

# HB.4400, An Act To Reduce Exclusionary Discipline For Violations of Rules Related To Student Grooming and Dress



Massachusetts  
Applesseed  
Center for Law & Justice



*Sponsored by Rep. Fluker Oakley and Sen. Gomez*

Despite efforts to address racial disparities in school discipline in Massachusetts, Black students remain 3 times more likely to be disciplined and 5 times more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their white counterparts.

In 2022, Massachusetts enacted The CROWN Act, which limited school disciplinary actions that were aimed at protective and natural hairstyles. HB.4400 would complement that law by banning exclusionary discipline on the basis of dress or grooming rule violations.

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"There will be white girls wearing really short skirts and crop tops...They get to go through the day without being apprehended or anything...Black girls with more of a body, they are being dress coded...It makes me feel uncomfortable because there are other people wearing the same thing but there's only certain people getting in trouble for it."

*– 8th grade Massachusetts student*

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## 2018-2019 School Year

Black female students are **3.2x**

Latinx female students are **2.6x**

American Indian female students are **2.4x**

Multiracial female students are **1.9x**

*...more likely to experience discipline than their white counterparts*

## This bill would:

- Prohibit school district or charter school employees from suspending or expelling students solely on the basis of a violation of dress or grooming rules
- Require that any rules related to student dress or grooming:
  - **Not treat students differently or have a disparate impact** on any student based on their race, national origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
  - Make no distinction, discrimination, or restriction on account of sex or gender identity
  - Have **clear, specific, and objective** definitions.
  - Ensure **dress or grooming rules are not enforced through direct physical contact** with a student.

## This bill would not:

- Limit school districts or charter schools from taking action to prevent bullying of any student or harassment of any student on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.
- Force a student to undress in front of another person.

**Questions?** Contact Nadia Romanazzi at [nadia@massapplesseed.org](mailto:nadia@massapplesseed.org)