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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Miami Beach Bans Race-Based Hair Discrimination

— *The measure protects against discriminatory practices involving hair texture or style* —

Miami Beach, FL – The Miami Beach City Commission voted unanimously to prohibit discriminatory practices in housing, employment, public services, funding or use of city facilities based on the texture or style of a person’s hair. The new ordinance applies in cases where hair is commonly associated with a particular race or national origin, such as Black communities.

“It’s unacceptable in 2022 that Black Americans and other minorities still face discrimination based on something so trivial as whether or not they have textured or curly hair,” explained Miami Beach Vice Mayor Alex Fernandez. “This serves to protect cultural identity and not have to worry about sacrificing who you are in Miami Beach.”

The city’s human rights ordinance already prohibited discrimination on the basis of various characteristics, including weight and height. The commission expanded those protections to now include hair texture associated with race, such as braids, locks, afros, curls and twists.

“We don’t want anyone to feel pressure to change their natural hair texture or hairstyle if they want to work, live or play in the City of Miami Beach,” added Miami Beach Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez. “We value diversity in our city and understand that it makes us stronger as a community.”

As recently as 2018, the U.S. military barred natural or protective hairstyles among servicewomen of African descent, according to Alan Fishman, who chairs the city’s Human Rights Committee. The military prohibition was later rescinded.

“Race-based hair discrimination stems from a perception that straight hair is clean, neat and professional while the opposite belief applies to textured or curly hair types,” Fishman said. “In reality, this is just another way to discriminate based on racial stereotypes.”

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