“The most disrespected woman in America is the black woman” stated Malcolm X. Black Women have worn their hair out since the beginning of ages, and the history of natural hair being deemed as unprofessional in the workplace goes back to slavery. From being asked to cover their hair, cut their locs, straighten their hair in order to look professional or more put together, hair discrimination in the workplace has many layers to it. As stated, it goes back to pre-slavery days when having your hair done in the African community was a must. According to the Assistant professor at Arkansas State University Brenda. A Randle’s article “During the pre-slavery times, only the mads and the mournings did not do their hair.” This goes to show how much having your hair done was a priority and represented an individual and their culture. In the 1500s when the slave ships came from Europe, the first act was to cut off all their hair in order to dissociate the individual with their roots and culture and to better control them.

The idea of protective styling came from African Americans being worked to death on the cotton fields and therefore not being able to take care and maintain their hair like they used to. Most were obligated like stated earlier to either cut off their hair or in the 1700s, wearing headscarves became popular which we still see nowadays. Based on Brenda. A Randle’s article, the decrease in natural hair styling caused a drop in natural hair products which resulted in African American’s using “butter and bacon grease” in their hair. The only group allowed to style their hair were the slaves working indoors. Styles like braids, locs, cornrows, and twists were all used and helped the black community keep their hair healthy. Slaves who worked in the “big houses" started picking up wearing wigs in the 18th century due to the fact that white men deemed it as more put together. That is where the idea of having straight hair in the workplace was introduced. African Americans themselves started believing that straight hair was considered

as “good hair” and their coils and curls were considered as “bad hair.” In the 20th century, it became common for younger kids to get their hair relaxed to make it quicker on the parents and get them to school on time. As they grew older, this resulted in that generation thinking that their hair was untamable and that the only way to make it look laid and presentable was to either straighten it or put a relaxer in. Minda Harts, an American author, was quoted in a *Washington Post* article “Most states are trying to protect black employees who want to wear their natural hairstyle at work.” Harts stated, “I’ll be honest with you: I wear my hair straight probably 99 percent of the time because, being in corporate America, I’ve seen how clients who have braids and natural hairstyles can be looked upon.”

Looking at our history today, natural hair and protective styling in the workplace became an ethical issue and a civil rights issue with the Chasity Jones’s case. An article by Imani Gandy “The U.S supreme court decided to ignore Black Hair Discrimination” emphasizes Chasity Jone’s case and how the American system plays a role in corporate companies banning hairstyling in the black community. In 2010, Chasity Jones went to an interview for a customer representative job at Catastrophe Management Systems (CMS). Following her acceptance for the position, the HR manager at the company reached out to her stating that they could not hire her with the “dreadlocks." When Chasity Jones asked why, the HR management responded with “They tend to get messy, although I’m not saying yours are, you know what I’m talking about." In the CMS’s hair policy handbook, it was quoted that hairstyle should reflect a business/professional image” and that “no excessive hairstyles or unusual colors are acceptable.” The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed a lawsuit against CMS in 2010. The case went from being dismissed in 2014 by U.S. District Court Judge Charles R. Butler Jr.,

to being appealed by EEOC, to being dismissed again in 2016 by a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals because according to the EEOC “they did not state a plausible claim that CMS intentionally discriminated against Ms. Jones because of her race.” The EEOC refused to take up the case to the supreme court perhaps they did not think they could win. However, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) picked it up and filed a motion with the supreme court. As specified in the article written by Imany Gandy “The Supreme Court refused, thus permitting employers like CMS to ban most, if not all, natural hairstyles.” Deciding to not offer someone a position due to their hair makes me come to the conclusion that this case goes against the Justice section of the Ethics of Virtue which states that “Justice requires us to treat all human beings equally and impartially.”

Hair discrimination does not only occur in the workplaces but also happens in schools. There are several stories about children being kicked out of school or not selected in a program because of their hair appearance. DeAndre Arnold is a case that grabbed the attention of many news centers. He was a senior in high school when it was brought to his family’s attention that he would not be permitted to walk for his graduation if he did not cut his locs. The school district claimed that this code of conduct was not new and that it had been in place for many years now. However, this particular situation grabbed the attention of the media and many felt as if this rule was racist and discriminatory. Additionally, DeAndre Arnold’s mother stated “He should get to choose who he identifies himself as, and he shouldn't be discriminated against," she said. "You don't tell girls they can't have short hair. It's so much bigger than DeAndre." When asked why cutting his hair was not an option, DeAndre’s families explained to CNN in an article that they published titled *“If this Texas student doesn't cut his dreadlocks, he won't get to walk at*

graduation" that dreadlocks have a history in his family, it is not just a hairstyle… DeAndre's mother stated that they are originally from Trinidad and all the men in their family grown their dreadlocks past their waist. Essentially, after the school noticed that this case was getting the attention of many social media influencers like Gabriella Union and The Ellen Show, they allowed the young man to return to school and walk the stage during his graduation.

In the same article, the author interviewed "Tehia Glass is an associate professor of educational psychology and elementary education at the University of North Carolina Charlotte." who explained in detail to CNN that DeAndre is not the first student who's gone through this. In 1976, there was: Jenkins v. Blue Cross Mutual Hospital Insurance. Jenkins was a woman who worked for Blue Cross for three years exactly. After all these years with the company, the time came for a promotion. Jenkins was denied of it because Blue Cross told her "She could never represent Blue Cross" with her natural hair, which was in an Afro. Jenkins according to CNN sued using the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and won the case.

These 2 cases, DeAndre Arnold and Jenkins connect to the Ethics of Social Contract which states that without laws to defend the human race, our society would be a terrible place to live in. The Social Contract theory is explained in the book *Ethics in Law Enforcement*. The author, Steve McCartney, states in Chapter 2 "Social contract theory is another descriptive theory about society and the relationship between rules and laws, and why society needs them. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1689) proposed that a society without rules and laws to govern our actions would be a dreadful place to live."

As a result of hair discrimination in the workplace and our society, the black community has come together in order to protect the youngest and the oldest. For starters, the Crown Act,

according to their website it is defined as “The CROWN Act, which stands for “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” is a law that prohibits race-based hair discrimination, which is the denial of employment and educational opportunities because of hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locks, twists or Bantu knots.” The crown act is made possible because of Dove and the CROWN coalition. Additionally, all the lawmakers and organizations that support what they are fighting for also play a huge role. It was first introduced in California in July of 2019 and made into law on July, 3rd 2019, since then, they have managed to get 10 states out of 40 onboard. On their website, they have many ways that people can choose to help, from signing their petition, sending a letter directly to your state, and if you are in one of the states that signed in favor of the CROWN act, they have phone numbers that you can call to handle the situation in a legal manner.

When it comes to MA, in January of 2020, based on 25 Public News service.org “The public hearing of the bill, called "An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Natural Hairstyles," is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. at the statehouse on January 28th, 2020. If it becomes law, Massachusetts would follow in the footsteps of California, New York, and New Jersey, which passed similar legislation this year...State Representative Steven Ultrino introduced the legislation because of an incident that happened in his district. Twin black girls got multiple detentions for wearing hair extensions at the Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in 2017.” Massachusetts is still on the list of one of the states that have not made hair discrimination illegal however back in 2019, Senator Ed. Markey, Boston City Council President Kim Janey as well as representative Ayanna Presley who is now serving as the U.S. Representatives for Massachusetts's 7th congressional district are some of the local politicians

who are advocating for the bill to be passed. H4292 was successfully concurred in the Senate and is currently waiting on the House to make a decision. The most recent update that was posted about the crown act was talked about in an article published by Glamour.com. The author explained “The week of September 22nd, 2020, marked some promising news for the Crown Act, a vital piece of legislation created by the CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Coalition, that would make it illegal to discriminate against someone at work or school over the way they wear their hair. While up until this point the Crown Act has only been passed at the state level in only seven states, it was announced Monday that the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill at the federal level—meaning, that if approved by Senate and the president, its protections would automatically apply to all 50 states”

Connecting the CROWN act to the Cares Ethics can be interpreted as this act is in place to protect the African American community and make their environment a safer place. The CROWN act if they succeed in making it pass as a law in all 40 states will become a shield for younger kids or adults that go through hair discrimination in the workplace and in their daily lives.

My own experience with hair discrimination has been a long road. It started when I was younger. I attended an all-girl catholic school in Haiti. I remember from kindergarten to 5th grade I wore my natural hair, however, when I got to 6th grade, things changed. For reference, having a perm or relaxer in your hair means that your hair gets stretched out and therefore becomes more manageable. The summer before going into 6th grade, my mother took me to the hair salon on a bright Saturday afternoon and permed my hair. At the time, I was really happy

because, at my school, if you had a perm, it meant that you were grown and mature. The long black silky hair was also considered more presentable to the nuns.

I have a vivid memory of Sunday Church when one of my classmates showed up to Mass with her afro out. One of the Nuns grabbed her by her uniform into her office in front of the entire crowd of parents, siblings, and friends. Five minutes later, my classmate came out of the office with a lopsided bun with a headscarf on top. The nuns had told her that her hair was too dramatic and that it was going to put too much attention on her. Meanwhile, the students with lighter skin tones and long silky hair were allowed to wear their hair out and I, with my perm was seen as acceptable and more put together.

It was not until I moved to the states that I started understanding the microaggressions that were directed to me during my younger days. I realized that even in a Caribbean country, where 95% of the people living there were black, there was also hatred and resentments towards our own hair. This goes back to how our ancestors' experiences still have an impact on us today. As I stated early on in my paper, it was deemed acceptable for African Americans back in the day to start wearing straight hair because the white man saw it as acceptable as opposed to our twists, locks, and coils. We often try to stick with European beauty standards in order to appear more acceptable. It took me a while to connect my experience to discrimination, coming from a country where being seen as “Black” is not really a thing.

To conclude everything that has been stated, hair discrimination in the workplace and in someone’s everyday life is an ethical issue because you are making a human feel less because of a strand of hair that comes out of their head. Hair discrimination goes against a number of Ethics in Business, however as stated in the earlier paragraphs, it connects with the Ethics of Virtue

more specifically Justice, the Ethics of Social contract which states that without laws, our society would be doomed and finally with the CROWN act which connects to the ethics of Care and will hopefully become a shield in order to protect the younger generation.

In short, African Americans have faced struggles in hair discrimination since before emancipation times, where kinker texture seems unclean and unprofessional. These are all attributes that are strongly related to racial discrimination, which therefore should be banned throughout the states. The fact that we have to advocate for part of our identity to be respected in the workforce as well as in school is truly gut-wrenching. However, with the constant increase that's been done, it is without a doubt that the natural hair movement and laws like the Crown-Act will educate many others on the importance of hair as part of our identity, as well as why it is important to ban Hair Discrimination the workplace and within our society.

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