

"Tell Congress To Stop Discrimination Against Natural Black Hair"

It has come to my attention that the United States Air Force has a regulation, AFI36-2903 DRESS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, which in part, discriminates against African-American women serving in the Air Force. The code was recently updated to include a bans on a common natural African-American hairstyle, which the Air Force has called "dreadlocks". Female personnel with neat, clean, professional well-kept hair are being forced to choose between cutting their hair and treating it with chemicals to conform with this regulation which I feel unfairly and unnecessarily discriminates against African-Americans. The regulation itself does not define "dreadlocks". This leaves women with hair that is in no means a distraction or a detriment to their duties, subject to disciplinary action.

While it is certainly reasonable that the Air Force require its personnel to wear their hair in a neat and professional manner, blanket regulations against a loosely defined manner of wearing the hair is causing undue hardship on a number of women in the Air Force. There appears to be an ignorance of the needs of African-American hair and what can be done in the way of styling the hair without either cutting it off or subjecting the hair to chemicals. Wearing the hair in a "locked" style is the only way many African-American women can wear their hair, with any length, and without having to chemically treat it or wear a wig. As long as the styles are neat, professional looking, not distracting and not hindering their ability to perform their duty, there is no reason the Air Force should require women to change their hair styles. I think the code was fine before the addition of the ban on "dreadlocks" and the addition of that ban is unnecessary. The code already states that hairstyles cannot be "faddish" and must be professional. Locked hair is not necessarily faddish nor is it necessarily unprofessional.

I would like to request that you look into this regulation and ask the Air Force to reconsider the ban of neat, clean and professional hairstyles worn by African-American women.

We have sent 1,578 letters to Congress so far. Please join us!

Sign this petition online at

<http://www.rallycongress.com/treasuredlocks>