

# SB656/HB1533

# Crown and Care Act

## Protection from Harmful Hair Chemicals

Sponsored by: Senator Shaneka Henson | Delegate Tiffany Alston

### The Enforcement Gap: Toxic Hair Chemicals Are Still Being Sold in Maryland

In 2025, Maryland banned several harmful chemicals in cosmetic products, including formaldehyde, phthalates, parabens, mercury, and PFAS. However, these dangerous chemicals remain on store shelves across Maryland.

#### These Products Harm Women

- These chemicals are linked to serious health risks, including cancer, infertility, fibroids, and hormone disruption—and Black women are disproportionately impacted:
- Black women are 50% more likely to use chemical hair straighteners, increasing exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals.
- NIH research found frequent users of chemical hair straighteners face more than double the risk of uterine cancer.
- Black women develop uterine fibroids at 2-3 times the rate of white women and at younger ages.
- Many of these chemicals are already banned or restricted in the European Union, yet remain widely available in U.S. products.

#### What the Crown & Care Act Does?

- Strengthens enforcement of Maryland's existing chemical ban
- Ensures the law is enforceable by the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division to investigate violations and pursue injunctive relief, restitution, civil penalties, and damages
- Allows courts to award:
  - Attorney's fees
  - Tripple damages for knowing violations
  - Punitive damages where appropriate
- Establishes a restitution and research fund where civil penalties and restitution will fund medical screening, treatment, and research related to fibroids, uterine cancer, hair loss, and related health conditions

### Why The Crown & Care Act Matters

Maryland banned harmful chemicals in cosmetic products in 2025, but these products remain on store shelves due to limited enforcement and accountability. SB 656 closes this gap by strengthening enforcement authority, establishing meaningful penalties, and ensuring both the Attorney General and affected consumers can hold manufacturers accountable and remove dangerous products from the market.