



## Civil Rights for the Aesthetically-Challenged

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Most of us are shameless "lookists." We have a natural preference for good-looking people over ugly ones, whether in the context of hiring employees, selecting a mate, or watching movies or television.

To date, most employers have largely been free to discriminate against the homely. A few nations, such as France, have outlawed discrimination based on physical appearance. In the U.S., only a few jurisdictions, such as the District of Columbia and Santa Cruz, California, have enacted legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment based on physical appearance. Otherwise, until recently, employers have been free to take good looks (or the opposite) into account when making hiring or employment decisions. A disturbing trend seems to be developing, however, in which physical appearance discrimination is being attacked under the guise of sex or disability discrimination. Two court decisions earlier this year represent the most recent examples of this trend.

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