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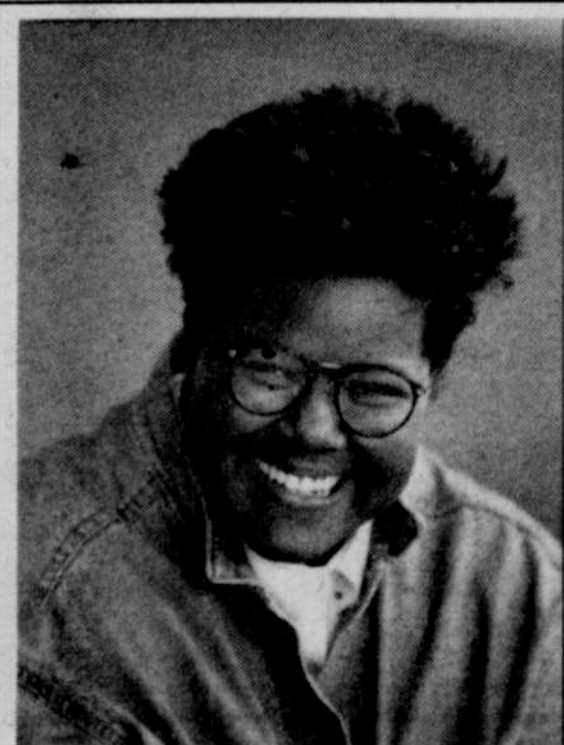
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Gay Inmates See Rights Protected

The Prison Service in England and Wales has announced a crackdown on staff who treat gay inmates differently from straight inmates during visits from their partners, *The Times* reported Nov. 7.

The service said gay inmates must be allowed to kiss and cuddle their partners the same as other inmates and that staff who impede such expressions will be disciplined.

Gay prisoners also will be allowed to enter into civil unions when the United Kingdom's comprehensive civil partnership act comes into force Dec. 5, the service said.

Barcelona Bashers Sent to Prison

Two skinheads who severely beat a gay couple at a Barcelona train station last year were sent to prison for two years Nov. 3. They were convicted of battery with homophobic aggravation.

One of the victims spent 20 days in the hospital as a result of the attack. The two bashers also must pay the victims \$10,266, pay all court costs and take a re-education course.

Anglican Head Meets Gay Bishop

The spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, met with New Hampshire's openly gay and partnered Episcopal bishop Nov. 3 in London.

A spokesperson for Williams called the conversation with Gene Robinson "friendly but candid."



The Rev. Gene Robinson caused a rift in the Anglican Church worldwide because he is an out gay man.

Robinson's election as bishop two years ago plunged the communion into crisis, with anti-gay Anglican leaders in Africa and Asia—and some conservatives in the United States—continuing to push toward schism. Traditionalists also are upset with the Anglican Church of Canada for allowing church blessings of gay marriages.

Polish PM to Abolish Office That Advocates for Gays

New Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz is abolishing the government agency that has advocated for queer equality.

He said the Office of Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men—a central body responsible for delivery of anti-discrimination and equal-opportunity policies—will be eliminated.

Eighty Polish nongovernmental organizations representing women, gays and national and religious minorities have signed a letter protesting the move. They say closing the office "will constitute a breach of Poland's obligations" to the European Union.

In October, Marcinkiewicz commented to *Newsweek*: "The family is natural, and the state must stand guard over the family. I don't care if someone is a homosexual or not, and even if I found out something like that, I wouldn't judge a person differently

than on their actions alone. But if that person tries to infect others with their homosexuality, then the state must intervene in this violation of freedom."

Brits to Crack Down on Homophobic Soccer Fans

Britain's Football Association has announced a crackdown on soccer fans who hurl anti-gay taunts at players, referees and each other, *The Observer* reported Oct. 30. The paper said such fans will be "identified and prosecuted."

"There is a problem with homophobic abuse in the game directed at not just players but also referees and also opposing fans," said Lucy Faulkner, the association's ethics and sports equity manager. "Such behavior is offensive and runs totally counter to both the game's family image and efforts to make football more acceptable to all sectors of society."



Lucy Faulkner is the British Football Association's ethics and sports equity manager.

Fans who observe anti-gay behavior are encouraged to call the association's toll-free hot line for reporting racist incidents.

The association also recently staged a "homophobia summit," which was attended by a wide variety of people associated with the sport, the newspaper said.

Swedish Social Democrats Call for Same-Sex Marriage

Sweden's ruling Social Democrats have expressed support for opening marriage to same-sex couples, *Radio Sweden* reported Oct. 31.

The idea was put forth by Health and Elderly Care Minister Ylva Johansson and approved by a vote of delegates at the party's annual convention. Since 1995, Swedish gays and lesbians have had access to registered partnerships that grant nearly every right and obligation of marriage.

U.K. Partnership Law May Have Undesirable Consequences

Activists are concerned that the United Kingdom's Civil Partnership Act, which takes effect in December, will negatively affect same-sex roommates and unregistered same-sex couples.

"All cohabiting same-sex couples will experience a reduction in state benefits as a side effect of the new Civil Partnership Act," said the gay rights group OutRage. "Even couples who don't want a civil partnership and have not registered their relationship will face cuts. In addition, same-sex friends or ex-lovers who live together will have to prove that they are not in a relationship—otherwise they, too, will lose out financially."

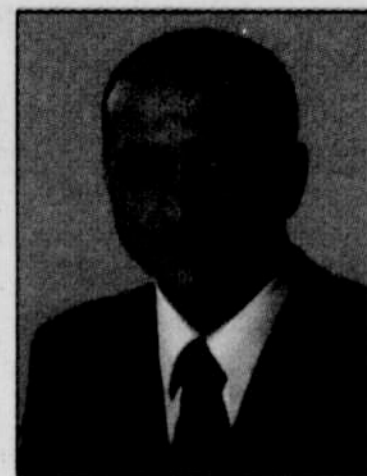
The group said it fears that "the pensions and benefits agencies will assume that all cohabiters are partners and cut their benefits accordingly."

Two people living together and receiving individual government pensions would see their benefits drop by about a third if they were recategorized as a couple, OutRage said.

The group has written to the work and pensions secretary urging the government to offer transitional protection to existing gay and lesbian state-benefit claimants.

Same-sex couples will be able to register their relationships starting Dec. 21. The act takes effect Dec. 5 but requires couples to give advance notice of their intention to tie the knot.

Registered partners will receive all the rights and obligations of marriage. Couples who have entered a



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