

California allows conjugal visits for gays

by UPI

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is altering its policies to allow conjugal visits for gay and lesbian prisoners.

The department has begun allowing the visits amid pressure from the American Civil Liberties Union and a complaint from a prisoner at a Vacaville prison, the San Francisco Chronicle reported Friday.

The policy change is expected to be reflected in permanent regulations to be adopted later in the year, the newspaper said.

The change allows gay and lesbian prisoners the right to spend up to three days with family members -- including domestic partners -- in living areas on prison grounds. Corrections officials said the change comes in response to legislation that awarded domestic partners many of the same rights as married couples.

"This was very much part of the intent of the law, we're glad the department is finally moving to adapt the regulations," Geoffrey Kors, executive director of Equality California, told the Chronicle.

However, the law was sharply criticized by opponents of same-sex unions.

"The ACLU's assault on marriage in California has produced this nonsensical policy that rubs the average voter the wrong way," Randy Thomasson, president of the Campaign for Children and Families, said in the Chronicle article.

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