

Open letter to Stonewall Gay Rights Group UK – www.stonewall.org.uk, (for publication in Jersey Evening Post)

18 January 2006

JERSEY - HOMOPHOBIC DISCRIMINATORY GOVERNMENT SET TO SHAME UK

I enclose a copy of the headline article in today's Jersey Evening Post also forwarded to the UK Government, European Court of Human Rights, UK Newspaper Groups and Gay Press.

The political weight of Stonewall has proved to be invaluable in achieving equality for gays and lesbians in a whole range of issues from obtaining an equal age of consent as heterosexuals in the UK, to the acceptance and legality of civil partnerships. I implore you, therefore, to use all endeavours to obtain **maximum publicity** for the homophobic attitude prevalent in such a large proportion of the newly elected ministerial government members of Jersey as proven by today's debate.

I am currently on holiday in Jersey and was having a great time until viewing the enclosed front-page article and watching local television news bulletins in relation to this issue. The views expressed by some of the ministers were deeply shocking and unbelievably out dated. The debate has provided a catalyst for members to vent their homophobic views, which makes one consider what other controversial views would come to the fore on other minority issues that dare not speak their name, rumours of which taint Jersey's reputation overseas.

Deputy James Reed for instance, highlights the risk of 'predatory men exploiting gay teenagers' but his homophobia prevents him from equating this with the risk of predatory men exploiting straight teenagers.

The Dean, also a states member, expresses his radical extremist view that 'We are sacrificing our children on the alter of political correctness.'

Deputy Baudains states '... intercourse should be between a man and a woman as a natural process across the animal kingdom....' .I would point out to him that it is scientifically proven that homosexuality is also commonplace across the entire animal kingdom, as the activity of other species obviously has such an important bearing on the issue.

When Sir Elton and David tied the knot in the UK, there was no discernable public outcry, no banner waving, no abuse; how civilisation has moved on. By contrast, in Jersey whereas it is acceptable for a 16 year old citizen to marry and have children, join the British army and risk their life in war, it is still a big deal for a 16 year old to chose to have intercourse with a same sex partner.

Today's debate speaks volumes both within the island and abroad and illustrates the abhorrent level of bigotry damaging the island's reputation. A local friend in Jersey has informed me that the Island's decision making can take a very long time. I trust you will use the interim period to repeatedly bring this issue to the public and politicians attention in the UK, particularly with regard to the contravention of human rights.

Yours faithfully
J. Jones, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan.

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