



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Federal Bill Introduced to Protect Pets of Domestic Violence Survivors



Rep. Katherine Clark

The concept of including pets and livestock in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders – enacted in 27 states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia – took an enormous step forward in August when U.S. Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) introduced a bipartisan bill to extend similar provisions on the federal level.



Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

H.R. 5267 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter.

“Sadly, domestic violence is something one in every four women will experience at some point in their lives,” said Rep. Clark, announcing the bill at an Aug. 18 ceremony at the MSPCA’s Angell Memorial Hospital in Boston. “This isolating experience is made even worse for those who fear for the safety of their pet. Most pet lovers, including me, consider their beloved dog or cat a part of their family. No one should have to make the choice between leaving an abusive situation and ensuring their pet’s safety, and I am grateful for the partnerships we’ve formed with organizations working to end domestic violence and animal abuse. Together, we crafted a bill that will help save lives.”

The PAWS Act amends the Violence Against Women Act’s interstate stalking provisions to make crossing state lines to injure pets a punishable offense. It also adds veterinary care to the list of restitution costs that can be recovered by victims, establishes a federal grant program designed to help domestic violence victims safely house their pets, and expresses a recommendation by Congress that states should include pets in protective orders.

The National Link Coalition, ASPCA, HSUS, and National Network to End Domestic Violence have signed on as endorsing the measure.

South Carolina Enacts Pet Protection Orders



Robert L. Brown

South Carolina has become the 27th state to enact legislation that allows courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that cover the pets of domestic violence survivors. Gov. Nikki Haley signed into law House Bill 3361 on June 6. The law amends Sec. 20-4-60 of the state's statutes to prohibit harm or harassment to pets owned or kept by the petitioner, respondent or other household members, and to include pets among other property covered by the order.



Gilda Cobb-Hunter

After several amendments, the bill unanimously passed the Senate by a vote of 40-0 and the House by 95-0. The bill had bipartisan support, introduced by Republican Rep. Deborah A. Long and Democratic Reps. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, J. David Weeks and Robert L. Brown.



Deborah A. Long

Four states have enacted Pet Protection Order laws this legislative session, with Virginia, Iowa and New Hampshire coming on board earlier this year. Pet Protective Orders were first introduced in Maine in 2006 as a means to protect all family members from domestic violence and to remove a significant barrier that prevents as many as 48% of survivors from leaving abusive situations.



J. David Weeks

Study to Document Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Link in Australia



Dr. Lydia Tong and friend

Increasing evidence from North America that domestic violence perpetrators often target pets to manipulate their victims to stay in abusive relationships is fueling a new Australian study that will investigate the relationship between animal abuse and domestic violence in an Australian context. Lydia Tong, a veterinarian who has published [research describing five tell-tale fractures](#) that should prompt veterinarians to suspect deliberate abuse rather than non-accidental injury (NAI), hopes knowing more about the Link in Australia will help to recognize abuse earlier, save lives, provide appropriate services for victims and their pets, and produce data that will inform policymakers.

Working with Domestic Violence NSW, Tong plans to interview domestic violence survivors with abused pets. She hopes the study's findings will confirm anecdotal reports and be used to improve services for both human and animal victims, she told the [Sydney Morning Herald](#).

"Vets are often the first to see evidence of abuse in a family, when they treat injured pets," she said. As part of the study, people who contact domestic violence crisis lines will be asked whether their abuser also harms family pets, whether they have access to veterinary services and if they would feel comfortable speaking with a vet about their situation.

Australian domestic violence services have found victims of abuse are sometimes scared or reluctant to leave an abusive relationship if they have to leave a pet behind, but the number of such cases has not been calculated to the degree found in American and Canadian surveys.

Tong has [published research](#) identifying five distinguishing fractures that veterinarians can use to assess when an animal has been abused rather than injured in an accident ([See The Link in the Literature](#)).

Online Shelter Database to Include Pet Services

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence has updated its comprehensive National Directory of Domestic Violence Programs in a searchable online version that will include more detailed information about programs for domestic survivors with pets.



Launched on Aug. 26, domesticshelters.org gives users access to some 300,000 data points about 3,000 domestic violence organizations. The database replaces the NCADV print directory, last published in 2008, and will allow for more frequent updates.

Shelters and programs can be searched by city and ZIP Code. Providers can edit their profiles to ensure more up-to-date information is published. Currently, many entries are only partially completed. As more providers edit their profiles, more details will be available as to the type of pet services available, such as foster care referrals, on-site housing, and animal therapy programs.

Users can also search for specific types of emergency, legal, financial, counseling, housing, support, children's, and educational services available within a geographic area.

Google reports more than 36,000,000 searches each year related to domestic violence, most of which are for seeking help. The NCADV site gives users the ability to input their location, service needs and language preference from desktops, smartphones and tablets, said Sylvia Torralba, membership director.

Pets in Peril Aids Australian Survivors and their Pets

Formally launched in 2006 in the eastern part of the Australian state of Victoria, Pets in Peril provides pet care services for over 100 domestic violence survivors and their families a year. The program, founded by Judy Johnson, is a collaboration between Animal Aid and Eastern Domestic Violence Service.



Similar to situations common across the U.S., Pets in Peril's surveys of domestic violence survivors have found that as many as 84% of women reported their pets were hurt by the batterers and 48% said concern for the animals was a major factor in delaying their leaving the abusive relationship.

"First and foremost, this is a domestic violence issue, not an animal abuse issue," Johnson said in a [community radio interview](#) on Aug. 10. "Animals are not just a pet. They're very much a part of the family, and he knows that."

Animal abuse is used to manipulate and control battered women and their children with threats if she were to leave. Often, the batterer shows her gruesome examples of what would happen, by beheading an animal or nailing it to a door, she said. Animal abuse "is an early warning sign that something dreadful is happening in the family," she said.

Johnson noted that it's unclear whether domestic violence Link cases are on the increase. "It's always been there," she said. "It's just safer for women to talk about it now. Hopefully they won't have to leave the animals behind too much longer."

Pet Foster Program Launched in Ottawa

The [Ottawa SafePet](#) program, launched in June, provides foster care for pets of domestic violence survivors in Canada's capital region. SafePet Ottawa is a collaborative originally designed by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, and Action Ontarienne Contre la Violence Faite aux Femmes. SafePet Ottawa is one sector of the [Ontario SafePet](#) program.



The program engages participating veterinarians, the Ottawa Humane Society, and the Ottawa Kennel Club. Women can drop off their pets, and reclaim them once they leave the shelter, at local veterinary clinics. The free program removes a significant barrier that has prevented as many as 48% of clients of Violence Against Women shelters in Ontario from leaving their abusers. 61% of Ontario women who had left their abusive partner stated that their partners had brutalized or killed a pet.

A pet owner must be a client of a VAW shelter. She must indicate she is worried about the welfare of her pet(s) and will not leave the abusive situation without them. Family and friends are the first choice to provide temporary care; SafePet Ottawa is open to those who have no one to care for their animal(s).

The pet owner must sign a surrender agreement. The VAW shelter will name a participating clinic and will call the clinic to alert them. Transportation to the clinic is the responsibility of the pet owner. The pet(s) will be given necessary immunizations and be spayed/neutered if necessary, at no cost to her. She must sign a form at the clinic to authorize this care and to relinquish the pet(s) to SafePet Ottawa. She should provide relevant information about the pet's history, health and veterinarian contact.

An extensive [application form](#) for potential foster families is on the SafePet Ottawa website. The program accepts cats, dogs, pocket pets and horses for stays lasting up to 3 months.

Policy Brief Summarizes The Link for Social Workers

Miranda Sve, a recent graduate of the social work program at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, helped answer the frequent question about domestic violence survivors, "Why doesn't she just leave?" by creating an effective two-page policy briefing summary for a public policy class.

"The Link Between Animal Abuse, Domestic Violence, and the Victim's Decision to Seek Refuge" condenses extensive research and survivors' testimonials. Sve adds recommendations for immediate local interventions (adding pet information at intake and in safety plans, recruiting foster pet parents and identifying pet-friendly housing options); regional interventions (cross-sector training and client confidentiality releases); and legislative policy interventions (allowing pets to be safely removed, pet protection orders, and harsher penalties for offenders).

"Getting in 'the system' may reveal later violent crimes," she concludes. "Intervening with animal abuse may prevent violence from escalating to human abuse."

The project was an outgrowth of Sve's seeing the video of a pioneering Link workshop, "[Pets in the Crossfire of Family Violence](#)," organized by Jane Hunt at the University of Minnesota in 2007. "Once I presented my final brief to the class, it was very well received," Sve tells *The LINK-Letter*. "That means 30 more social workers will enter the field with basic knowledge of the Link!" The Policy Brief is available in the [Resources section](#) of the National Link Coalition's website.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE **Court Rules Animals May Be Considered “Victims”**



A landmark court ruling in Oregon may change the way animal cruelty cases can be prosecuted and lead to longer prison sentences for offenders, according to animal law experts.

In 2009, Arnold Weldon Nix was convicted of starving 20 horses and goats on his property. The trial court ruled that because animals are defined as property under the law, the horses and goats could not be considered “victims,” and thus Nix had committed only one punishable offense. The court merged the 20 counts into a single conviction for second-degree animal neglect. Nix was sentenced to 90 days in jail (suspended) and three years’ probation. The state appealed.

An appeals court disagreed and said that animals can be “victims” and ruled that Nix could be sentenced for 20 separate violations. On Aug. 7, 2014, the Oregon Supreme Court, in *State v. Nix (355 Or 777 2014)*, affirmed the appeals court ruling, reversed the circuit court judgment, and remanded the case for re-sentencing on 20 separate convictions for each guilty verdict.

Citing common dictionary definitions, historical usages, legal precedents, and legislative history, the Supreme Court ruled that the ordinary meaning of the word “victim” can apply to both human and non-human animals. While earlier laws and many state statutes are directed at protecting property or public morality, Oregon’s laws, for nearly a century, have been rooted in a tradition of protecting animals from suffering, the court wrote.

Animal Court Considered in New Mexico

The 2014 [New Mexico Link conference](#) will have a panel discussion about the potential of setting up an animal court in the state, coordinator Tammy Fielbelkorn has announced. Panelists at the conference, scheduled for Sept. 22 at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, will include Judge Brett Loveless, Judge Rosemary Cosgrove-Aguilar, Albuquerque Assistant City Attorney Doris Duhigg, retired Public Defender John Walker, and UNM law students Laura Castille and Amber Macias-Mayo. The discussion is designed to start a process to help abused animals through the legal system.



Animal Abuse Police Hotline Receiving Many Calls

A special police hotline established to report crimes against animals has received 126 reports, including 20 suspected cases of victimized dogs and cats, between the launch of the hotline in January (*See LINK-Letter March 2014*) and the end of June.



The hotline was started in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan to raise awareness for animal welfare and to detect early signs of violent crimes, [Mainichi newspaper](#) reported. While no reports have led to arrests for serious crimes, one call reported elementary school students who were shooting cats with air guns. Two students were taken into custody in that incident. The large number of calls is seen as testimony to the growth of public awareness of animal abuse and its Links to human violence.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Massachusetts Veterinarians Required to Report Suspected Animal Abuse

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has 12 other states in which veterinarians are mandated to report known or suspected animal cruelty. Gov. Deval Patrick signed into law the PAWS Act (Protecting Animal Welfare and Safety) on Aug. 20. Veterinarians may make such reports, with immunity from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reporting, to any police officer or special state police officer. Massachusetts practitioners previously had such immunity if they chose to report, but reporting was not mandatory. Under the new law, failure to report cruelty will be reported to the state board of registration in veterinary medicine.



“Puppy Doe,” who inspired the PAWS Act

The new law also increases penalties for some animal cruelty convictions. It establishes a statewide task force that will conduct a systematic review of the state’s animal cruelty and protection laws, the need for a registry of animal abuse offenders, and for training law enforcement, animal control officers, judges and veterinarians on the Link between animal abuse and domestic violence and animal hoarding. The task force will also explore mechanisms for more comprehensive reporting of animal abuse and for educating children about animal abuse. One provision of the original bill – to define animal abuse committed in the presence of a child as “extreme atrocity and cruelty” with enhanced penalties – was deleted, but task force members indicate they will reconsider this in their review.

The bill was a result of the “Puppy Doe” incident, a Link case that horrified Massachusetts residents. Radoslaw Czerkawski, 33, of Quincy, Mass., has pleaded not guilty to 12 counts of animal cruelty for allegedly beating, burning, starving and stabbing a 2-year-old pit bull in the eye, as well as slicing her tongue. He also faces charges in connection with stealing an estimated \$150,000 from a 95-year-old woman with dementia who he was hired to care for in her home, the [Lowell Sun](#) reported.

“Abusive acts toward animals are unacceptable and all too often can lead to violence toward people,” said State Sen. Bruce Tarr, sponsor of the PAWS bill, in a statement. “Our laws need to strongly and clearly penalize those who commit the kinds of brutal acts we’ve seen in the Puppy Doe case and others, and this legislation makes major progress in achieving that goal.”

Veterinarians are also mandated to report known or suspected animal abuse in Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Such laws follow the pattern established some 50 years ago requiring physicians and other human health care professionals to report suspected child abuse and neglect.



BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Australian Radio Podcast Now Available

3CR, an independent Community Radio station in Melbourne, aired an extensive interview with National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow on the Aug. 10, 2014 edition of Emma Townshend's “Freedom of Species” program. The show also interviewed Michael Beatty from the RSPCA/Queensland discussing their Pets in Crisis collaboration with DV Connect, a government intervention program; and Judy Johnson, founder of the [Pets in Peril](#) collaboration between Victoria’s Animal Aid and Eastern Domestic Violence Service. [Click here](#) to listen to the podcast.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD PROTECTION

Boy, 4, Under DCF Care Mauled by Illegal Pit Bulls

A 4-year-old boy in Miami would not have been fatally mauled by dogs on Aug. 13 if the Florida Department of Children and Families had known about the Miami-Dade County ban on pit bulls – and if Animal Services had not allowed an exemption for “American bulldogs,” [Animals 24-7 reported](#).

Javon Dade, Jr., was killed by pit bulls in his father’s yard despite the breed ban, enacted in 1989 and affirmed by 63% of voters in 2012, The boy’s father, Javon Dade, 30, and his girlfriend, Alessandra Carrasco, 26, were charged with child neglect on Aug. 22. After the attack, three adult pit bulls and three puppies were seized by Animal Services; one was euthanized because of its temperament.



Javon Dade, Jr.

CBS Miami reported that Dade and Carrasco had smoked several marijuana cigarettes laced with cocaine after the boy went to sleep. When they woke up the next morning, Javon Jr. was nowhere to be found. Police received a missing person call more than an hour later and quickly found the boy’s body in tall grass in the home’s back yard. Dade had reportedly been arrested at least 18 times, charged at least 12 times, and convicted seven times previously on drug and battery charges. He was also fined \$1,040 for failing to license and vaccinate the dogs.

Three years prior to the attack, DCF workers were warned about the smell and danger of six untrained dogs in the family’s apartment. News media reported that a call to the child abuse hotline in 2011 said that the dogs fought with each other and relieved themselves on the floor where the couple’s children played, and that both Dade and Carrasco had been bitten trying to break up the fights. DCF reportedly investigated twice but failed to notify Animal Services of the illegal presence of the pit bulls.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Radiographic Evidence Identifies Non-Accidental Injury

Building upon previous research by Munro and Thrusfield that identified features that distinguished non-accidental injury (NAI) among battered pets from accidental injuries, Lydia Tong of the University of Sydney, Australia used radiography to identify five distinct types of fractures to help pathologists, practitioners and forensics experts support a diagnosis of animal abuse. Radiographic features in 19 dogs with abuse histories and 135 dogs with accidental fractures indicated the following features should raise the index of suspicion, and support a diagnosis, of NAI: (1) presence of multiple fractures; (2) fractures occurring on more than one region of the body; (3) transverse fractures; (4) delayed presentation (fractures presenting at a later stage of healing); and (5) multiple fractures at different stages of healing.

-- Tong, L.J. (2014). *Fracture characteristics to distinguish between accidental injury and non-accidental injury in dogs. The Veterinary Journal, 199(3), 392-398.*

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS



Núria Querol

Link Toolkit Translated into Spanish...

The National Link Coalition's *Toolkit for Starting a Link Coalition in Your Community* has taken an even bigger step through a translation into Spanish. Dr. Núria Querol, coordinator of Spain's Link consortium GEVHA, announced the publication of *Herramientas para Crear una Coalición del Link en tu Comunidad*. The manual was translated by Sònia Pujol and David Carrasco, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. It was expanded to include Spanish materials concerning

negligencia y abuso a menores, maltrato animal, abusos a la 3^a edad, and violencia doméstica. The Spanish version is freely available on the National Link Coalition's [Resources in Other Languages](#) webpage. In other exciting news from Spain:

- Querol, has been named the representative of the Council of Medical Associations at the National Commission Against Gender Violence of Catalonia. From that position, she will do her best to include animal abuse as an item in evaluating and addressing domestic violence.
- The electronic magazine [TOT SantCugat](#) is publishing a monthly column by Querol about the human-animal bond, prevention and intervention in violence and The Link.
- The Link is a pivotal argument in the [Campaign by Galgos Ethique](#) to the UNESCO asking for non-human animals to be recognized as sentient beings.
- The Link is included in several academic courses at the University of Barcelona School of Law, including Criminal Investigation, Criminal Profiling and Investigative Psychology, and Psychopathic Personality and Violent Crimes.

... and Coming Soon: Portuguese!



Meanwhile, [Anabela Moreira](#), a veterinarian in Lisbon, has graciously volunteered to translate our Toolkit into Portuguese. This will be of great benefit to the growing Link interest in Brazil, Portugal and other lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) countries. Moreira, who also has a Ph.D. in veterinary science and is starting a

Master's program in legal medicine, is writing her dissertation on the Link and the perception of animal abuse in Portugal. She tells *The LINK-Letter* that new legislation in Portugal will shortly allow some forms of animal cruelty against companion animals to be charged as felony-level crimes.

Oregon Coalition Holds Conference, Cites Prosecution Progress

The Washington County, Ore. Animal Protection Multi-Disciplinary Team will present *Paws for Justice III*, its 3rd annual Link training, on Sept. 24, at the Sheriff's Office Training Room. "Animal Hoarding: Psychology, Response, Intervention and Prosecution" will be a free, all-day session featuring presentations by deputy district attorneys, hoarding experts, psychologists, and animal services supervisors.



[Debbie Wood](#), Manager of County Animal Services and the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter, shared with *The LINK-Letter* the value of coalition members working together. "Our DA now prosecutes about 20 animal crimes a year, versus maybe 3 or 4 before we established our MDT," she writes. "The Deputy DA who prosecutes these cases has lost exactly **one** case. One, out of dozens. That's because these crimes are taken very seriously here by **all** parties."

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 5267 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter.



Michigan HB 5658 would allow family divisions of circuit courts issuing personal protection orders to enjoin a spouse, former spouse, co-parent, date or household resident from injuring, killing, torturing, threatening or removing an animal, and from interfering with the petitioner’s efforts to remove animals. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee. Another bill, **SB 285** would make it illegal to kill, torture, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal with the intent to cause mental suffering or distress to another person or to exert control over another person. **SB 285** cleared the Senate and passed the House Committee on Criminal Justice and is awaiting a second reading on the House floor.



New Jersey A 494 would provide specific statutory authority to allow courts to include animals in domestic violence restraining orders. The bill affects animals belonging to either party or a minor child in the household. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.



Ohio HB 243 and **SB 177** would allow courts to include companion animals in domestic violence, anti-stalking and temporary protection orders. **HB 243** would also require children adjudicated as delinquent for committing animal cruelty to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling, and adult offenders to be sentenced to probation supervision. **SB 177** cleared the Senate Criminal Justice Committee on May 13 and passed the full Senate by a unanimous 33-0 vote on June 3. It now heads to the House. **HB 243** is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



New Jersey A-2155 would establish a three-year pilot program within DCF to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence, trauma, or children with behavioral healthcare needs. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.

Animal Abuse Committed by a Child



New York A-4618 and **S-2656** would require juveniles and adult cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric analysis and evaluation and, when necessary, treatment. The records of juvenile offenders would not be sealed and could be used in future prosecutions. The bills are in the respective Agriculture Committees.



Ohio HB 243 would require a child who is adjudicated a delinquent child for committing cruelty to a companion animal to undergo a psychological evaluation and, if recommended, counseling. The bill would also require courts to sentence adult offenders to probation. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



Illinois HB 3768 would make it a Class 4 felony, with subsequent violations classified as Class 3 felonies, to commit aggravated animal cruelty or abuse in the presence of a minor. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



New York A-706 would include animal cruelty in the presence of a child as an element in endangering a child's welfare, and within the definition of a neglected or maltreated child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Illinois HB 3284 would declare any building used in animal fighting a public nuisance and would allow authorities to abate such building and seize any vehicle, vessel or aircraft used in such fights. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



Massachusetts HB 1594 would replace the archaic definition of bestiality as "the abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast," with more contemporary terminology making it illegal to "commit a sexual act upon an animal, use an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permit a sexual act with an animal." The bill will be reviewed by a study committee during the legislative recess.



Michigan HB 5063 and **SB 605** would require prosecutors handling animal abuse offenses to report the individuals to the state police for entry into the department's criminal history database (ICHAT – Internet Criminal History Access Tool). Companion bills **HB 5062** and **SB 603** would waive the normal fees when animal control or animal protection shelters request criminal background checks from the state police's ICHAT files. **HB 5062** was passed by the House on June 12 and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey SB 736 would create a new crime of "leader of a dog fighting network" which would be added to the list of offenses considered "racketeering activities" under New Jersey's anti-racketeering (RICO) law. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New York AB 893 and **AB 1659** would recodify animal cruelty laws and move them from the Agriculture and Markets laws into the Penal Code. The bills are in the Codes Committee.



New York AB 4517 and **SB 2560** and **SB 5112** would classify physical injury or death occurring to animals during the commission of a felony or the immediate flight therefrom as Aggravated Cruelty. **SB 2560** was passed by the Senate and is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee, along with **AB4517**.



Rhode Island HB 7099 would allow judges to impose more severe sentences than those specified in animal cruelty statutes when "substantial and compelling" circumstances exist, including the character and background of the offender and the extreme nature and circumstances of the offense. The bill is being held for further study in the House Judiciary Committee.

Reporting and Cross-Reporting



New York A-3766 would require anyone who enforces animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and any person mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment to file a report of suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Children & Families Committee.



New York A-3283 would require any employee of a veterinary hospital or clinic, boarding kennel, shelter or rescue center, or facility that provides services for animals to report an animal's injury, illness, or condition to the police if animal cruelty or abuse is suspected. Employees who reasonably and in good faith file such reports would be immune from civil or criminal liability. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Hoarding



New York AB 1466 would create a new crime of Companion Animal Hoarding, based upon recognition that living conditions in these homes frequently fall well below accepted standards for animals and human beings, and that such cases are frequently accompanied by self-neglect and neglect of children and the elderly living in the household. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 860 would establish animal hoarding as a third-degree misdemeanor, and require psychological evaluation prior to sentencing. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Man Charged with Beating Girlfriend and Dog after Bad Dream



Carlos Gascon

A man who was arrested for allegedly beating his girlfriend after he had a dream that she had cheated on him was also charged with animal cruelty for reportedly slamming his dog to the ground and putting his foot on the dog's neck. Carlos Gascon, of Monroe County, Fla., was also charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault, domestic battery by strangulation, battery, and false imprisonment. His girlfriend alleged that Gascon choked her, poured hot coffee on her, cut the back of her leg with a knife, threatened to kill her while holding a knife to her throat, and picked her up and slammed her down on a glass table, [NBC News](#) reported.

Mass Murderer Targets Parents, Sons and Family Dog



Nicolas Etienne Holzer

Santa Barbara, Calif. sheriff's officials are investigating a mass murder in Goleta, Calif., on Aug. 11, in which the suspect, Nicolas Etienne Holzer, 45, allegedly told a 911 dispatcher that he had killed his parents, two sons, and family dog. Holzer reportedly told sheriff's detectives that he had killed his family to fulfill his destiny. All the victims had been stabbed repeatedly. Detectives said that Holzer had killed his father first, then both of his children, who investigators believe were sleeping at the time. His mother and the dog, an Australian shepherd, were the last to die. Deputies recovered two large kitchen knives believed to have been used in the killings. Deputies reported having had no official contact with Holzer other than an assault case from 1996 in which he had been a witness, and that Holzer had neither a criminal record nor history of mental illness. [News media reported](#) that Holzer was being held without bail on four counts of murder.

Serial Killer Suspect Booked on Animal Cruelty Charges

A man considered a “person of interest” in a series of possibly five shootings that left three people dead and two others injured in Southern California’s San Fernando Valley was booked into custody on \$1 million bail on charges of allegedly shooting and killing two dogs on the day prior to the incidents. Alexander Hernandez, 34, was taken into custody after a standoff in Sylmar, following



Police cruisers block off a street, scene of one of three fatal shootings in the San Fernando Valley

three attacks that occurred within an hour of each other on Aug. 24. A family of five heading to church shortly before 6 a.m. pulled over in San Fernando because the vehicle behind them was driving erratically, the [Los Angeles Times](#) reported. The SUV pulled up and a shotgun-wielding gunman opened fire. 45 minutes later, police found a man shot to death in Sylmar. 15 minutes later, a woman was shot to death while sitting in her car in Pacoima waiting to take a friend to church. LAPD detectives believe the killings were the culmination of a 14-day stretch in which a serial killer stalked area motorists in their cars. The dog shootings had occurred on Saturday, Aug. 23. Animal cruelty task force detectives investigating the dog shootings alerted homicide investigators when they discovered that witnesses had identified a similar vehicle used in all the cases.

Dog Shot in Domestic Situation

Police in Dayton, Ohio are investigating a case in which a small brown Shih Tzu dog named “Lady” was apparently shot in the leg on Aug. 8 during a domestic violence situation. [WHIO-TV](#) reported that a witness told police that a man shot the dog with a .38-caliber handgun because he was angry with a woman. The woman told police she had wanted a restraining order against the alleged shooter. The woman’s teenage niece showed officers the injured dog, who was taken to the Montgomery County Animal Resource Center for treatment.



Police Engage in Shootout with Turtle Kidnappers

Two Costa Rican men apparently trying to kidnap an endangered sea turtle and sell it for its meat engaged police in a high-speed pursuit and gun battle. Limón police officer Raúl Rivera had stopped the vehicle at a routine police checkpoint when the car’s occupants began firing shots. After a chase lasting several kilometers, one occupant was taken into custody while the other fled. Inside the trunk, officers found a 2,000-pound leatherback turtle, “alive and flapping its fins as if asking for help,” the [Tico Times](#) reported. The Costa Rican Coast Guard released the turtle back into the ocean.

Alleged Child Pornographer Also Suspected of Animal Cruelty

Chambersburg, Penna. police arrested Larvene Vinson Wilson, 68, on six charges of child pornography after he allegedly posted a suspicious photo to a Facebook page. Police searching his residence reportedly found extensive computer files showing hundreds of clothed young girls in sexually suggestive poses, plus numerous images of nude children and adults in sexual situations. Police also contacted the local humane society when they found numerous unhealthy animals, and one dead animal, in Wilson’s home, the Chambersburg [Public Opinion](#) reported.



Shari Walters

Woman Charged with Poisoning Roommates After They Catch Her Having Sex with Their Dogs

An Albuquerque woman has been arrested for allegedly having sex with her roommate’s two dogs – and then attempting to poison the roommate and her roommate’s brother, who had broken off their dating relationship when he heard about the bestiality incident. [KOAT-TV reported](#) that Beverly Bradley caught her roommate, Shari Walters, 53, nude in a shed having sex with at least one of Bradley’s dogs. Bradley’s brother Jeffrey, who had been dating Walters, broke off the relationship when Walters said she had been having sex with dogs since she was 14, according to court documents.

Apparently seeking revenge, Walters allegedly tried to poison the brother and sister by putting rubbing alcohol and toilet bowl cleaner in their food and water. Walters reportedly said she would stop trying to kill them if Jeffrey would still be with her. After undergoing a psychiatric examination, Walters was booked into the Bernalillo County Jail on \$20,000 bond and charged with cruelty to animals, aggravated battery and assault with intent to commit a violent felony. The Bradleys were receiving medical treatment for the poisoning and the dogs were treated for minor injuries.

Man Charged in Son’s Homicide Had Animal Abuse, Domestic Violence Charges

Before he was charged with second-degree murder in the death of his 9-week-old son, Christopher Berry, of Lowell, Mass., was also charged with animal cruelty for allegedly putting down bird seed in a parking lot to attract pigeons and then running through the flock, killing six of the birds. Berry is also facing charges of assault and battery for allegedly forcing his girlfriend out of a chair and shoving her out the door of their apartment when she was moving out. The [Lowell Sun](#) reported that Berry is also accused of receiving stolen property and of breaking into an auto parts store where he worked and stealing \$1,500 from a safe.

Police Officer Pleads Guilty in Killing of Girlfriend’s Dog



Alec Taylor

A Baltimore, Md. city police officer has pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated animal cruelty for beating a seven-month-old puppy with a mop and choking it to death with his hands – and then texting a photo of the dog’s body and the details of the incident to his girlfriend (*See LINK-Letter, April 2014*). Montgomery County authorities had arrested Alec Taylor, 27, of Silver Spring, a five-year veteran of the Baltimore police force. According to police and [media reports](#), Taylor told his girlfriend that he killed “Rocco,” a Jack Russell terrier the two of them shared, because he was tired of it soiling the carpet. Taylor had been suspended without pay and subsequently resigned from the force. Sentencing is scheduled for Oct. 8.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Sept. 12 – Plainfield, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train employees of the [New Jersey Department of Children and Families](#) on “Species-Spanning Prevention: Animal Abuse as a Risk Factor for Child Maltreatment and Family Violence.”

Sept. 22 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.: The [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) will feature 12 internationally renowned speakers covering such topics as pets and domestic violence, cross-reporting,

elder care and the Link, animal cruelty therapy options, investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty cases, and defining success in Link initiatives.

Sept. 23 – Darwin, Australia: Frank Ascione will give the keynote address on “Animal Abuse and Psychopathology, Conduct Disorder and Antisocial Personality Disorder” at the [Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities](#)’ annual conference.

Sept. 24 – Medina, Ohio: Lesley Ashworth will present on the Link between animal abuse and domestic violence for [Summit/Medina County domestic violence](#) officials.

Sept. 24 – Hillsboro, Ore.: The [Washington County Animal Protection Multidisciplinary Team](#) will present an all-day workshop on Animal Hoarding: Psychology, response, Intervention and Prosecution.

Sept. 24 – Phoenix, Ariz.: Chris Risley-Curtiss will present on “Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence: What’s the Connection?” at the [Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence](#)’s Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Victim Services Conference.

Sept. 27 – New Haven, Conn.: The [Connecticut Bar Association](#) and Yale Law School’s Student Animal Legal Defense Committee will offer a conference on how “ag-gag” laws impact animals, consumers and the environment.

Sept. 30 – Adelaide, Australia: Tania Signal, Nik Taylor, Lydia Tong, and Heather Fraser will present a research panel on “Human-Animal Violence Links, Prevention and Community Engagement” for the [Animals in Society Working Group](#) at Flinders University.

OCT. 1 – 31: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Oct. 1 – Columbus, Ohio: Phil Arkow will speak to two veterinary college classes and the [Albert Schweitzer Fellowship](#) event.

Oct. 4 – (various locations): Domestic violence shelters will celebrate [National SAF-T Day](#) to celebrate programs that shelter animals and families together.

Oct. 6-8 – Phoenix, Ariz.: Diane Balkin, John Thompson, Chris Risley-Curtiss, Barbara Boat, and Allie Phillips will conduct sessions on investigating and prosecuting child abuse/animal abuse cases, the poly-victimization of childhood animal abuse and trauma focused intervention, childhood animal cruelty as a toxic stressor on the developing brain, and the use of therapy animals in child sexual abuse cases, at the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse’s [Strategies for Justice](#) conference.

Oct. 9 – Virginia Beach, Va.: Chris Risley-Curtiss and Chris Brosan will describe the Loudoun County Stop Abuse and Violence Effort at the [Virginia Animal Control Association](#) 2014 Conference.

Oct. 17 – Salt Lake City, Utah: Barbara Boat will present on “Animal Cruelty, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence: A Toxic Triad” at the [Academy on Violence and Abuse conference](#).

Oct. 17-19 – Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol, Sònia Pujol and David Carrasco will participate in a roundtable about The Link and the Freedom Paws Link Project at the [AnimalADDA Fair](#).

Oct. 22 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct two webinars on “The Prevention of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse in Military Families” for the [National Organization for Victim Assistance Academy](#).

Oct. 27-29 – Dillon, Colo.: Justie Coyle and Jim Pyle will present on The Link and how it affects its victims at the [Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance](#) conference.

Oct. 28 – Boston, Mass.: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Animal Rescue League](#)’s Fall educational event.

Oct. 30-31 – San Vicente del Raspeig, Spain: Núria Querol will discuss “Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” at the University of Alicante [Congress on Criminology](#).

Nov. 14 – Ontario, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present on the impact of The Link for prosecutors and law enforcement agencies on behalf of the [San Bernardino County Animal Cruelty Task Force](#).

Nov. 18 – Dover, Del.: Phil Arkow will discuss the role of veterinary personnel regarding animal abuse and interpersonal violence, and Rob Reisman will discuss animal abuse forensics and pathology, at the [Delaware Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Winter CE Conference.

Nov. 20 – Anchorage, Alaska: Allie Phillips will conduct a day-long training on The Link for first responders in conjunction with the [Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference](#).

Nov. 20 – San Antonio, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on Animal Abuse, Hoarding and the Elderly, and Animal-Assisted Interventions with the Elderly, at the 31st Annual [Adult Protective Services Conference](#).

Nov. 20-21 – San Francisco, Calif.: Nuria Querol i Vinas will present on how Spanish law enforcement agencies are incorporating animal abuse in policing, and on cooperative research between health and law enforcement professionals regarding domestic violence and animal abuse, at the [American Society of Criminology](#) conference.

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The news items and training opportunities contained in *The LINK-Letter* are intended to disseminate as widely and as freely as possible information about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Permission is hereby granted to re-post these articles in other newsletters, websites, magazines, and electronic publications provided that appropriate credit is given to the National Link Coalition and with links to www.nationallinkcoalition.org.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

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