



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



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

More Canadian Vets Now Required to Report Suspected Cruelty

Five of Canada's 13 provinces and territories have now enacted legislation requiring veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse, according to a new study just released by the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Veterinarians in British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Ontario are required to report suspected animal cruelty. They join other professionals in those regions who are granted civil and criminal immunity for reporting animals in distress or for assisting in the enforcement of animal protection laws.



[2015 Canadian Animal Protection Laws Rankings](#) cites as areas for improvement adding similar laws in the remaining eight provinces and territories, and enacting laws in all 13 jurisdictions that would mandate reporting of suspected animal abuse by personnel in select non-animal-related agencies.

The report notes that Ontario is the only province offering mental health counseling for animal abuse offenders. Nova Scotia and Manitoba are unique in Canada – and perhaps the world – in having laws that recognize psychological harm to animals, similar to child abuse statutes worldwide that recognize emotional abuse. Limited psychological welfare provisions are in place in British Columbia (sled dogs), Newfoundland & Labrador (dogs), Ontario (captive wildlife), and Quebec (euthanasia of dogs and cats).

The study rates Canada's jurisdictions based on their cumulative scores on 60 questions spanning 11 categories. The analysis, similar to those conducted periodically by ALDF on American states, is limited to existing legislation and does not review the separate issue of how such laws are enforced.

In Canada, the power to enact criminal law rests exclusively with the federal government, although provinces and territories can create quasi-criminal or regulatory offenses. Given that the federal Criminal Code provisions dealing with animal cruelty have changed little since they were enacted in 1892, all provinces and territories have enacted their own animal protection laws, the report notes.

Are Animals Vets' Best Friends in Combating Domestic Violence?



Dr. Lydia Tong

An hour-long podcast on how animal abuse is often a sentinel signal of domestic violence aired on August 2 on Australia's 3CR independent community radio channel. Dr. Lydia Tong, a veterinary pathologist from the University of Sydney, described her research identifying five types of fractures in dogs that are more likely to indicate human-induced physical abuse rather than accidental injuries, and how abused animals relate to family members in households marked by intimate partner violence.

"The challenge for a lot of vets is that you may have a degree of suspicion but it may only be a partial suspicion and we aren't really equipped to make a more definitive diagnosis to be sure that it's abuse," Tong told host Emma Townshend. "It's quite intimidating to take that to the next level without being sure. One of the fundamental problems that we have had is that there has been very little research done by the veterinary profession so far as to how we can diagnose abuse, unlike in human medicine where they've got huge amounts of forensics about abuse in children and adults."

The five-fracture model is never an absolutely perfect tool but every time a veterinarian sees another one of these five elements it should increase the index of suspicion – particularly when compared with what the client said had caused the injury, she noted.

Veterinarians are often the first to see indications of violence within the family. "It's a common misconception that abused animals often don't make it to the vet clinic," she said, citing statistics from several countries about the prevalence of veterinarians seeing abused animals – including animals brought in by the abuser.

Tong is in support of a carefully-considered plan to enact mandatory reporting for Australian veterinarians who encounter suspected animal abuse. Such a mandate would be a way to give them the protection from liability that they currently lack if they do report. "What we need to do is design a reporting system that's appropriate for pet owners and for veterinarians."

Her current study asks domestic violence survivors what kinds of physical or emotional animal abuse is occurring, how family members interact with the veterinary community, and how abuse of their pets causes them to be at increased risk themselves. Many respondents are indicating they have delayed leaving, or have returned to the abuser, in fear for what will happen to their animals. The purpose of the study is to get to a better handle on what the situation is in Australia and use that information to influence policy makers to improve services for both human and animal victims.

Tong is working with two women's refuges to make them the first pet-friendly domestic violence shelters in Australia. She is also working to increase communications between veterinarians, police, animal welfare groups and social services. "I'd like to see all of us speaking to each other. I think that's the way we need to go," she said.

The podcast is available for download on 3CR's [Freedom of Species program website](#).

THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Links to Human Crimes Cited in Support of Ohio Bestiality Bill

Links between bestiality and crimes against humans were cited in an extensive letter of support for Ohio **SB 195**, introduced on July 16. The measure would prohibit a person from engaging in sexual conduct with an animal and selling or buying an animal for sexual purposes, and provide for the seizure and impoundment of animals involved, and authorize psychological counseling or evaluation for convicted offenders.



Jenny Edwards

In a letter to sponsoring Sen. Jim Hughes, Jenny Edwards, of the Chandler Edwards law enforcement research center, cited several specific cases from Ohio that describe bestiality as not just an act of animal cruelty, but rather as an act of sexual assault and exploitation. “In our experience, perpetrators behave more like pedophiles or rapists than animal abusers,” Edwards wrote. “They train their animals, photograph them in sexual situations, collect and share animal pornography, talk about their encounters with other animal sex abusers in private chat rooms, seek out their victims, and trespass or break into properties in order to gain access.”

Noting that these encounters often result in injury or death to the animal, Edwards noted that the problem of animal sex abuse is growing. One Internet site for zoophiles has more than 10,000 followers online at any given moment and 22 pages of posts from individuals in Ohio seeking animals for sex or offering their animals to others, she wrote. There were 13 posts on Craigslist in the past 30 days from the Columbus area seeking animals for sex.

Ohio cases in Edwards’ extensive files include:

- Amanda Cassner, charged in June 2015 with “pandering” for having oral sex with her dog.
- Kevin Ballard, charged with animal cruelty in April 2014 after raping an 8-month-old puppy.
- Robert Walder, charged in March, 2013 with eight counts of rape of a child under 15 for allegedly forcing his daughter to remove her clothes, get down on her knees and submit to Walder’s placing a dog on her back to sodomize her.
- Michael Hilsenbeck, arrested for trespassing, exposing himself and allowing a dog to fellate him.

“Bestiality, particularly when experienced as a child, has been shown to be the single largest risk factor and strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse,” she wrote. She cited statistics indicating that in 400 arrests where an animal was involved in a sexual contact, 35% also involved child sexual assault, abuser or exploitation. In 37.3% of arrests, offenders had prior histories of bestiality, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, rape, substance abuse, public indecency, and homicide.

“This is a crime that has far-reaching implications.”

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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.

Two Criminal Justice Agencies Launch Anti-Cruelty Initiatives

Fresno County, Calif. Prosecutor's Office

Fresno County, Calif. District Attorney Lisa A. Smittcamp is the latest among a growing number of prosecutors to form a specialized Animal Cruelty Unit within her office dedicated to addressing animal abuse and its adverse effects on people.

Recognizing that animal cruelty can be a precursor to violent crimes against people, the D.A.'s office [announced the new unit on July 17](#) and hopes to stem the tide of violence. "One of the goals of the Animal Cruelty Unit is to break this connection between animal abuse and human violence," Smittcamp said in a news release.



D.A. Lisa A. Smittcamp

"Cock fighting and dog fighting also plague our community. These activities often involve guns, drugs, gangs, prostitution, and other violence. Children are routinely taken to these events, indoctrinating yet another generation of animal abusers," she added.

The unit will be staffed by several dedicated prosecutors working alongside local law enforcement, including Central California SPCA humane officers who investigate some 1,200 animal cruelty reports each year.

"Animal abuse appears to be a growing problem throughout the Central Valley and in Fresno County, everything from dogs and cats and horses being malnourished and tortured to cockfighting and dogfighting," said [abc30](#) news reporter Gene Haagenson. "That's why this special Animal Cruelty Unit is so important. They also feel that cracking down on those who are cruel to animals is important because they're often abusive to their own family members as well."

The announcement comes less than three months after the National Link Coalition led an extensive training program in Fresno County.

Richland County, S. C. Sheriff's Department

Meanwhile, the Richland County Sheriff's Department in the South Carolina state capital, just one week after its officers helped bust a dogfighting ring where nearly two dozen dogs were rescued, has also announced the formation of a multidisciplinary animal cruelty task force. [WACH-TV](#) reported that the new unit will include the solicitor's office, animal control and other entities. Special Victims Investigator Joseph Clarke was one of several individuals who noted that more often than not the people abusing animals are involved in other criminal activity. "If they can do that to an innocent animal, they can do that to an innocent person," said veterinary technician Nikki Gernux.



Richland Co. Sheriff
Leon Lott

Animal Abuse: A Link into the Mind of Teen Killers



Phil Chalmers

What goes on inside the minds of teenagers who kill? That's a question that was addressed extensively at the National Sheriffs Association conference by Phil Chalmers, a TV celebrity who has interviewed over 200 adult and teen serial killers and mass murderers since 1985.

Chalmers reminded the sheriffs that these killers' upbringing is unlike their own personal experiences. "Don't think about your own childhood," he said. "These kids are different. These kids are getting younger, more violent and committing adult crimes. And many of them look harmless."

Citing the Macdonald Triad of childhood antisocial behaviors – a 1960s-era theory that histories of firesetting, bedwetting and animal cruelty were predictive of later violent tendencies – Chalmers added a fourth component: being a Peeping Tom. "But animal cruelty is the worst," he said. "If your shed's burned down, he's wetting the bed and your cat's missing, look out." And if several warning signs are combined – such as

setting fire to animals – the impact is magnified.

(Researchers today note that the Macdonald Triad has not been successfully validated and that aggressive childhood behaviors are more likely linked to parental neglect, brutality or abuse.)

Chalmers described evolving trends in teen killings, which today average five each day and one school shooting every three weeks. While it is not clear that violent first-person video games trigger mass shootings, Chalmers claimed they spawned a new generation of teen killers who enjoy mayhem. He sees a current trend in teens who slaughter members of their own families. He predicts the 2020s will see a dramatic increase of female teen killers and teens killing law enforcement officers.

"There is no single cause of teen murder – juvenile homicide is a multiple cause crime," he said, noting that it can't all be blamed on drugs or video games. Usually, three to six causes stack up and send a teen over the edge. These include:

- Mental injury and brain injury
- Lack of spiritual guidance and discipline
- Criminal lifestyle and poverty
- A youth who is easily peer pressured
- Easy access to or fascination with deadly weapons
- Participation in cults, gangs and hate groups
- Being high on alcohol or prescribed or illegal drugs, or killing for drug money
- Anger and depression issues causing the teen to want to die
- Obsession with violent entertainment
- Coming from an unstable home or being bullied at school

Chalmers said that these youths don't just snap – they plan their attacks for several months and learn through the Internet details of other cases. Unlike adults, teen killers need a trigger. The #1 trigger for a boy is when his girlfriend dumps him. For girls it's when her parents say she can't date someone. Chalmers identified six types of teen killers:

- **Family killers** –seek retribution against their family.
- **School killers** – most come to school expecting to die. These include suicidal students who have been bullied, or who want to get even with society and make a name for themselves, or terrorists. Most are obsessed with deadly weapons.
- **Gang or cult killers** – like the gunfights and close-up violence. Some go into military service to get advanced weapons training.
- **Crime killers** – commit robberies and burglaries, and kill when the crime is botched.
- **Baby killers** – teen parents who kill their infants.
- **Thrill killers** – want the excitement.

These teens, who Chalmers label as “Generation Death,” often go into a homicidal trance—they almost don't know where they're at but they expect that everyone, including themselves, is going to die.

The #1 cause of school shootings is bullying. “We know one thing,” he concluded. “If we can stop bullying we can stop school shootings.”

Law Enforcement Link Training Advances in Spain



Dr. Núria Querol (right), head of Spain’s **GEVHA** Coalition, conducts a lecture on animal abuse and interpersonal violence at Spain’s Police Academy of Catalonia. The workshop was one of three presentations in a four-hour program in June that educated 200 candidates from various local law enforcement agencies. Other presenters were Alberto Ayala and David Carrasco discussing police tactics to avoid the use of lethal force when interacting with dogs; and Sònja Pujol training on best practices for police in investigating cases of animal abuse.

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK





The Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

Offenders of domestic violence often have a pattern of abusing all members of the household - including children and pets. It is estimated that as many as 65 percent of domestic violence victims stay in abusive homes or **delay leaving out of concern for the safety of their pets**. Few family violence shelters have the ability to house pets and many victims must choose between leaving their pets behind and staying with their abuser.

San Diego Humane Society is teaming up with **RedRover**, a national nonprofit organization, to host a conference about the link between animal abuse and domestic violence and **how we, as a community, can help these victims**.

Anyone who works directly with domestic violence victims and interested in attending, please contact **Captain Mel Jones** at mjones@sdhumane.org.



San Diego Humane Society

WHEN
July 17
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

WHERE
San Diego Humane Society
5500 Gaines Street
San Diego, CA 92110

Capt. Melyssa Jones from the **San Diego Humane Society** (left) and Esperanza Zúñiga of **RedRover** chat at the July 17 conference on the Link between animal abuse and domestic violence. The conference addressed how the southern California community can help all survivors of domestic violence.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Federal Agencies Are Taking Note of The Link



The Family and Youth Services Bureau – the federal government’s National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth that works to end youth homelessness, teen pregnancy and family violence – has begun to recognize the animal-related issues inherent in families undergoing crises. A series of recent online postings is drawing attention to these issues.

A [July 1, 2015 post](#), “Help Get People in Abusive Homes and their Pets to Safety,” describes new program strategies. “Pets can bring great comfort to those who experience domestic violence, but fear for their safety can get in the way of victims’ decision to flee an abusive home,” the Bureau wrote. The post guides viewers to a directory of state Pet Protection Order laws, state domestic violence coalitions with information about local partnerships between family violence and animal welfare advocates, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline that can connect callers with listings of pet safe havens.

On [March 17, 2015](#), a post focused on Ohio’s new law protecting pets of domestic violence survivors. Nancy Neylon, Executive Director of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, advised service providers, “Ask the questions. When talking to survivors, ask about companion animals and whether they have any concerns. Whether the animals would be coming to shelter or just being able to help them – make them aware they can do so with a civil protection order. One question to automatically ask survivors is whether they have any needs or fears around companion animals. Depending on how they answer, go from there. If yes, add this to the protection order. If they are coming into shelter, help them find a safe place for the animal while they are in the shelter.”

A [Dec. 13, 2013 post](#) described a “bright idea” – pet-friendly domestic violence shelters that let survivors keep their four-legged friends. The post interviewed Darryl Evey, Executive Director of the Family Assistance Program in Victorville, Calif., and offered resources for shelters seeking how-to-do-it manuals and funding opportunities. “Domestic violence is about control and abuse,” said Evey. “What better way to control and abuse a woman than to abuse the pet she loves. Abusers will use the pets as leverage against women. It’s important to take that leverage away.”

In a [June 12, 2015 blog](#) for the Administration for Children and Families’ Family Room, Marylouise Kelley of the Bureau’s Family Violence Prevention and Services Program wrote about steps being taken to protect victims’ pets. Programs such as RedRover, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T), and the Safe Havens Mapping Project were referenced.



Gov. Kate Brown

Coercive Animal Threats Declared Felony in Oregon

Citing evidence, examples and statistics on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence, Oregon legislators overwhelmingly passed **HB 3468** which was signed into law on July 21 by Gov. Kate Brown. The new measure, which takes effect next Jan. 1, will make it a Felony C crime of coercion to compel or induce another person to engage in certain conduct by instilling in that person the fear of physical injury being done to an animal.

The House Judiciary Committee considering the measure discussed the impact of violence and threats of violence against animals as leverage used by domestic violence abusers, the need to provide safety and protection for domestic violence victims, and the need to hold abusers accountable for their actions.



Sharon Harmon

Sharon Harmon, Executive Director of the Oregon Humane Society, was one of several witnesses testifying in support of the measure. “Some abusers may harm animals or force other family members to harm animals in an effort to perpetuate a sense that violence in the household is normal,” she said.

“Multiple studies show a direct link between violence against animals and violence against humans, especially within the context of domestic violence where abusers use animals – specifically the threat of harming an animal – as a means of achieving submission,” said a staff briefing report on the measure.

Nine Domestic Violence Shelters Receive Pet-Friendly Grants

Nine more domestic violence shelters have been named recipients of grants from RedRover’s Safe Housing program to enable them to become pet-friendly and accept animals belonging to their human family members fleeing abusive situations. A total of \$38,244 in grants, ranging up to \$6,000, was awarded, President and CEO Nicole Forsyth announced on July 1.



“When a victim of domestic violence believes that there is nowhere safe for them to escape to with their pets, they may stay in the abusive relationship out of fear for their pets’ safety,” said Forsyth. “Their pets are often also victims of abuse, suffering from injuries and neglect. [RedRover’s Safe Housing grants](#) make it possible for victims to receive lifesaving sheltering services, reassured that their pets are protected.”

Recipients of funding in this grant cycle were:

- South Peninsula Haven House – Homer, Alaska
- Interface Children & Family Services – Camarillo, Cal.
- Haven Hills – Canoga Park, Calif.
- Arising Hope International – Eastlake, Colo.
- Urban Resource Institute – New York, N.Y.
- The Domestic Violence Shelter – Mansfield, Ohio
- CCW-IVAS Place – Lenoir City, Tenn.
- The ARK Domestic Violence Shelter – Brownwood, Texas
- DAWN- Domestic Abuse Women's Network – Tukwila, Wash.

[Applications for the next round of grants](#) are due October 15. RedRover is especially interested in establishing at least one pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in every state, and shelters in the 13 remaining states will be particularly encouraged to apply.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... JUVENILES

New Connecticut Law to Mobilize Animal-Assisted Therapy to Help Children Living with Trauma and Loss



Gov. Dannel Malloy

A new law signed by Gov. Dannel Malloy on July 6 will cause the Connecticut Department of Children & Families to develop training for DCF employees and mental health care providers by Jan. 1, 2016 on the healing value of the human-animal bond for children and the benefits of animal-assisted therapy in dealing with traumatic situations. **HB 6725**, introduced in March with 17 co-sponsors, will develop protocols and mobilize volunteer canine crisis response teams to aid children and youth living with trauma and loss, such as were employed following the mass shootings at Newtown's Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

Rehabilitative Program Pairs Abused Children with Homeless Dogs

Among the many programs that have emerged in recent years offering at-risk youth and juvenile offenders opportunities to train and rehabilitate unwanted shelter animals, we'd like to share with you one that has come to the attention of *The LINK-Letter* recently.



In Scotland, the [Fostering Compassion](#) project was developed under the umbrella of the Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears in 2013, initially helping ten vulnerable and at risk children in the East Lothian community east of Edinburgh. Last year this increased to 50 children in three different regions of Scotland and in 2015 this is set to increase to 100 children in five regions. All children referred to the project have been subjected to or witnessed abuse, neglect and violence or have suffered as a result of parental substance misuse and are struggling to show compassion and empathy, Lesley Winton tells *The LINK-Letter*.

“Through Fostering Compassion we run animal- and nature-themed workshops and activities which help the children to see animals as sentient beings and help them gain a greater understanding of their own circumstances through the rescued animals’ stories, in turn building the children’s feelings of self worth and self esteem,” she says.

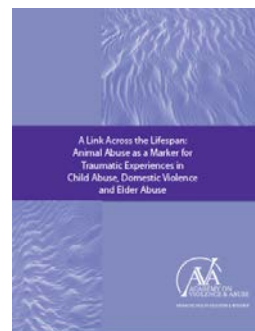
“Through the project we hope to play a part in reversing the negative cycle of abuse that can so often develop in these situations, turning potentially worrying behavior into nurturing, caring and compassionate behavior. The activities help the children find new and healthier ways to deal with difficult emotions, memories and feelings without even realizing they are doing so.”

James Cox, Kinship Assessment Co-ordinator from Edinburgh District Council, said, “The children enjoyed watching and hearing how these animals who had been neglected and mistreated are now happy and healthy. The animals offer a connection that cannot be made by words.”

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Academy on Violence and Abuse Addresses The Link

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow was invited to write a monograph on The Link for the Academy on Violence and Abuse, a nonprofit academic organization that educates and trains health professionals about the often unrecognizable health effects of violence and abuse. *A Link Across the Lifespan* is a 16-page report describing animal abuse as a public health issue and an adverse childhood experience. The monograph summarizes recent research into how animal abuse is often a marker for traumatic experiences in child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse, and new legislation, programs and professional responses incorporating these concepts. National Link Coalition Steering Committee member Barbara Boat also serves on the AVA Board of Directors. The monograph is available as a free download on the [AVA website](#).



-- Arkow, P. (2015). *A Link Across the Lifespan: Animal Abuse as a Marker for Traumatic Experiences in Child Abuse, Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse*. Shakopee, MN: Academy on Violence and Abuse.

Pet-Friendly Shelters for Homeless and Domestic Violence Survivors Explored

The increasing opportunities for homeless families and survivors of domestic violence to keep the family together in pet-friendly shelters is the focus of an 8-page article in *Uncensored*, the quarterly journal of the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. The article describes pet-friendly shelters and pet support programs for the homeless and domestic violence survivors in Arizona, Nevada, California, Michigan, and New York.





-- Linek, K. (2015). *A safe place for pets and people: Keeping the Whole Family Together*. *Uncensored*, 6(2), 10-17.


THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching:

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child

 **Massachusetts H3446** would criminalize animal abuse in the presence of a child under age 14 and would increase penalties for such cruelty to up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **New York A534** defines "aggravated" animal cruelty as causing extreme physical pain or done in an especially depraved or sadistic manner, a Class E felony. It would make the commission of aggravated cruelty in the presence of a child a Class D felony. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

 **New York A944** and **S1795** would criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. The bills are in the Codes Committee.

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and 91 bipartisan co-sponsors (21 Republicans, 70 Democrats). The bill 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.



Alaska HB 147 would allow victims to petition the court for a protective order that the abuser may not remove, harm or dispose of any animals in the household, and to grant her exclusive care and custody of them. Peace officers investigating domestic violence cases must inform victims of this provision. The bill would also declare pets to be marital property and give courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. The bill was held over in the House Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned and will be revisited in January 2016.



California AB 494 would amend Sec. 527.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure and Secs. 213.5 and 15657.03 of the Welfare and Institutions Code to allow courts to issue restraining orders of protective orders to enjoin a person from harming, threatening or disposing of an animal and to grant a petitioner’s request for the exclusive care, possession or control of an animal. Similar provisions currently exist in Sec. 6320 of the California Family Code. The measure has cleared the House and is currently in the Senate.



Michigan SB 28 would make it a crime to knowingly kill, torture, mutilate, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal, or threaten to do so, with the intent of causing mental suffering or distress to a person or to exert control over a person. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole.



Michigan HB 4478 would allow courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders preventing respondents from injuring, torturing, neglecting, threatening, or removing the petitioner’s animals. It would apply to current or former spouses, individuals with whom the petitioner has a child in common or where has been a dating relationship, or an individual presently or formerly residing in the same household. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Criminal Justice.



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.



New Mexico S 178 was approved. It will appropriate \$50,000 per year over six years to provide temporary safe havens for the animals of domestic violence survivors.



Oregon HB 3468 was signed into law on July 21 and will take effect next Jan. 1. The new law makes it a Felony C crime of coercion to compel or induce another person to engage in certain conduct by instilling in that person the fear of physical injury being done to an animal.



Pennsylvania SB 594 would increase penalties for killing, torturing, maiming or poisoning an

animal belonging to someone who is protected by a protection-from-abuse order to a \$2,000 - \$15,000 fine and/or two years' imprisonment. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Wisconsin companion bills AB 141 and SB 97 would add household pets under the provisions of temporary restraining orders or longer-lasting injunctions that can be issued by courts to protect victims of abuse, harassment or threats. The bills would also allow the petitioner or a designee to retrieve household pets.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



Connecticut HB6725 will cause the Dept. of Children & Families to develop and implement training for employees and mental health care providers on animal-assisted therapy and develop a protocol to use such programs to aid children and youth living with trauma and loss. **The bill passed the House and Senate and was signed by Gov. Dannel Malloy on July 6.**



New Jersey A2155 would establish a three-year pilot program 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.

“CASA for Animals”



Connecticut HB 6187 would establish a process for appointing an advocate to investigate and advocate for the welfare or custody of animals that are subjects of civil or criminal court proceedings. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and had a public hearing on April 1.



New York AB 3443 would authorize a guardian ad litem to be appointed by a court in tort causes of action for wrongful injury or death of a companion animal. It would also allow restraining orders and other injunctive relief for the wrongful injury or killing of a companion animal. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



Rhode Island H 5414 would require a court of competent jurisdiction to order the appointment of an animal advocate where the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders



New York A1445 and S1174 would increase penalties for animal fighting and aggravated cruelty to animals and would require a psychiatric evaluation for defendants convicted of aggravated cruelty. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.



New York A1673 and S814 would require unsealing of court records that juvenile offenders convicted of animal cruelty offenses and require them to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Michigan HB 4353 would allow animal shelters to consider an individual's criminal history when determining whether or not to allow that individual to adopt an animal. Convicted animal abusers could not adopt for at least 5 years following conviction. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee. **Senate Bill 219** would prohibit offenders convicted of animal fighting or bestiality from owning animals other than livestock for 5 years. The bill was referred to the Committee of the Whole.



After languishing for over a year, **New Jersey SB 736 was signed into law** on Aug. 10 by Gov. Chris Christie. The measure creates a new crime of "leader of a dog fighting network" which will be added to the offenses considered "racketeering activities" under New Jersey's anti-racketeering (RICO) law. A series of high-profile dogfighting raids brought the issue's urgency to lawmakers.



New York A346 would create a statewide task force to study how to improve investigations of animal abuse and enforcement of anti-cruelty laws. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



New York A1596 and S2936 would expand aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.



The **Oregon** Veterinary Medical Examination Board's proposed Rule No. [875-030-1101](#) would screen applicants and licensees to determine if they have a history of criminal behavior that would preclude their fitness to practice as a veterinarian or certified veterinary technician.

Cross-Reporting



Massachusetts S863 and H132 would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. **H132** was referred to the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and **S863** is in the Judiciary Committee.



New York A5082 would require anyone mandated to report suspected child abuse who also encounters suspected animal abuse in the course of their duties to make an immediate report to local police or SPCA agencies. Failure to report would be a Class A misdemeanor and civilly liable. An extensive list of medical, social work, therapy, education, camp, day care, counseling and law enforcement professionals are mandated reporters of child abuse. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.



Oregon HB 2694 was signed into law on May 28. It allows Department of Human Services regulated social workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect, with immunity for good-faith reporting. The bill is in the Human Services & Housing Committee.



Rhode Island HR 5194 would initiate a mandatory child abuse/domestic violence and animal abuse cross-reporting system. The bill has been held for further study in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Hoarding



New York A1265 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Animal Sexual Assault



Ohio SB 195 was introduced on July 16. It would prohibit a person from engaging in sexual conduct with an animal and related acts, provide for the seizure and impoundment of animals, and authorize psychological counseling or evaluation for convicted offenders.



Oregon HB 2693 was signed into law on June 10. It creates a new misdemeanor crime of encouraging sexual assault of an animal, defined as possessing or controlling a visual recording of a person engaged in sexual conduct with an animal. The crime is punishable by one year's imprisonment and/or \$6,250 in fines. The new law also increases the penalties for sexual assault of an animal, up to five years' imprisonment and/or \$125,000 fine.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Louisiana Theater Gunman Ranted about Trying to Beat a Cat to Death



John Russell Houser

Five days before he opened fired in a Lafayette, La. movie theater, killing two and wounding nine, John Houser shocked two women in a bistro by recounting a time when he tried and failed to beat a cat to death with a steel rod. The women, who sat stunned and silent, listened as he stroked their dogs and rambled on for about 30 minutes about how people spend too much money on their pets and that there ought to be cheaper ways to euthanize an animal. The [Associated Press](#) reported Houser told them he had once taken in a stray cat that had gotten sick so he bashed its head in with the rod but failed to kill it. "He was hurt that the cat lived. It was this twisted sense that he was doing the right thing," recalled Bonnie Barbier of the conversation. The outburst was described as one of an extensive series of rants in a decades-long collision with disaster, a volatile mental state and a long history of seeking vengeance.

Game-Hunting Dentist Said to Have History of Sexual Harassment



Dr. Walter Palmer

Dr. Walter Palmer, the Minnesota dentist alleged to have shot a beloved Zimbabwe lion with a crossbow in a trophy hunt, was reported to have settled a \$127,500 sexual harassment suit in 2009 filed by his dental assistant, who was also his patient. The woman, 55, claimed Palmer in 2005 had subjected her to "verbal comments and physical conduct involving her breasts, buttocks and genitalia," according to court documents published in the [New York Daily News](#).

Palmer has been under fire since it was alleged that he shot "Cecil," a Zimbabwean tourist attraction, during a \$50,000 guided excursion. Cecil, who was found skinned and decapitated, had been lured off a protected game reserve onto private property. The settlement with the Minnesota Board of Dentistry, in which Palmer did not admit any wrongdoing, also required Palmer and all of his employees to undergo three hours of sexual harassment training. The agreement also revealed that Palmer had pled guilty on April 22, 2008 in U.S. District Court to a federal charge of making false statements relating to a bear-hunting incident and was sentenced to one year's probation and fined \$2,938.



Cecil the lion

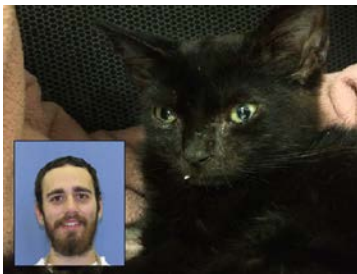


Suspect in Shootings Linked to Animal Cruelty Video

A Wichita, Kansas man who was reportedly upset at his girlfriend's behavior was jailed on suspicion of first-degree murder, aggravated assault, battery, robbery, kidnapping, and possible animal abuse after videos surfaced of her 16-week-old kitten being thrown against the wall of a house. Wichita police arrested Damion Looney, 28 and said he attacked the kitten while waiting for his girlfriend to return home from a nightclub, where he had earlier pepper-sprayed her and both had been escorted from the club. When she returned home with a male friend who was trying to protect her, Looney allegedly shot the man in the face and pistol-whipped another friend who came to assist. Police said Looney took a Snapchat video of her kitten being thrown twice against a wall, which quickly went viral. The cat was taken to an animal hospital but had to be euthanized due to its injuries. "There was some vindictiveness there," Police Lt. Jeff Gilmore told [The Wichita Eagle](#). "He was doing this and putting it out there to harm her."

Damion Looney

Prison Time Sought for Drug Addict Charged with Cruelty to Cat



James Myers and "Mephisto"

Prosecutors in Chester County, Penna. hope to seek jail time for James P. Myers, 25, who pled guilty to drug charges and cruelty to animals for choking a kitten with a rope, kicking it and injecting it with heroin. Myers' attorney said his client was high on heroin when he tried to rescue the stray cat and tied a rope around its neck as a leash but then hallucinated and thought the cat was attacking him. [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) reported that the cat, named "Mephisto," now has a permanent home and has recovered and that Myers, a drug addict, is trying to do the same.

UPDATE

Landscaper Who Mowed Over 9 Ducklings and Choked Girlfriend Gets a Year in Jail

The Palm Beach County, Fla. landscaper arrested last May for beating his girlfriend and laughing after he deliberately ran over nine ducklings with his power mower (See [LINK-Letter June 2015](#)) pled guilty to nine counts of animal cruelty and domestic battery and was given a sentence of three years probation, with the first year to be spent in jail. Once freed, he will be prohibited from owning any animals, the [Sun-Sentinel](#) reported. Jason Scott Falbo II, 24, of Royal Palm Beach, pled guilty in Palm Beach County Court on July 23 before Circuit Court Judge Glenn Kelley. "They were in my path so I just kept mowing," Falbo told an investigating animal control officer who found scattered pieces of the ducklings all over the grass. The homeowners, who regularly fed the ducks, said Falbo had taken out several ducks on one pass, then smiled and laughed as he mowed over more of them. The mother and four ducklings were able to escape to an adjacent lake, where two more ducklings subsequently drowned. Falbo will also have to perform 10 hours of community service, pay \$669 in fines and court costs, and submit to a mental health exam. The plea bargain also included a requirement to have no contact with his girlfriend whom he repeatedly choked in an unrelated incident last March.



Jason Scott Falbo II

90 Living and Dead Animals Seized in Child Abuse Case



Authorities in Laurens County, S. C., are investigating an alleged case of animal hoarding and child abuse after sheriff's deputies found a badly beaten two-year-old boy and two other toddlers living in a deplorable home with about 90 animals, 75 of which were dead.

The child's mother, Savannah Morgan, 25, of Gray Court, was charged on July 29 with four counts of child abuse and neglect and cruelty to animals. Charges may also be filed against the father, [WYFF-TV](#) reported.

Savannah Morgan

Morgan, who is 36 weeks pregnant, was said to have called 911 when she found the boy was not breathing. Sheriff's deputies found the child bruised, unresponsive and in cardiac arrest and had him airlifted in critical condition to a hospital in Greenville. Two other children, aged 1 and 2, were removed due to suspected physical abuse and placed into protective custody with DSS, the [Greenville News](#) reported.

Animal control officers seized nearly 90 animals – 75 of which were dead – from the home, which authorities said was unlivable with soiled diapers, feces, trash and broken glass on the floors. The menagerie included dogs, 10 pythons, two bearded dragons, 11 gerbils, six tarantulas, and 48 rats.

Citing Drugs, Weapons, and Witness Intimidation, Judge Revokes Bail in Animal Abuse Case

Citing threats to witnesses and accusations of involvement with drugs and weapons, a judge in Charleston, S.C. has revoked bail for William Leonard Dodson, 41, charged with felony animal cruelty for allegedly taping the muzzle of a pit bull named "Caitlyn" nine times because the dog barked too much. Prosecutors said the key witnesses who identified Dodson were so fearful from threats that they were receiving that they left the state until the case was settled, the [Post and Courier](#) reported.



"Caitlyn" (left) and William Leonard Dodson

Dodson has been in jail since his arrest on June 1 on the cruelty charge. At the time of his arrest he had been freed on \$110,000 bail on drug and weapons charges stemming from an arrest in March. Dodson is a felon with a short arrest record in South Carolina but a lengthy rap sheet in his home state of Georgia with convictions for drug violations, burglary, pointing a gun, carrying a concealed weapon, and being a felon in possession of a gun. At the time of his arrest he was on parole from Georgia, where he had recently visited in order to buy drugs, prosecutors said. Georgia is currently trying to revoke his parole.

Dodson reportedly bought Caitlyn, a pit bull mix, in May for \$20 from North Charleston residents who claim they have been targets of threats from Dodson's wife and associates. After the dog broke free of its chain, officers found her with electrical tape clamped so tightly around her muzzle that her tongue had turned black. She underwent several surgeries and lost part of her tongue and upper lip, but Charleston Animal Society officials say she continues to thrive with a new foster family. Her case drew worldwide attention.

Suspect Sought for Sexual Assault and Dog Theft

Law enforcement officials in Sarpy County, Neb., were on the lookout for an alleged sexual predator suspected of sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend and stealing her dog. [KMTV](#) in Omaha reported that Nicholas Moss, 35, was wanted for felony sexual assault, false imprisonment and violating a protection order. Court documents say that the woman filed a protection order against him on April 30: on May 14 she found her home had been broken into and her dog was gone. Moss allegedly called her and told her they needed to meet up or he would kill her dog. When they later met, he reportedly took her cell phone and sexually assaulted her before she finally made her escape. Moss previously served prison time in Nevada.

Two Link Cases in Conyers, Ga.

Dog Hanged in Violent Domestic Dispute

An estranged couple was arrested in Conyers, Ga., after a violent fight that resulted in the hanging death of a family dog. According to the [Rockdale Citizen](#), Sarah Alicia Rolley, 24, had asked her husband to come by so they could work out their differences. An argument reportedly ensued, and she allegedly threw his laptop off the second floor balcony. Police said he struck her with his fist and tried to choke her. She freed herself, called 911 and pushed him out the door. Andrew then reportedly kicked and beat on the back door until one of their children opened the door. He allegedly struck Sarah again until she was able to run to a neighbor's house. Police responding to the call found the pit bull puppy hanging by her leash over the balcony. Sarah was charged with criminal damage to property and aggravated stalking for violating a protective order. Andrew was charged with cruelty to children, cruelty to animals, aggravated assault and stalking, and obstructing a person making an emergency call.

Teen Accused of Attacking Dogs After Fight with His Mother

In a second, unrelated case in Conyers, Ga., police say a teenager shot and killed a family dog after an argument with his mother. Police told [11 Alive TV](#) that the incident escalated to the point where the boy, 16, threw the mother dog down a flight of stairs and threatened to shoot and kill the puppies. Officers found two puppies bleeding, one of which later died. Police also reportedly found two handguns, one of which had been stolen, in the youth's bedroom. Authorities were determining whether to charge him as a juvenile or adult with animal cruelty, making terroristic threats and obstructing an officer.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Aug. 13 – Newport, R.I.: [Allie Phillips](#) will train at the U.S. Navy Prosecuting Special Victim Cases School.

Aug. 18 – Addison, Texas: Phil Arkow and Esperanza Zúñiga will present on “The Link Across the Lifespan” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [41st NOVA Conference](#).

Aug. 20 – (Online): Belinda Lewis and Matt Lewis will discuss “Animal Cruelty Crime Scene Forensic Photography” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Aug. 25 – Nashville, Tenn.: Paul Needham will present on “The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence” at the [American Association of Service Coordinators](#) conference.

Sept. 14 – Albuquerque, N. M.: “Positive Links” -- the New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence – will hold an [all-day conference](#) featuring many Link authorities, including Phil Arkow, Patricia Norris, Chris Risley-Curtiss, Jared Rounsville, Pam Wiseman, and Esperanza Zúñiga.

Sept. 19 – Irving, Texas: Phil Arkow will speak on “Breaking the Chain of Violence” at the [Texas Humane Legislation Network](#)’s Animal Advocacy Conference.

Sept. 22 – Fort Wayne, Ind.: Phil Arkow will conduct a Link training on behalf of [Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control](#).

Sept. 22-25 – Malgrat de Mar, Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol, Sònia Pujol and Judge Eva Diaz will present on The Link at the [II Conference on Police Intervention with Canines](#).

Sept. 24 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Maya Gupta will speak on “Examining the Cruelty Link between Humans and Animals and Finding Solutions for Effective Intervention” at the HAV (Human-Animal Vulnerability) Coalition of Kitchener-Waterloo Region’s 2nd [Link Conference](#).

Sept. 26 – Blacksburg, Va.: Phil Arkow will discuss animal abuse as the “dark side” of the human-animal bond at the [CENTAUR](#) Human-Animal Bond Symposium.

Sept. 30 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a [webinar](#) on “The Dark Side of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse as an Indicator and Predictor of Abuse of Vulnerable Populations” for the Humane Society of the U.S.

Oct. 1 – Baltimore, Md.: Randy Lockwood and Sharon Miller will present on building community task force responses to animal cruelty at the [National Animal Care & Control Association](#) conference.

Oct. 2 – Hammonton, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

Oct. 8 – Hamden, Conn.: Phil Arkow will participate in a panel discussion for the [Connecticut Bar Association’s Animal Law Section](#).

Oct. 15 – Charlottesville, Va.: Randy Lockwood and Sharon Miller will present on building community responses to animal cruelty at the [Virginia Animal Control Association](#) annual conference.

Oct. 16-18 – Los Alcazares, Murcia, Spain: Núria Querol will present a workshop on The Link at the PAES (Protección Animales España) [National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Oct. 22 – (Online): Laura Dunn from the Animal Legal Defense Fund will discuss using pre-conviction forfeiture to save seized animals from re-victimization in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Oct. 30 – Phoenix, Ariz.: [Allie Phillips](#) will give a presentation on Therapy Animals Supporting Kids in courtrooms and children’s advocacy centers to a meeting of Arizona Superior Court Judges

Nov. 4-5 – Knoxville, Tenn.: A post-conference workshop on The Link between Human and Animal Violence will be held following the [Veterinary Social Work/Veterinary Health and Wellness Summits](#) at the University of Tennessee. Speakers will include Maya Gupta discussing “Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adults Who Have Engaged In or Witnessed Animal Abuse” and Jenny Edwards speaking on “Bestiality: The Best Kept Secret in America.”

Nov. 4-6 – Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Animal Legal Defense Fund will present the [5th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#) to bring multidisciplinary professionals together to enhance their efforts in combating animal cruelty and related violent crimes.

Nov. 4-6 – Barcelona, Spain: The First International Congress of Profiling and Criminal Behavior Analysis in Violent Crimes will be held at the University of Barcelona. Núria Querol will present a plenary session on “CSI Techniques in Crimes against Animals.” A [Call for Papers](#) is posted online.

Nov. 6 – Phoenix, Md.: The Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office Animal Abuse Unit will hold an [Animal Abuse Leadership Summit](#).

Nov. 23-24 – Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol and Sònia Pujol will present a workshop on “The Link and Policing” at the ii Interuniversity Seminar of Criminology, organized by the [Spanish Society of Criminology](#).

Dec. 1 – Port St. Lucie, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the Violence Connection conference sponsored by the Pegasus Foundation and the [Spay/Neuter Alliance of the Treasure Coast](#).

Dec. 4 – San Bernardino, Calif.: Phil Arkow will speak to the [San Bernardino Animal Cruelty Task Force](#).

May 9, 2016 – Manahawkin, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

July 11-13, 2016 – Paris, France: Phil Arkow will participate in a global exchange examining research and practice aspects of animal abuse and domestic violence at the [International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations’](#) Triennial conference.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and tell us what organization(s) you’re with and where you’re located.



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.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
Stratford, N.J.

Lesley Ashworth

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund
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Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
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