



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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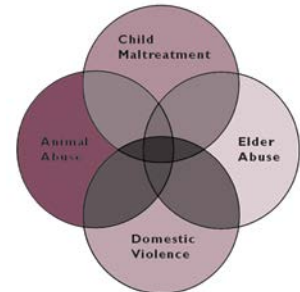
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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THE LINK AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Texas Church Shooter Had History of Animal, Child and Domestic Abuse

Devin Patrick Kelley, identified by law enforcement officials as the man who opened fire in a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas in a deadly rampage that killed 26 people, had a violent history that included charges of domestic violence and child abuse that got him drummed out of the Air Force and a later charge of animal cruelty.



Devin Patrick Kelley

The [Denver Post](#) reported that Kelley, 26, was cited on Aug. 1, 2014 by El Paso County, Colo. sheriffs for misdemeanor animal cruelty after witnesses said they saw him beat a dog with his fists in a Colorado Springs trailer park. Kelley got a deferred probationary sentence and ordered to pay \$368 in restitution and \$78 to a victim's assistance fund. The cruelty to animals charge was dismissed on March 31, 2016, after Kelley successfully completed the terms of his sentence, according to court records.

Previously, Kelley had been stationed at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, where he was court-martialed in 2012, demoted in rank and given a bad conduct discharge for assaulting his then-wife and stepson. He served 12 months in the brig. [CNN](#) reported that a woman who worked with him at the base said Kelley told her he had bought dogs on Craigslist for "target practice."

The [New York Times](#) reported that Kelley moved to Comal County Texas, where he was investigated twice, but not charged, for sexual assault and rape in 2013. [WTHR-TV](#) said that two former girlfriends accused him of disturbing and violent behavior and stalking after they broke up with him. "Years after dating me he would try to bribe me to hang out with him," former girlfriend Katy Landry told NBC News. "He ended up assaulting me. He would stalk me by repeatedly calling me — even prank calling me saying really weird stuff."

Brittany Adcock, 22, said she dated Kelley for two months when she was 13 and he was 18. She now thinks the age difference was peculiar, and said Kelley harassed her, offered her money to hang out with her, and suggested she move in with him and his wife where he would take care of her as long as she walked around topless.



Rhode Island Criminalizes Animal Hoarding

The Rhode Island General Assembly has enacted legislation that adds animal hoarding, defined as the “hazardous accumulation of animals,” to the list of offenses already considered cruelty to animals. The new law also requires any sentencing judge to consider whether such conduct is the result of a mental health disorder as defined in §27-38.2-2.

SB 390, sponsored by Sens. Paul Jabour, Frank Lombardi, James Doyle, and Erin Lynch Prata, and companion measure **HB 5882**, were approved by the Senate on June 29 and by the House on Sept. 19. They were sent to Gov. Gina Raimondo on Sept. 28 and became effective on Oct. 6 without her signature.

Sens. Jabour, Lombardi (top), Doyle, and Lynch Prata

Except for livestock as defined elsewhere in statutes, the “hazardous accumulation of animals” means the accumulation of a large number of animals to a point where the owner, possessor or custodian of the animals fails to or is unable to provide “adequate living conditions” resulting in harm or danger to the health and wellbeing of the animals. Animals that are neglected, abandoned, or “hazardously accumulated” may be seized for their welfare by agents of the RI SPCA, and owners forfeit all rights to those animals.



Three Courts Convict Based on Assessments of Societal Dangerousness of Cruelty to Animals

Three courts in Italy have convicted individuals using what are believed to be that country’s first Link-based assessments of the offenders’ risk of societal dangerousness for having committed cruelty to animals. [Link Italia](#) tells *The LINK-Letter* that these assessments resulted in more serious penalties being imposed.

The Bergamo Criminal Court on March 1 sentenced Trescore Balneario to 3-¹/₂ years in prison and two years of probation for torturing, killing, cooking, and eating adopted kittens. Videos of the torture were sent to shelter volunteers along with sexual proposals and insults. Balneario has a criminal history and had been diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder. He was convicted of stalking and sentenced to two years imprisonment, one year of probation, and €13,000 restitution to the victim.

On May 26, the Criminal Court of Paola sentenced four men to 16 months in prison for hanging a dog, beating him to death, and then posting the incident on Facebook. The court suspended punishment pending six months of voluntary community service.

The Criminal Court of Nuoro on July 31 sentenced a fisherman and an accomplice to 16 months in prison for tying a small bomb to a seagull which exploded in flight. The act was filmed and posted online.

“Data collection and the development of specific investigative instruments and evaluation on the social dangerousness of conduct of cruelty to animals has always been aimed at being used in criminal proceedings as a fundamental technical contribution to the development of judgments qualitatively appropriate to the crime,” Link Italia spokeswoman Silvia Quilleri said.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Updates on the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act

1. Sponsor Hopeful that Progress Can Be Made

Massachusetts Congresswoman Katherine Clark told statewide [news media](#) that she is hoping the increased attention during Domestic Violence Awareness Month will convince Congress to move her landmark Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act out of committees or allow its language to be added to another piece of moving legislation.



Rep. Katherine Clark

Clark, a Democrat, partnered with Florida Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen to re-introduce the bipartisan measure last February (*See the [March 2017 LINK-Letter](#)*) as **H.R. 909**. A companion bipartisan bill, **S. 322**, was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.). The two bills have 238 co-sponsors but, as was the situation when the original bills were introduced in the 114th Congress, they have been stalled by legislative gridlock.

The bills call for amending the definition of stalking in the federal criminal code to include “conduct that causes a person to experience a reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to his or her pet.” They would create a criminal penalty for those who cross state lines with the intent of violating a protection order against a pet, as now exist in 32 states. They would include the cost of veterinary services in any mandatory restitution for losses incurred by domestic violence survivors.

The bills would also establish a \$3,000,000 fund from which the U.S. Department of Agriculture could award grants for shelter and housing assistance and support services for domestic violence survivors with pets.

“Pets are often one of the few joys and sources of unconditional love in these situations, and they also then become an excellent tool of manipulation and creating fear of what will happen if a victim speaks out or if a victim leaves and gets to safety and security,” she said. “We see not just only threats against pets, but killing of pets, mutilation of pets as a warning of what will happen.”

Court-issued protection-from-abuse orders in the 32 states might include pets, “but you can’t reach the perpetrator because they’re in another state and making threats from another state,” she said. “So this law would help give nationwide enforcement ability and, at the same time, build up the availability of shelters that can also protect your pet.”

Clark noted some hopeful signs in Congress. “I have some good partners in the majority that really would like to see us get this bill done,” she said. “It is ultimately up to leadership in the House on the Republican side, but having 55 Republicans gives this bill some real visibility and we hope that we can get it to a vote very shortly.”

2. Congressional Briefing on the PAWS Act

Dedicated people from both inside and outside the Beltway converged on the Longworth House Office Building on Oct. 24 for a Congressional Animal Protection Caucus legislative briefing on the PAWS Act. The briefing, timed to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, addressed the need to extend pet coverage in protection-from-abuse orders across state lines and to increase the resources available to build pet-friendly domestic violence shelters.

Featured speakers included:

- **Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.)**, co-lead sponsor of the PAWS Act
- **Blair Decker & Meagan Dziura**, co-Executive Directors, Safety Network for Abused Animals & People
- **Randy Lockwood**, Senior Vice President for Forensic Sciences & Anti-Cruelty Projects, ASPCA
- **John Thompson**, Deputy Executive Director, National Sheriffs' Association
- **Abbie Tuller**, Senior Director, Urban Resource Institute/ People and Animals Living Safely (PALS)



The National Link Coalition's Randy Lockwood (left) and John Thompson were in attendance



Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen hopes to push PAWS Act legislation forward

U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-New Jersey), Katherine Clarke (D-Massachusetts), and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Florida) addressed the meeting, highlighting the bill's support in both the House Animal Protection and Law Enforcement caucuses. Pascrell noted that the Act would give law enforcement additional resources to protect domestic violence survivors and their pets. Clarke described how domestic violence thrives in secrecy and isolation and how animals are tools of manipulation. Ros-Lehtinen said her goal is to "empower victims to step out of the shadows and move to zero tolerance for domestic violence."

The briefing was sponsored by the ASPCA, Animal Welfare Institute and the Humane Society Legislative Fund. Other organizations supporting the PAWS Act include the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC).

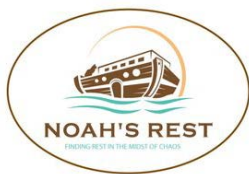
AKC Awarding Grants to Pet-Friendly Shelters

A philanthropic arm of the American Kennel Club commemorated Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a month-long campaign to raise donations to support pet owners who find themselves in the hands of an abusive partner. Grants from the [AKC Humane Fund](#) will help support pet-friendly domestic violence shelters across the U.S. Shelters that welcome pets help break the cycle of domestic abuse. Grants may be used for capital construction or operational expenses.



The AKC Humane Fund supports the health and happiness of dogs by giving back to the canine community through education, grantmaking and outreach promoting responsible pet ownership. Program grants support pet-friendly women's shelters, canine rescue groups, and disaster relief services for animals. The fund also awards scholarships to students whose studies contribute to the well-being of dogs.

Grants are available only to 501c3 organizations that either are domestic violence shelters or that provide temporary or permanent housing for pets of domestic violence victims and that have a formal, established working relationship with at least one domestic violence shelter. Grants may not be used for fundraising purposes.



Noah's Rest Helps Pet Survivors in Chicagoland

"Finding rest in the midst of chaos" is the watchword at [Noah's Rest](#), which for three years has been arranging safe, temporary shelter for pets of victims of domestic violence in the northern suburbs of Chicago, so no one is forced to choose between abandoning a beloved pet and staying in an abusive relationship.

When a man or woman is planning to leave a violent relationship, there are many reasons why a shelter is a safe option. It may not be safe to stay with friends or family members because the abusive partner is aware of these locations. Or, the victim has become so isolated from a support network that there is no place else to go for help.

In the absence of pet-friendly shelters in the Chicagoland region of Illinois and Wisconsin that accept animals (the nearest SAF-T shelter is in Quincy, Ill., some 250 miles downstate), Noah's Rest helps provide foster care to remove one significant barrier to domestic violence survivors' leaving. The all-volunteer nonprofit provides boarding, food, veterinary care, medications, and regular monitoring and companionship to these animals free of charge to the owners.

"Pets are family, too," says Noah's Ark Secretary Patty Hanscom. "They also deserve to be protected from domestic abuse."

Noah's Rest celebrated their 3rd Annual Cocktail Paw-ty on Oct. 14 with a fundraising gala.

Australian Website Shines Light on Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

A grassroots initiative in Western Australia has developed a website that focuses on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse by sharing powerful first-person accounts of life and death inside the cycles of violence. 63% of Australians own pets and most of them experience the loveliness of the picture of a faithful pet greeting them to start their day. [My Saving Grace](#) is drawing attention to the reality that for too many of these people their close bonds with their pets are exploited by domestic violence perpetrators to intimidate, punish and control their victims.



“Victims of domestic violence live with an impossible choice. How to leave a violent relationship when you cannot find a safe place for your animals? How to leave behind, in harm’s way, your saving grace?” the website asks.

The website features an excellent [two-minute animated video](#), “Make the Link, act for animals and change the story.” Twelve other brief video vignettes feature interviews with survivors and Link authorities describing: how to include pets in escape plans; the need for more pet-friendly refuges; the role of veterinarians in these situations; traumas inflicted upon pets that suggest non-accidental injury; animal therapy to help children develop empathy; how acquiring a new pet can help survivors heal after leaving an abusive relationship; and how we can no longer condone the violence by keeping silent.

The site is divided into eight chapters, each telling a dramatic story illustrating a different angle of the animal abuse/domestic violence Link. The three organizers – a social justice advocate, film maker and journalist – had initially planned a six-week photographic portrait project; three years later after collating the interviews they realized they could never really finish telling this story and a website was created through which information can flow.

An extensive Resources section features 24 PDFs and PowerPoints of research articles, guidelines and presentations, plus downloads of the website videos.

“Our deepest gratitude goes out to each woman who stepped into this space, each change maker who is speaking out, each companion animal living and passed who is connected to us through their story,” they write. “Our hope is that each visitor to the site will be one more person who changes the story.”

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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

THE LINK AND... CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

PACT Act Would Impose Federal Ban on Animal Sexual Abuse

Bestiality Often Linked with Child Pornography and Sex Abuse

Forty-five states have banned bestiality or animal sexual abuse ([See the July 2017 LINK-Letter](#)), which researchers have found to be an extremely strong predictor of and risk factor for child pornography and child sexual abuse, but a serious gap exists in enforcement of these provisions because no federal laws yet complement the state statutes.



(above): Reps. Smith & Deutch;

(below): Sens. Twomey & Blumenthal

In response, over 260 federal legislators have signed on to the PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act, **H.R. 1494/S.654**. The bills, introduced by Reps. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) and Ted Deutch (D-Fla.) in the House and Sens. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) in the Senate, have massive bipartisan support.

The bills would amend and update 18 U.S. Code § 48, enacted several years ago to prohibit the creation and distribution of “animal crush videos” in which small animals are crushed or otherwise harmed to generate a sexual thrill among viewers. The PACT Act would expand the definition of “animal crushing” to include any act in which animals are subjected to serious bodily injury or conduct that, if committed against a person, would violate 18 U.S. Code Chapter 109A, §2241 and 2242, which prohibit sexual abuse and aggravated sexual abuse.

No federal statutes currently criminalize bestiality. The U.S. military includes animal abuse and bestiality among the dischargeable offenses included in the Uniform Code of Military Justice ([See the November 2016 LINK-Letter](#)), but there are no applicable federal laws yet.

The PACT Act is endorsed by the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the National Children’s Center, and hundreds of humane and law enforcement agencies. It would enable the federal government to prosecute animal sexual abuse on federal property such as military bases, federal prisons, airports, and national parks and prohibit interstate transport of animals and distribution of animal pornography videos.

Many websites attract people with this deviant sexual behavior and host thousands of ads from people seeking animals to abuse sexually. During any one week, a state’s Craigslist page may have dozens of ads from people soliciting or offering animals for sex, often to be transported across state lines.

During the course of child exploitation investigations, detectives commonly find sexual predators in possession of bestiality images and videos. Researchers have concluded that bestiality is the number-one risk factor for and the strongest predictor of increased risk of sexual abuse of a child. Another study determined that human sex offenders were eight times more likely than the general population to have a history of bestiality.

The Senate passed the PACT Act last year, but the House failed to act, even though a solid majority of that chamber backed the legislation.

PANDA Pets Comfort Child Sexual Assault Victims in California



One of the newest programs through which therapy dogs accompany sexually abused children during the emotionally charged procedures of investigation and prosecution is under way in Orange County, Calif., thanks to a partnership between the Orange County SPCA and the District Attorney's Office.

The SPCA expanded its PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) program of animal-assisted therapy in 2016 to launch [PANDA](#) (PAWS Assist the Needs of the District Attorney). PAWS

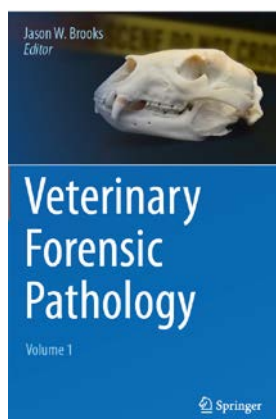
therapy dogs help comfort child victims of sexual assault when they meet with OCDA staff to prepare for their cases and trial. The comfort and support make the meetings more productive and help the victims feel better by being accompanied by a non-judgmental, furry friend.

PANDA was initiated at the suggestion of an Assistant District Attorney and then implemented through the Sexual Assault Unit at the DA's office. The start-up took several months after first establishing an agreement between the OCSPCA and the OCDA to make sure the program did not add any additional workload to the DA and that confidentiality was maintained at all times.

The DA and the PAWS director choose the most experienced and qualified volunteers and their dogs to participate. They must go through extra training to deal with such emotional situations and complete a heavy background check. Ongoing communication between PANDA and OCDA helps the program run efficiently.

The OCSPCA's insurance coverage requires that they only visit facilities, rather than private homes, and that they use a "buddy system" of at least two individuals in each AAT session for safety and liability reasons.

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE



New Forensic Pathology Text to be Published

A new two-volume textbook on veterinary forensic pathology, about to be published, features chapters by several members of the National Link Coalition and offers a comprehensive and essential reference guide for veterinary pathologists and clinical veterinarians who are performing necropsies and conducting forensic casework in the investigation of animal abuse. Jason W. Brooks, VMD, Ph.D., DACVP, a veterinary pathologist at Penn State University, served as editor for the books which provide highly practical advice for performing animal crime investigations. [Volume 1](#) presents a broad range of animal crime cases with a focus on the post-mortem examination and the observed pathology. [Volume 2](#) guides readers through the forensic evaluation of animal deaths from a variety of blunt- and sharp-force traumas including

animal fighting and animal sexual abuse. The richly-illustrated volumes are due to be released in December.

-- Brooks, J.W. (Ed.). (2017). *Veterinary Forensic Pathology, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2*. New York: Springer.

British Veterinarians and Human Healthcare Work Together to Protect Children and Pets

Veterinarians and human health professionals in the U.K. are collaborating on innovative programs to address common issues affecting the welfare of children, women and animals, including a guide, [“Keeping Babies and Children Safe around Dogs in the Home,”](#) plus an online course on animal welfare for human healthcare workers.

The September 2017 issue of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association’s magazine *Companion* describes these efforts, which were initiated by Sylvia Jeffers, a pediatric nurse and home health visitor. Jeffers was moved by three overlapping issues she encountered: children who were attacked by dogs; children and pets not receiving vaccinations and adequate health care; and animals that are abused.



Sylvia Jeffers

“The most vulnerable families always seem to have pets in the house and it is clear that if the children are not well cared for then it is likely to be the same for the pets,” said Jeffers. “Routine healthcare like worming and vaccinations just won’t happen because the parents will be unable to afford it.”

Jeffers recounted a tragedy where a 7-month-old baby was mauled to death by a dog in Northamptonshire. The girl’s mother and grandmother received prison sentences and the regional Safeguarding Children Board recommended that health visitors and midwives routinely ask parents about the presence of pets in the home, in order to proactively provide them with pet care and safety information.



Wendy Sneddon

Jeffers is also working with our British affiliate, [The Links Group UK](#), on the issue of dogs becoming the victims rather than the perpetrators of family violence. The result was the training module on animal welfare for human health professionals to help them identify animal maltreatment and how to respond if they go into a home where an aggressive, intimidating dog is present.

The module explains the basics of animal behavior and explores the connections between abuse to both human and animal victims. While the course is multidisciplinary, “Our main target audience is healthcare professionals who work in the community with vulnerable people,” said co-author Wendy Sneddon, a veterinary nurse and Links Group UK Secretary. “The module will give them an introduction to welfare needs of pets and basic behavior to look out for when these professionals are visiting homes. We are aware that evidence of animal abuse has helped strengthen cases of child/domestic abuse, so reporting suspicions of either will help both animals and humans in the long run.”

Home health visitors have no statutory responsibility for safeguarding animal welfare, but they can be another set of eyes and ears wherever animal and child welfare intersect.

“Domestic violence is a big part of health visitors’ work,” she said, “although we are not required to address this from the angle of the family pet. In child protection cases, we do take note if there is a pet in the family. If the pet is not well, that will have an impact on others, particularly children. So we do look out to try and assess how well the animal is being looked after.”

Minnesota Mulls Amendment to Veterinary Reporting Provisions

In 1987, Minnesota became what is believed to be the first state to require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities. At the time, the threat of civil or criminal lawsuits emanating from making such reports was not seen as a potential concern, and there were no other similar state laws upon which to model the Minnesota statute's wording. Consequently, the law has been on the state's books for 30 years without including specific provisions granting practitioners immunity for making such reports in good faith.

Two companion bills in the state legislature are aimed at correcting this oversight. [SF 1167](#) and [HF 787](#) would grant veterinarians immunity from civil liability for reporting to peace officers, humane agents, or animal control officers known or suspected inhumane treatment of animals, including but not limited to neglect, cruelty, or abuse. Currently, 14 states mandate veterinary reporting and 18 states permit practitioners to report; only three of these 32 states (Minnesota, Kansas and Wisconsin) fail to provide immunity from civil liability, criminal liability or professional disciplinary action.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

New Mexico Coalition Holds Online Fundraising Auction



New Mexico's Positive Links coalition held a fundraising [holiday auction](#) on Nov. 1-8. Over 80 donated items were auctioned to support Positive Links' raising awareness about The Link between animal abuse and human violence and the group's training throughout New Mexico. The online bidding was conducted through Facebook.

Links Group UK Reaches Out to Welsh Veterinary Professionals

The Links Group UK conducted two training sessions in Wales as part of the coalition's [Links Veterinary Training Initiative](#). The programs, held in Cardiff on Oct. 4 and in Wrexham on Oct. 5, included presentations on "Shades of Violence and the Complexity of Abuse," "Domestic Violence in a Welsh Context," "Identifying Non-Accidental Injury in Animals," "The Legal Perspective on Animal Welfare," "Recording Vital Information," and "Introducing the Online Course in Animal Welfare for Human Healthcare Professionals." Wales' domestic violence strategy is a relatively recent initiative, dating back only to 2015, and a lot of resources are being utilized to stop the violence – including engaging veterinarians as reporters.



North Texas Link Coalition Gets the Word Out

The [North Texas LINK Coalition](#) (See the [June 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) got a big boost in public recognition in October when the [SPCA of Texas](#), serving as the Coalition's host agency, issued a press release to the public, news media, and its own 10,000-member constituent base.



"There is a proven link between violence toward animals and violence toward humans, and sadly the North Texas area does see extreme cases of animal cruelty," said SPCA President/CEO James Bias. "Thanks to research by the National Link Coalition and others, it is now widely recognized that mistreatment of animals is often a warning sign that other family members in the household may not be safe."

Bias quantified the nature of Link work in the Dallas metropolitan area with statistics about the incidence and costs of family violence. In 2016, the SPCA of Texas' Animal Cruelty Investigations Unit investigated over 2,500 reports of animal maltreatment resulting in the rescue and seizure of 2,290 animals. Meanwhile, the Dallas Domestic Violence Taskforce Report cited 4,011 cases of intimate partner violence filed by the Dallas Police Department, including 16 family violence murders.



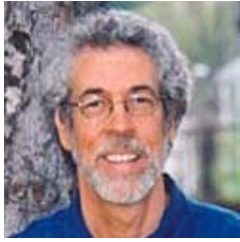
Family violence exacts a significant financial cost as well. The 2016 Texas Health & Human Services Commission's Family Violence Program Report noted its expenditures for service providers' delivery of vital services to domestic violence survivors and their children totaled \$30 million, a figure which represented only a small part of the total need. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' Client Services Operating Budget increased by \$100 million from 2014 to 2016.

"Those state-level human services-related budgets do not include the additional crime-fighting expenses of municipal, county and state law enforcement agencies or the independently-funded nonprofit organizations' services that support abused humans and animals, also in the tens of millions," he noted.

The press release quoted National Link Coalition members Phil Arkow and Maya Gupta. "This isn't about whether we like animals," Gupta told the Conference on Crimes Against Women in Dallas earlier this year. "If we want to reduce violence in all its forms, we must pay attention to the connections between human and animal violence."

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Animal Abuse Not Always Linked to Other Violent Behavior



Arnold Arluke and Lesley Irvine

Adding a reality check to the general construct that animal abuse often serves as an indicator and predictor of interpersonal violence, the authors challenge the assumption that harming animals necessarily predicts future violent behavior. They emphasize that definitions and perceptions of cruelty are contextual and based on intent and motive, and that laws often grant specific exemptions. People make sense of cruelty through social and cultural filters, which influence whether and how much they appreciate the welfare of animals and perceive harm. This cultural ambivalence, in turn, leads to differing explanations for the acts and often conflicting responses. They argue that legal, socially acceptable forms of harm to animals, as in hunting and farming, do not necessarily increase one's propensity for violence. Similarly, while some studies show that witnessing animal abuse leads to more violence, others report it leads to more compassion for animals. They recommend identifying and focusing attention on the kinds of abuse that may predict dangerousness in order to provide the conceptual clarity needed to develop responses tailored to individual offenders.

-- Arluke, A., & Irvine, L. (2017). *Physical cruelty of companion animals*. In J. Maher, H. Pierpoint, & P. Beirne (eds.). *The Palgrave International Handbook of Animal Abuse Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 39-57.

Study Examines Attachment Styles and Proclivity for Animal Abuse



Jade Ford

A research paper on The Link has won a British psychology student the 2017 [Undergraduate Paper Prize](#) in Human-Animal Studies awarded annually by the Animals & Society Institute. Jade Ford, a student at Keynes College, University of Kent, wrote "Man's best friend... and sometimes target: How negative interpersonal relations are related to animal abuse proclivity."

Ford wrote that research on the psychological correlates of animal abuse typically study incarcerated offenders who commonly come from dysfunctional family environments and experience high levels of anxiety. But no study has examined how attachment styles (which are byproducts of maladaptive childhoods), social anxiety, and animal abuse proclivity are inter-related.

Ford's study employed a correlational design to assess the association between attachment styles and social anxiety as indicators of different forms of animal abuse proclivity within a general adult sample. She found that an anxious attachment style significantly correlated with direct proclivity (i.e., the animal as the perceived provocateur). The relationship between social anxiety and indirect animal abuse proclivity (i.e., the animal as the outlet for aggression) was mediated by avoidant attachment.

She emphasized the importance of exploring how interpersonal relationships influence a person's relationship with animals, which is relevant to the treatment and assessment of animal abusers. Ford is working as a research assistant for the university and is writing two additional papers on animal abuse. She plans to study for a master's degree in forensic psychology in hopes of starting a career in counseling.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Saskatchewan Link Conference Educates and Inspires



The Saskatchewan SPCA's first-ever, two-day conference focusing on the relationship between violence to people and animals brought together nearly 70 individuals from animal welfare organizations, human service agencies, the provincial government, and enforcement.

Convening in the provincial capital of Regina, participants had the opportunity to hear Randall Lockwood explain how animals can be used as a tool for the abuser to control and punish the victims. Threats of violence towards animals prevent victims from leaving or coerce them into returning to the home.

Other speakers provided insights on the human-animal bond, legislative tools to assist victims of violence, and how to recognize and report various types of abuse. Tim Battle provided an update on the pet safekeeping program in Alberta for domestic violence survivors ([See the January 2017 LINK-Letter](#)).

Battle and Lockwood both stressed the importance of collaboration to resolve problems that can't be solved by one agency alone. "Whether we work primarily with people or with animals, we all need to start thinking beyond our own particular sector," said Leanne Sillers of the Saskatchewan SPCA.

At brainstorming session generated ideas which will help shape the new animal safekeeping program under development by the Saskatchewan SPCA, in conjunction with community partners.

Link Programs Presented in Colombia

Servio Reyes tells *The LINK-Letter* that Link interest is building in Colombia. He attended the International Congress of Green Criminology in Bogota on Sept. 25-27. Green criminology is the



analysis of environmental harms from a criminological perspective, including offenses, offenders, victims, and

responses to environmental crimes. Reyes also spoke to psychology students at the University of San Gil (*right*).



Meanwhile, humane education practitioners in Colombia conducted an intervention in Subachoque, teaching empathy towards animals to children in the 3rd and 4th grades, utilizing the RedRover protocol. The students' empathy levels were evaluated using the Gullone & Thompson CTAQ instrument.

Link Academic Research Center Founded in Canada

An [Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group](#) has been founded at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. Amy Fitzgerald, PhD, Associate Professor in Criminology, is the Director.

The research group is composed of interdisciplinary faculty and graduate students conducting research on aspects of the intersection of abuse against people and animals. Working under a mandate to foster connections between academia and the broader service community, they interface with the community to first understand the interconnections, and then advocate for change in policy and practice to better address the needs of all those affected by abuse – human and animal alike.



Amy Fitzgerald, Ph.D.

Fitzgerald's research focuses on the intersection of harms – criminal and otherwise – against people, animals, and the environment. She has published six journal articles and chapters on animal abuse and domestic violence, and on the culture of violence in slaughterhouses, in recent years.

Link Training Offered at Domestic Violence/Child Abuse Conference



Jerilee Zezula, D.V.M., speaks on “The Cruelty Connection: Creating Safer Communities through Species-Spanning Community Partnerships” at the annual Partnering for a Future Without Violence conference organized by the New Hampshire Attorney General’s Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Governor’s Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence.



Matt Bershadker

Huffington Post Publicizes Link Programs

The [Huffington Post](#) gave awareness of the animal abuse/domestic violence Link a big boost on Oct. 30 in an extensive article about several pet-friendly shelters that are helping survivors and their families to escape. Matt Bershadker, President and CEO of the ASPCA, described the URIPALS shelter in New York City, where the city domestic violence crisis line receives more than 225 calls every day. He also wrote about Iowa’s Domestic Violence Intervention Program pet kennels in Iowa City, and plans to add pet co-sheltering facilities in Shelby County, Ala.

Urging readers to contact their Senators and Representatives to support the PAWS Act, [H.R. 909/S.322](#), in Congress, Bershadker wrote, “In honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month as well as the many human and animal victims who deserve our attention, we must commit to protecting the most vulnerable among us. Too many lives are at risk if we don’t.”

Link Cited as Rationale for Humane Education

Humane education has been an integral part of Fort Wayne, Ind., Animal Care & Control for over 30 years. The program got a nice publicity boost in October, when Holly Pasquinelli, community relations and education specialist at the animal shelter, wrote an op-ed column in the [Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette](#) that cited The Link as a rationale for humane education.

The program teaches empathy to school children, intervening to help prevent bites, promote responsible pet ownership, and understand how animals might feel in different situations. Showing compassion for animals will result in more compassion towards people and help stop the cycles of violence, she wrote.



Holly Pasquinelli

“There's a deeper reason we teach empathy and kindness toward animals. Over the past two decades there have been numerous studies on what's known as ‘The Link.’ Animal abuse does not happen in a vacuum, and a home where an animal is being abused is a strong indicator that others in the home are not safe, according to researchers who have studied animal abuse for decades,” she wrote.

“The areas where animal cruelty, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse intersect is called ‘The Link,’ according to the National Link Coalition – an organization at the forefront of working with communities to break the cycle of violence. In studying that cycle, researchers have also found that children who witness abuse toward animals are at a higher risk of becoming abusers themselves. That's where we step in.”

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching... and Victories We're Celebrating

The National Link Coalition is encouraged by the increase in the number of violence-prevention bills being introduced that are based on Link principles. Join us as we follow these measures and salute our victories that will do a better job of protecting people and animals – and please let us know of new measures that are introduced in your state.

“CASA for Animals”

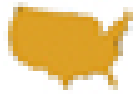


New Jersey A 2041 and its companion **S 433** would allow courts to issue “animal protection orders” forbidding persons convicted of animal cruelty from having contact with the abused animal or other animals, either permanently or for a specified period of time. **A 2041** passed the Assembly. Both bills are in the Senate Economic Growth Committee.



Rhode Island H5061 would have required courts to order the appointment of an animal care advocate wherever the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.**

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 909 and S.322 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced and now has 235 bi-partisan co-sponsors in the House and 28 in the Senate. The PAWS Act would prohibit threats or acts of violence against a victim's pet in interstate stalking and interstate violation of protection orders. It would allocate \$3 million annually through 2021 in grants for shelter and housing assistance for victims with pets, support services to help victims secure safe housing that allows pets, and for pet-related services. Grants could also be used for training on The Link and for identifying best practices. Abusers would be required to make restitution to the victim for costs incurred for veterinary services. **H.R. 909** is in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. **S.322** is in the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Hawai'i HB 155 would have allowed either party to order the other to restrain from transferring, encumbering or disposing of pets during divorce, separation or annulment, particularly if one party poses a threat of physical harm to the animal. Courts could have ordered a party to pay for pet support, and consider the animals' well-being and whether future ownership should be individual or joint. The measure was approved by the House Agriculture Committee and was referred to the Judiciary Committee, **but no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned on May 4.**



Illinois SB 1261 amends the Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act to allow parties filing for divorce to file a joint petition for simplified dissolution if they have executed a written agreement allocating ownership and responsibility for their companion animals. The measure also allows the parties to petition for sole or joint ownership, contingent upon the court's consideration of what would be in the animals' best interests. **The bill was approved by Gov. Bruce Rauner on Aug. 25 and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2018.**



Indiana SB 323 allows a court to grant an order of protection to: (1) award possession and care of an animal to a petitioner; (2) prohibit a respondent from taking action against the animal; and (3) direct a law enforcement officer to accompany the petitioner to retrieve the animal. **The bill was signed into law on April 21 by Gov. Eric Holcomb and became effective on July 1.**



Michigan HB 4026 would define "causing or attempting to cause physical harm" to a family member's animal as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain. It would allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and to include veterinary care among the emergency health care services that they provide among the criteria for needing funding. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



Nevada law defines harming an animal to harass a spouse or partner as domestic violence. **SB62** would have increased the penalty for this act to a Category B felony if the abuser is convicted of a similar act. **No action was taken before the time limit for legislative action expired.**



New York A8663 would amend §23 of the state's Domestic Relations Law to require the court to consider the best interest of a companion animal when awarding possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



Ohio HB1 would expand the ability of courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include the animals of domestic violence survivors to individuals seeking protection orders in cases of dating violence. It would allow a court order of protection to require that a respondent not remove, damage, hide, harm, or dispose of any companion animal owned or possessed by the petitioner alleging dating violence. It also would allow a court order to authorize the petitioner, alleging dating violence, to remove a companion animal owned by that petitioner from the possession of the respondent. The bill has passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania HB1652 would allow divorcing parties to enter into a custody agreement for the possession and/or care of a companion animal. Such agreements may specify the time during which each party will possess the pet and each party's financial responsibility regarding its care. The bill defines relevant factors which the court may consider. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Texas SB 339 and HB 142 would have created a new offense of illegal sexual contact called "indecent assault" and allowed victims to obtain protective orders. Violations of these protective orders would have included harming, threatening, or interfering with the care, custody or control of a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to the protected party. **No action was taken on either bill when the Legislature adjourned.**



Rhode Island H5556 would have required courts to consider the best interest of the animal in awarding possession of a domestic animal in a divorce or separation proceeding. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.**



Wyoming HB193 would have allowed courts to grant sole possession of any household pets to the petitioner in a protection order, and to order the respondent not have any contact with any household pet or abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the animal. **The bill died when the legislature adjourned.**

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



Alabama HB393/SB273 was signed into law on May 19. This new law allows for the use of a registered therapy dog in legal proceedings, when permitted by the judge, to assist a victim or witness in order to reduce unnecessary emotional distress and allow full and factual testimony. It authorizes a judge to use discretionary funds to offset the costs for a registered handler of a registered therapy dog used in a legal proceeding.



California AB411 will allow child witnesses in any serious or violent felony cases to have a therapy or facility dog present during court testimony. Procedures will be established requiring the party seeking to have the dog present to attest to the training and credentials of the dog and its handler and facts necessitating the need for the dog. The court could reject the request if it finds the dog's presence would cause undue prejudice to the defendant or would be unduly disruptive to the court proceeding. The bill passed the House 79-0 and the Senate 39-0 and **was signed into law on Sept. 26.**



Idaho SB 1089 amends Idaho's procedures for witnesses in criminal proceedings to allow facility dogs to remain at the witness stand with a child during testimony. **The measure was signed into law** by Gov. Butch Otter on March 27 and took effect July 1.



Michigan HB 4025 would increase the penalties for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child to a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year's imprisonment, \$2,000 fine, and 300 hours of community service. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



New York S1432 and **A5048** criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. **S1432** passed the Senate and both bills are in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York S2470 and companion bill **A2140**, and **S728** and companion bill **A3845**, would increase penalties for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child. **S2470** is in the Senate Agriculture Committee; **A2140** is in the Assembly Codes Committee. **S728** passed the Senate and joined and **A3845** in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



Texas HB 289 would have made it a violation to harm or threaten a pet or assistance animal belonging to a child under a protection-from-abuse order. The bill was in the House Human Services Committee, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned**.

Animal Hoarding



New Jersey A3638 would establish animal hoarding as an animal cruelty offense and require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders. The bill was reported favorably out of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



New York A44 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as ownership, possession or custody of more than 25 companion animals living in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of the animals and/or people. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may be required to undergo counseling and be prohibited from owning animals. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Rhode Island S390/HB 5882 defines animal hoarding ("hazardous accumulation of animals") and adds it to the list of conduct that is considered cruelty to animals. The new law also requires any sentencing judge to consider whether such conduct is the result of a mental health disorder. **The bills became law on Oct. 6** without the signature of Gov. Gina Raimondo.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



Mississippi HB 575 would have defined malicious intent of a dog or cat as felony-level aggravated cruelty, mandated psychological evaluations for offenders, and mandated police and sheriffs to report all investigations of cruelty to a dog or cat into the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). **The bill died in committee on Jan. 31.**



New Jersey A2367 and **S529**, "Shyanne's Law," would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders, and mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. Currently, mental health counseling is mandated only for juvenile offenders. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Economic Growth Committees.



New Mexico HB 210 would have created a new category of “extreme cruelty to animals” and would have required persons convicted of this offense to undergo psychological counseling. **The bill was in committee when the regular Legislature session ended.**

Animal Sexual Abuse



H.R. 1494/S.654 -- the PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act – would amend and update 18 U.S. Code § 48 to expand the definition of “animal crushing,” as pertains to “crush videos,” to include any act in which animals are subjected to serious bodily injury or conduct that, if committed against a person, would be defined as sexual abuse or aggravated sexual abuse. The bills have 261 co-sponsors and are in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.



Kentucky HB 143 would have made the sexual assault of a dog or cat a first-offense Class D felony, and a Class C felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Currently, bestiality is illegal in Kentucky only if it occurs in conjunction with prostitution. Offenders would have been barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



Kentucky HB 480 would have created a new offense of sexual assault against an animal and allowed a peace officer to seize an animal. Accepted animal husbandry and veterinary medical practices would have been exempted. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



Massachusetts S.805 would amend Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. Ch. 272, § 34, which currently uses the archaic language prohibiting “the abominable and detestable crime against nature either with mankind or with any animal,” to prohibit “a sexual act on an animal, uses an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permits a sexual act with an animal on any premises under such person’s control.” The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Missouri HB 431 would have allowed persons convicted of having sex with an animal to petition to have their names removed from the state sex offenders registry. **The bill was in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



Nevada AB 391 adds a new section to Nevada’s Revised Statutes, Chapter 201 (“Crimes Against Public Decency and Good Morals”) that now defines bestiality as a gross misdemeanor that can be upgraded to a Category D felony if the animal dies or suffers serious bodily injury as a result, or if the offender has a prior conviction for animal cruelty. Offenders will be required to permanently forfeit any animals in the home and cannot work with or volunteer where animals are present. Courts can authorize offenders to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling and to pay costs for the care and medical expenses of the animals. The measure will also cover anyone who causes, aids, promotes or observes bestiality. Accepted animal husbandry, veterinary and conformation judging practices are excluded. **The bill was signed into law on May 23** by Gov. Brian Sandoval and took effect Oct. 1.



Texas SB 1232 creates a new section 21.09 of the Penal Code, making it a felony to commit bestiality, obtain an animal for this purpose, or organize, promote, conduct or observe bestiality. The crime is considered a state jail felony unless it is committed in the presence of a child, results in serious bodily injury or death of the animal, or the offender has a prior conviction, in which

case it is a 2nd-degree felony. Generally accepted veterinary and animal husbandry practices are exempted. Upon conviction, the court may order the defendant to relinquish custody of any animals and to participate in a psychological treatment or other appropriate program. The measure passed the Senate and the House unanimously and **was signed into law and took effect Sept. 1, 2017.**



Vermont H.62 adds a new category of sexual conduct to the various conditions defined as cruelty to animals. The measure amends 13 V.S.A. Chapter 8 to define sexual conduct as any act between a person and animal that involves contact or insertion between the mouth, sex organ or anus of a person and an animal without a bona fide veterinary or animal husbandry purpose. The definition extends to anyone possessing, selling, transferring, purchasing or obtaining an animal for sexual conduct; or organizing, promoting, aiding, abetting or participating as an observer; or permitting sexual conduct on his or her premises or advertising it. **The bill was signed into law on June 7 and took effect July 1.**



West Virginia HB 2664 would have added bestiality to the code of crimes against chastity, morality and decency. Individuals who engage in, abet, observe, permit, advertise, or promote bestiality, or induce a child to commit bestiality, would have been guilty of a misdemeanor, or a felony upon previous convictions or serious bodily injury or death to the animal. Courts would have been able to order offenders to surrender all their animals, prohibit ownership of animals for five or 15 years, and undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. **No action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



California AB 197 would add animal abuse, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, and other crimes to the list of “violent” felonies that could be prosecuted as a 3rd strike with additional years of imprisonment under the Three Strikes Law. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



Indiana SB 306 would have increased the penalty for attending an animal fighting contest from a Class A misdemeanor to a Level 6 felony. The bill was in the Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



Kentucky HB 135 would have redefined animal torture to include deliberate neglect or physical abuse that results in death or serious physical injury to a dog or cat, and barred offenders from owning dogs or cats. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



Massachusetts S.1159 would add the crimes of animal cruelty and fighting as specifically enumerated offenses which would allow the prosecution to ask for pre-trial detention on the grounds of the defendant’s dangerousness. The bill would also mandate *Cross-Training*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.



New Jersey A 2738 would expand the criminal and civil acts of animal cruelty to include the theft or release of an animal during the commission of a burglary. The bill is in the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



New Mexico HJM 6 requested that the state Departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth & Families consider training on The Link between animal abuse and family violence in their training curricula for field workers and other appropriate staff. The measure passed the House by a vote of 67-0 **but no action had been taken by the Senate when the Legislative session ended.**



New York S1680 and companion bill **A3038** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **S1680** passed the Senate on Jan. 30 and was referred to the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **A3038** is in the Codes Committee.



New York S251 would expand animal fighting prohibitions to criminalize promoting, attending, facilitating, training, breeding or selling fighting animals, or selling, manufacturing or owning animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Oregon HB 2026 would have appropriated money from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to fund a position dedicated exclusively to assisting local district attorneys and law enforcement with the prosecution of cases involving the “detriment or risk of detriment” to animals. **The bill was in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



Rhode Island H5728 would have imposed further penalties for deliberate or unintentional harming of animals during the commission of any crime. Any sentence imposed would run consecutively to any sentence imposed for the underlying offense. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.**



Texas HB 1357 would have defined as “family violence” coercive, controlling or punishing acts or threats of abuse directed against an animal owned by a member of the household or someone with whom the abuser has had a dating relationship. It also made technical corrections to assist prosecutors in animal cruelty cases. The bill had been approved unanimously by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee but **no further action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



Washington HB 1153 addresses financial exploitation and physical neglect of seniors and people with disabilities by increasing penalties, reducing barriers to prosecution, and expanding the scope of protection for vulnerable persons. 1st-degree animal cruelty, including sexual contact with an animal, is listed as a crime which prosecutors may cite as reasons for filing charges. **The measure was signed into law on May 10** by Gov. Jay Inslee.

Cross-Reporting



Iowa S.F. 129 would have required veterinarians who suspect animal abuse, neglect or torture to report the incident to law enforcement agencies with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability. Law enforcement officials would have been required to file a child endangerment alert report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnesses suspected animal abuse, neglect or torture. Courts could, and in some cases would have been required to, order psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment. The bill would have created seven new criminal offenses describing animal abuse, neglect, torture, abandonment, and endangerment. The bill was in the Senate Agriculture Committee but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



Maine LD 157 would have required veterinarians who suspect an animal to be the subject of cruelty or neglect to report the case to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Currently, Maine veterinarians are permitted to report cruelty or neglect, and are required to report only “aggravated” animal cruelty. **The bill died in the Senate.**



Gov. Larry Hogan **signed Maryland HB 1463 into law** on May 4. It requires a veterinarian who believes that an animal that she or he has treated has been subjected to cruelty or fighting to report the case to law enforcement or county animal control in a timely manner. Existing law only encouraged reporting and did not include animal fighting among the provisions. Practitioners will continue to have immunity from civil and criminal liability when reporting. The bill passed the House by a vote of 118-15 and was approved unanimously 47-0 in the Senate. **It took effect Oct. 1.**



Massachusetts S.295 would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers, and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of suspected child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Education Committee.



Massachusetts S.1159 would require employees or contractors of the Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs investigators, and Disabled Persons Protection Commission investigators to report suspected animal abuse. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. The bill would also affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.



Three companion measures address cross-reporting in **Michigan**. **HB 4441** would amend the Child Protection Law to add animal control officers to the list of professions mandated to report suspected child abuse or child neglect. **HB 4442** would amend the Michigan Penal Code to require Child Protective Services employees to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction where the animal was found, with anonymity, the presumption of having acted in good faith, and immunity from civil or criminal liability. Failure to report, or making a false report, would be punishable offenses. **HB 4443** would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to make the intentional false reporting of animal abuse a felony. The bills are in the House Judiciary Committee.



Minnesota veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect to peace officers, humane agents or animal control officers. **HF 787 and SF1167** would give them immunity from civil liability.




New York S621 and companion bill **A4904** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to police, SPCAs, peace officers, district attorney's offices, animal control officers, the department of agriculture and markets, or other appropriate government agencies and to turn over necessary records. New York veterinarians are currently permitted to report but are not required to do so. The bills, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, are in the respective Higher Education Committees.





Ohio HB147 would add agents of the Ohio Humane Society to the list of professionals who have a duty to report suspected child abuse to a public children's services agency or peace officer. It also would repeal a provision of the Humane Society Law that specifically requires humane society agents to remove a child from his or her parents when the agent deems it to be in the child's

best interest. Current law designates agents of county humane societies as mandated reporters, but not agents of the Ohio Humane Society. Current law also requires public children's services agencies to prepare a memorandum of understanding to be signed by specified law enforcement and judicial officers in their jurisdiction, including the county humane society; the bill would allow the Ohio Humane Society to be a signatory as well. The bill is in the Civil Justice Committee.

 **Pennsylvania SB 176** would add animal control and humane society police officers to the list of individuals mandated to report possible child abuse, and social services employees to report possible cases of animal cruelty. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



 **Pennsylvania HB 1238 ("Libre's Law")** was signed into law on June 28. It used Link premises to overhaul the state's anti-cruelty statutes with enhanced penalties, and grants immunity from civil and criminal liability for veterinarians, technicians and assistants who report suspected animal abuse.

 **Rhode Island H5392** would have required all child protection and domestic violence caseworkers to report suspected animal abuse to animal control and humane agencies, and that animal control and humane officers be mandated to report suspected child abuse and domestic violence to child protection and domestic violence agencies. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.**

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Trio Face 113 Charges of Animal and Child Abuse After Kennel is Raided



Sheboygan County Deputies and Humane Society officers rescue the dogs

dogs, was also charged with 36 counts of failing to provide proper food and drink to confined animals. The child maltreatment charges apparently stemmed from an unidentified 16-year-old boy who worked at the kennel who claimed the trio blamed him for the dogs' dying of starvation after he was told to ration the food. He said Tichel told him that he made her want to kill herself and that he would lose everything if he reported the kennel's conditions to anyone. The surviving golden retrievers and Bernese mountain dogs were reportedly recuperating at the Sheboygan County Humane Society.

A couple who ran a dilapidated kennel in Wilson, Wis., have each been charged with mental harm to a child and 37 counts of animal cruelty, after sheriff's deputies rescued 37 starving and infected dogs and found dozens more dead dogs packed in two freezers. The [Sheboygan Press](#) reported that Christie Tichel, 38, and Anthony Keyport, 31, owned the Kinship Companions kennel, whose permit had been revoked in 2015, and had stopped feeding the dogs on a regular basis.

Tichel's daughter Breanna Mikula, 20, who had been assigned by the pair to feed the

- ☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☐ Other Crimes
☒ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Man Accused of Drowning Dog, Attempting to Drown Girlfriend



Harry M. Lewis

A Kailua, Hawai'i man has been indicted on charges of attempting to kill his girlfriend and drowning her dog. Harry Martin Lewis, 40, was indicted for attempted murder, animal cruelty and terroristic threatening following an argument with his girlfriend, [KHON-TV](#) reported. Police and the Hawaiian Humane Society said the woman, 42, went in to the bathroom and allegedly found Lewis holding the dog's head under water. Sources said he then tried to drown her in the bathtub as well but she yelled for help and her roommates intervened. The dog reportedly died. "Animal abuse, harming or killing an animal, sends a strong message to the victim that I can harm the animals just as easy. I can harm or kill you," said Marci Lopes, deputy director of Hawaii's Domestic Violence Action Center.

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☒ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☐ Other Crimes
☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Repeat Animal Sexual Abuser Charged with Sexually Assaulting Horses

A Green Bay, Wis. man with a history of sexually molesting horses is scheduled to be tried on Dec. 14 in Manitowoc County Circuit Court. Sterling Rachwal, 54, has pled not guilty to the animal sexual abuse charges and is also facing trial in Brown County, Wis., on similar charges. The Green Bay [Press-Gazette](#) called Rachwal an accused "horse molester" and noted he has been charged with intentionally mistreating animals, disorderly conduct and resisting an officer. According to court documents, Rachwal was said to have been seen running out of a stall of a horse-boarding stable in Eaton, Wis. where the horse had been assaulted.



Sterling Rachwal

Rachwal was convicted of similar incidents in the 1980s and 1990s and was found not guilty by reason of insanity and was held at Mendota Mental Health Institute until 2008. He was convicted of disorderly conduct in Fond du Lac County in 2010 and was returned to Mendota until being released in 2015. He reportedly also has a history of arson in Nevada and California.

☐ Animal Abuse ☒ Animal Sexual Abuse ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☒ Other Crimes
☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Man Charged with Multiple Offenses in Theft of Ex-Girlfriend's Dog



George Degrandis

A man charged with violating a protective order and repeatedly breaking into his ex-girlfriend's home was arrested after allegedly stealing her dog and leading police on a lengthy pursuit through several Connecticut towns. [WFSB-TV](#) reported that George Degrandis, 39, of New Britain, broke into the woman's house and stole her dog on Oct. 27 and drove off through Southington and New Britain before finally being stopped in Middletown. He was charged with violating a protective order, burglary, larceny, operating a motor vehicle without insurance and registration, and reckless driving. Police said he had outstanding warrants charging him with violation of the protective order, burglary, criminal mischief and disorderly conduct from an Oct. 1 incident, plus similar charges stemming from an Oct. 18 incident.

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☒ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☒ Other Crimes
☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Boyfriend Charged with Cruelty in Dog Shooting



Police said this dog was shot over a domestic dispute

A Hartford, Conn. man who was reportedly angry about a domestic dispute was charged with animal cruelty and numerous other violations on Oct. 27. Police transported a dog suffering from a gunshot wound to the jaw to a veterinary hospital for emergency attention that required surgery. [WFSB-TV](#) reported that detectives from the Focused Violence Reduction Team arrested Tyshawn Virtue and seized 34 live 9mm rounds, a bulletproof vest, and a semi-automatic firearm. Virtue was also charged with criminal possession of a firearm, body armor and ammunition, other weapons offenses, reckless endangerment, disorderly conduct, cruelty to animals, and violation of a protection order. He was being held on \$500,000 bond.

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☒ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☒ Other Crimes
☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Mom Charged with Child and Animal Endangerment in Feces-Strewn House

A Des Moines, Iowa woman is facing three counts of child endangerment, four counts of animal neglect, and one count of neglect of a dependent person after police found her dogs and feces-covered children left alone in deplorable conditions. Destinee Miller, 25, was arrested after police found three children, ages 4, 2 and 1, playing outside. The 4-year-old was reportedly responsible for the care of his younger siblings, the [Des Moines Register](#) reported. The 2-year old was reportedly naked and covered in feces from head to toe; the 1-year old was wearing only a diaper that was full. The house was said to be filled with human waste and hundreds of mounds of dog feces and urine. The dogs were turned over to the Animal Rescue League of Iowa and the children were taken into DHS custody.



Destinee Miller

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☒ Other Crimes
☒ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse



Man Gets Prison for Body-Slamming Girlfriend's Dog

A Bronx, N.Y. man who abused his girlfriend's puppy so badly that she lost a leg was sentenced to a year in jail – despite his girlfriend's testimony that the dog had only fallen down the stairs. Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark got Roberto Martinez to plead guilty to felony aggravated cruelty, the [New Jersey Herald](#) reported. The dog, a mixed-breed named "Sally," underwent surgery by the ASPCA; she is now living in a new home. The incident occurred in September 2016 when Martinez lifted Sally, then eight months old, to his shoulder height and slammed her to the floor. Veterinarians found evidence of prior abuse, including broken ribs which are often a telltale sign of repeated physical abuse.

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☒ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse
☐ Other Crimes ☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Man Charged with Cruelty for Hurling Chihuahua in Front of 3-year-old Girl



Jeffery Scott Thornton

Jeffery Scott Thornton, 51, of Moreland, Ga., was charged with animal cruelty for allegedly throwing a 12-year-old Chihuahua across a back yard in front of several family members, including his girlfriend and a 3-year-old girl. The [Newnan Times-Herald](#) reported that Thornton's girlfriend said he had been drinking and threatening to shoot his neighbor's cats when he allegedly threw the dog, named "Tiny," some 10 to 15 yards. Thornton reportedly told investigators he didn't mean to throw the dog that far or to hurt it.

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☒ Other Crimes
☒ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse



N.H. Man Gets One Year for Strangling Ex-Girlfriend's Cats

A Keene, N.H. man who was indicted in March ([See the April 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) on two felony charges of strangling his girlfriend's cats to death pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor counts. Dale Adam Johnson, 22, entered the pleas in Cheshire County Superior Court on Oct. 25 in the deaths of "Honey" and Bo." Johnson's ex-girlfriend, who was present in the courtroom, declined the offer of including a no-contact order

Dale Adam Johnson in the sentence, according to The [Manchester Union-Leader](#). Johnson was sentenced to one year in jail, with 180 days suspended for good behavior, plus two years' probation. "Even though this isn't a domestic violence case per se, there is a strong correlation between the two," said Judge David Ruoff in handing down the sentence. "It's a huge red flag when there is this kind of conduct against an animal."

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☒ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse
☐ Other Crimes ☐ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse

Connecticut Woman Charged with Child and Animal Abuse

Police in Shelton, Conn. charged a woman with assault of an intellectually disabled person, risk of injury to a child and cruelty to animals after finding a boy with cuts and bruises all over his body and a cat that was so badly neglected that it had to be euthanized. [NBC Connecticut](#) reported that Faith Taylor was under investigation by a state Department of Children and Families caseworkers for a special needs child who called detectives for assistance. The officers found a cat that appeared to be dead, but later heard a faint sound from the cat, which was then transported to a veterinary clinic where it had to be euthanized. Connecticut requires child protection workers to report suspected animal abuse.



Faith Taylor

☒ Animal Abuse ☐ Animal Sexual Abuse ☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Elder Abuse ☐ Other Crimes
☒ Child Abuse and Neglect ☐ Child Sexual Abuse



Gage White

Man Charged with Using Taser on Dog and Threatening Neighbors

Police in Rochester, N. H., arrested Gage White, 22, on charges of animal cruelty and assault for allegedly using a taser gun twice on his dog, "Cario," and threatening to also use it on his neighbors. [NBC-Boston](#) reported that the veterinarian caring for Cario said it was the first time in 42 years of practice that he had seen a dog who had been tased. Cario will be adopted to a new owner. The owner of the trailer park where

White lives is filing a restraining order to keep White out of the park. "If he's willing to do something like that to a dog that's innocent, then what else could he do?" the manager asked.

☒ **Animal Abuse** ☐ **Animal Sexual Abuse** ☒ **Domestic Violence** ☐ **Elder Abuse** ☒ **Other Crimes**
☐ **Child Abuse and Neglect** ☐ **Child Sexual Abuse**

Dog Killed During Home Invasion and Robbery

Oklahoma City police are looking for an armed couple who shot a woman's dog to death during a home invasion robbery in which she was also badly beaten. [The Oklahoman](#) said that Gabrielle Wooldridge, 22, was sleeping on Oct. 8 when she heard someone trying to kick in her door. She called 911, where dispatchers heard the couple shoot and kill her German shepherd named "Dutch" and then attack her. Police arrived at the scene moments later but the assailants had escaped.

☒ **Animal Abuse** ☐ **Animal Sexual Abuse** ☐ **Domestic Violence** ☐ **Elder Abuse** ☒ **Other Crimes**
☐ **Child Abuse and Neglect** ☐ **Child Sexual Abuse**

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Nov. 15-17 – Portland, Ore.: The [7th National Animal Cruelty Conference](#), sponsored by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will be held. Speakers will include Diane Balkin, Thomas A. Balmer, Madeline Bernstein, Don Cocek, Emily Davidson, Gillian Deegan, April Doherty, Laura Dunn, Sherwin Figueroa, Jeremy Hoffman, Jill Hollander, Jake Kamins, Mark Kumpf, David LaBahn, Howard Lawrence, Adam Lippe, Randy Lockwood, Martin Mack, Melinda Merck, David Rosengard, John Thompson, Michelle Welch, and Bunny Welsh.

Nov. 15 – Pittsfield, Mass.: The [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) Network will kick off another season of meetings, presentations and collaboration at the Berkshire Humane Society.

Nov. 15 – London, United Kingdom: [The Links Group UK](#) will meet at Dogs Trust.

Nov. 17 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: Hayley Glaholt from [Link Coalition Toronto](#), and John Stevens from the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, will present on The Link at Peel Family Mediation Service's annual domestic violence symposium.

Nov. 24 – Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Allie Phillips will present on Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)TM at the [International Fund for Animal Welfare](#) convention.

Dec. 1 – Aurora, Colo.: The [Aurora Link Steering Committee](#) will meet.

Dec. 4 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada: An Animal [Cruelty Pre-Conference for Crown Prosecutors](#) and allied professionals will be held by the National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty, as the opening day for the Canadian Link Conference.

Dec. 4-6 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada: The inaugural Canadian Link Conference will be held, under the auspices of the [Canadian Federation of Humane Societies](#).

Dec. 14 – (Online): Allie Phillips will lead a [webinar](#) for the Institute for Human-Animal Connection on “Advances in Human-Animal Interaction Laws” including domestic violence pet protection, cross-reporting, pets in women’s shelters, and more. LINK-Letter readers can use the code CHANGE for one-time free access.

Dec. 14 – Albuquerque, N.Mex.: Tammy Fiebelkorn, President of Positive Links, and Grants Police Chief Marty Vigil will present on “The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence” at the 21st Century Conference of the [New Mexico Association of Chiefs of Police](#).

Jan. 11, 2018 – (Online): Phil Arkow and Amber Ahern will lead a webinar on “How to Build a Successful and Sustainable Link Coalition” as part of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection’s Interconnected Webinar Series. [Registration](#) is free for LINK-Letter readers: use Promo Code COSHELTER.

Jan. 18 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link to the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s [Animal Law Committee](#).

Jan. 23 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at the Regional Food Bank.

Feb. 15 – (Online): Allie Phillips will lead a [webinar](#) for the Institute for Human-Animal Connection on “Linked-Informed Response: Changing Agency Procedures” about how human and animal welfare agencies, prosecutors, law enforcement, and allied professionals are changing their policies and procedures. LINK-Letter readers can use the code CHANGE for one-time free access.

March 9 – Dallas, Texas: Phil Arkow will speak at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#)’s CEU Conference.

March 21 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Phil Arkow will speak to the Animals and Social Work class at the University of Pennsylvania [School of Social Policy & Practice](#).

May 11 – Richmond, Va.: Phil Arkow will present on “Species-Spanning Medicine: The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence” at the Virginia Commonwealth University [Department of Psychiatry](#)’s Grand Rounds.

June 5 – Bloomington, Ill.: Phil Arkow will present at the [Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference](#).

July 6 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Phil Arkow will present on The Link, Clinical and Diagnostic Indicators of Animal Abuse, and Addressing Practice Management Concerns in Responding to Suspected Abuse at the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#) Convention.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) Please 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,
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Stratford, N.J.

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