



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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JUNE 15 IS WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... ELDER & DISABLED ABUSE

National Link Coalition Summit Focuses on Elder Abuse Issues

The National Link Coalition convened our biennial “Summit,” an opportunity for members of our steering committee to gather face-to-face and to learn more about new developments in the many areas of interest encompassed by The Link between animal abuse and human violence. The meeting was held in Oakland, Calif., to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Latham Foundation who graciously hosted our meeting.

Our 2018 “idea forum” featured a detailed track focusing on abuse of the elderly and disabled. Candace Heisler, a retired assistant district attorney from San Francisco, provided an overview of adult protection, the demographics of an aging society, and how elder abuse is severely under-reported. She described the differences between child and adult protective services and how abuse of the elderly and disabled frequently involves polyvictimization. The elder abuse field has fewer laws, specialized training for law enforcement, and offender interventions than child abuse and domestic violence are accustomed to, while the elderly population are more vulnerable due to cognitive and medical issues and societal attitudes about the elderly.

Lori Delagrammatikas, President-Elect of the National Adult Protective Services Association and APS Liaison with the California DSS, described the lack of uniformity in adult protection services across the U.S. She listed areas of interest Linking the adult and animal protection communities, including: animal hoarding, which is often a sign of self-neglect; APS clients who need to be moved into a higher level of care but who refuse to go without their animals; APS clients who lack the capacity for proper animal care and the animals are neglected as a result; and seniors who refuse to go into emergency shelters during a disaster unless their pets can accompany them.

Mary Twomey, Aging Services Program Specialist for the U.S. Administration for Community Living, described how federal funding for adult protective services was initiated only in 2010 and is a minuscule fraction of funding available for child protection. Her Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services was created only in 2014.

Other speakers included: Bernie Unti of the Humane Society of the U.S., who described the history and future of humane education as an antidote to human violence; Diane Balkin noted how the criminal justice system needs to become more user- and victim-friendly; and Martha Smith-Blackmore, who described her entrance into veterinary forensics and how such evidence is helping to win animal cruelty cases in court.



Nicole Forsyth (above, left) of RedRover, and Allie Phillips, of Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)TM brought us up-to-date on the status of pet-friendly co-housing programs in domestic violence shelters and funding opportunities to help shelters construct pet facilities. Jennifer Woolf (lower left) described the new frontier of veterinary forensics and how successful prosecutions require a team effort that includes veterinarians. Nuria Querol of Spain's Observatorio de Violencia Hacia los Animales described the status of Link programs, coalitions and awareness in Europe. Coursework on The Link is being taught in several Spanish universities, including the University of Barcelona, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, and the Universidad de Murcia.



Link Issues Included in Federal Guidelines for APS Agencies

The National Link Coalition was pleased to learn that several of our suggestions regarding the impact of animals and animal abuse on the elderly and disabled have been incorporated into the federal government's guidelines for state Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies.



The Administration for Community Living (ACL) invited comments from stakeholders to be incorporated into the [Final National Voluntary Consensus Guidelines](#) for State Adult Protective Services Systems, published in September, 2016. The process to create the Guidelines began in 2014 and included reviews of state APS practices and minimum practice standards across the U.S. The Guidelines are intended to serve not as federal regulations, mandates nor legal obligations, but rather to provide state APS administrators with recommendations from the field about quality APS practice.

The National Link Coalition was invited as a stakeholder to submit suggestions to include Link issues in such APS areas as program administration, processes for receiving and responding to reports, screening and triaging reports of maltreatment, investigation procedures, service planning and intervention, and training for case workers and supervisors. Three of our specific recommendations were included:

Program administration:

- To improve communities' response to adult maltreatment, it is recommended that APS systems create policies and protocols to promote their collaboration with other entities during investigations and interventions, including animal welfare organizations.

Receiving reports of maltreatment:

- When receiving reports, the system should have a standardized process for eliciting and documenting the content of the report, including, risks that may be encountered by an APS worker in responding to this report (e.g., presence of animals in the home).

Conducting the investigation:

- The needs/risk assessment needs to include criticality or safety of the client's environmental conditions including presence of abused, dangerous or hoarded animals in the home.

ACL further recognized the important roles pets play in the well-being of elderly and disabled individuals, and the potential health and safety concerns related to the pets themselves, by citing several comments from reviewers. While not specifically included in the Guidelines, the comments were added in an appendix:

"For many elders and people with disabilities pets are a very important part of their lives. In fact, they assist in a variety of ways, including emotional well-being."

"To create a truly integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary system supporting interagency coordination, we suggest that APS agencies should take into account the emotional support, individual and public health issues, and environmental and safety risks presented by clients' pets. Interagency coordination between APS and animal services currently exists in several areas but has not been codified into national guidelines. APS collaborations with other entities, as needed, should include veterinary and animal welfare and control agencies."

“Screening reports should identify presence of abused, dangerous or hoarded animals in the home.”

The Guidelines were one of several “building blocks” that ACL feels are needed to develop an effective network of APS systems across the nation. Historically, there has been no federal “home” nor a designated federal appropriation for APS; instead, states and local agencies have developed significant variations affecting the populations served, settings in which services are available, timeliness of responses, types of services provided, and relationships with other service providers and the justice system. Because the APS system is designed and administered at the state or local level, as a national system it is fragmented and unequal.

The other “building blocks” identified were:

- A national Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services housed at ACL.
- Support for effective APS practice through a National Adult Protective Services Resource Center.
- A national APS data collection system which will help inform research on appropriate interventions for older adults and adults with disabilities.

The 114-page Guidelines envision a comprehensive, multidisciplinary system that effectively supports older adults and adults with disabilities so they can exercise their right to live where they choose, with the people they choose, and to fully participate in their communities without threat of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation. They serve APS programs that are often the gateway for adult maltreatment victims who need additional community, social, health, behavioral health, and legal services to maintain independence, as well as the avenue through which their maltreatment is reported to the criminal justice system.

Disabled Residents Seen as Risk Factor for Animal Neglect

The presence of disabled individuals in a home was identified as one of the four most significant risk factors for animals for animals in the household to be neglected. Brazilian researchers sought to identify the associated factors of companion animal neglect in the family environment by following up on the records of animal abuse investigations of the Protection Animal Division of the city of Pinhais, in the state of Paraná.

The researchers considered socioeconomic factors about the owners and four types of indicators: nutritional, comfort, health, and behavioral. A binomial logistic regression model was fitted in order to predict the presence of animal neglect based on predictor variables. The number of animals in the household, disadvantageous economic conditions, the presence of disabled people, and a low educational level of the owners were identified as associated factors of animal neglect. The authors concluded that understanding the factors related to the occurrence of animal neglect is fundamental for the development of multidisciplinary preventive strategies to reduce the occurrence of this crime.

-- Monsalve, S., Hammerschmidt, J., Izar, M.L., Marconcin, S., & Rizzato, F., et al. (2018, May 28).
Associated factors of companion animal neglect in the family environment in Pinhais, Brazil.
Preventive Veterinary Medicine.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Conference Announces First Shelter Specifically Built for Co-Living

"Coco has that innocence and light and excitement when you come home, so you don't have to think about the trauma going on in your life. In order for the healing process to begin, all of us needed to be settled."

With these emotional words describing the importance of co-sheltering pets with women and children fleeing domestic violence, survivor Hope Dawson, accompanied by her dog, "Coco," helped the Urban Resource Institute's People and Animals Living Safely program ([URIPALS](#)) formally announce what will be the nation's first domestic violence shelter built specifically to accommodate both people and their pets.



The announcement was made at a formal conference in New York, where a live audience of some 100 thought leaders – plus an online Facebook stream with over 7,600 viewers – learned about the new shelter, being constructed in Brooklyn with an anticipated opening this Fall. The new facility, called PALS Place, is being supported in part by Purina, which hopes to develop this as a model co-living facility that can be replicated in other cities nationally.

A panel of national and local authorities led a lively 2-¹/₂ hour discussion about "Protecting the Hidden Victim," how The Link impacts pets experiencing domestic violence. URIPALS has retrofitted four of its shelters in New York to accommodate pets, with a fifth shelter being retrofitted later this year, but PALS Place will be the first such site where each apartment unit will be specifically built for co-living.

Several executives from Purina were on hand to explain their support for the program. "We believe that pets and people are better together, and that people are better with pets," said Kurt Venator, DVM, Ph.D., Purina's Chief Veterinary Officer. "PALS Place will be a place where all members of the family can heal together for a smoother transition and recovery."



Nationally syndicated pet columnist Steve Dale (left) leads the panel discussion at the "Protecting the Hidden Victim" conference. Panelists included, from left, URIPALS President & CEO Nat Fields; Purina Chief Veterinary Officer Kurt Venator; former URIPALS resident Hope Dawson; NYC Mayor's Office Commissioner to Combat Domestic Violence Cecile Noel; National Domestic Violence Resource Center CEO Anne Menard; and forensic veterinarian Melinda Merck. Also on the panel were Animal Welfare Institute Director of Government Affairs Nancy Blaney and National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow.

Study Explores Links Between Childhood Animal Cruelty, Antisocial Personality Disorder and Domestic Violence

This study examined associations between animal cruelty, intimate partner violence and antisocial personality disorder among 42 incarcerated men with histories of intimate partner violence. The researchers hypothesized that men with antisocial personality disorders diagnoses would report greater exposure to, and perpetration of, animal cruelty and more severe intimate partner violence. They also expected that lifetime exposure to, and perpetration of, animal cruelty would be associated with higher rates of intimate partner violence and more animal abuse within that context.

The researchers found that rates of animal cruelty were high in this population: 36% of participants had experienced childhood animal cruelty; 81% perpetrated animal cruelty in their lifetime; 85.7% had been exposed to animal cruelty during their lifetime; 38% used threats against animals during a relationship conflict; and 52% had abused and/or killed a pet during a relationship conflict.

Histories of childhood animal cruelty were significantly related to increased use of psychological abuse and sexual coercion in the context of intimate relationships, as well as threats to, and actual perpetration of, animal abuse during relationship conflicts. However, antisocial personality disorder was not related to animal cruelty in the context of intimate partner violence.

-- Haden, S.C., McDonald, S.E., Ascione, F.R., & Blakelock, H. (2018). An exploratory study of domestic violence: Perpetrators' reports of violence against animals. *Anthrozoös*, 31(3), 337-352.

Animal Abuse Included in Batterers' Risk Assessments



COLORADO
Division of Criminal Justice
Department of Public Safety

The State of Colorado Domestic Violence Offender Management Board (DVOMB) has included a question related to animal abuse within an extensive [Domestic Violence Risk and Needs Assessment](#) (DVRNA). Every batterer intervention program in Colorado is

required to screen for risks which include animal abuse or neglect and use such findings as a factor in how long an offender must undergo court-ordered treatment by a board-certified therapist.

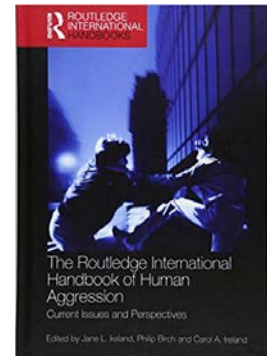
The DVRNA was developed in 2010 and has undergone several iterations in intervening years to identify empirically-based, predictive risk factors that should be considered when working with offenders in treatment. The 5th edition of the DVRNA Scoring Manual, published in 2016, contains 14 domains of risk deemed most highly predictive of future violence, based upon extensive literature reviews, clinical experience and knowledge from participants in the criminal justice system. The DVRNA assigns offenders a total score based upon risk.

The domains include: prior domestic violence incidents or other criminal history, including animal cruelty; drug or alcohol abuse; mental health issues; suicidal or homicidal ideation; use, threats, or access to weapons and firearms; obsessive stalking of the victim; safety concerns; spousal assault; separation; unemployment; violence to other family members including child abuse; and association with criminals. The number of risk factors that are checked in the assessment is used to help determine the offender's risk status.

It is not known how many other states have similar standards or include questions about animal abuse as a precursor to domestic violence.

Link Chapter Included in Handbook on Human Aggression

Describing family violence as a serious global health issue that encompasses a range of abusive acts including intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect, Shelby McDonald has added additional insights into the Links between intimate partner violence and animal maltreatment through the mechanism of coercive control. Citing extensive studies indicating how perpetrators may be more likely to employ animal maltreatment as a coercive tactic when their partner has a strong bond or emotional attachment to the animal, she describes numerous issues involved in these Links. They include: aggression toward pets as physical punishment and animal discipline; the impact upon children exposed to animal-directed aggression; the psychosocial consequences of childhood exposure to animal abuse; and how such exposure leads to callous and unemotional traits. She offers implications for practice for professionals working with abused women and children.



- McDonald, S.E. (2018). *Animal maltreatment in households experiencing family violence*. In, J.L. Ireland, P. Birch, & C.A. Ireland (Eds.). *The Routledge International Handbook of Human Aggression*. New York: Routledge, pp. 183-193.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD ABUSE

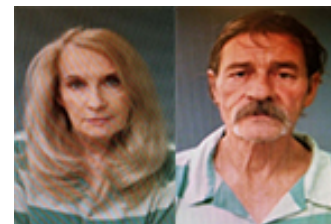
CPS Report Results in Seizure of 140 Animals from Alleged Puppy Mill



Child protective services caseworkers visiting a home in Honey Grove, Texas, made a shocking discovery and reported a case of suspected animal cruelty, resulting in the seizure of 140 animals from the home. The [SPCA of Texas](#) reported that its investigators, working with the Fannin County Sheriff's Office last January, obtained a warrant to seize the animals from the home which was operating as an alleged puppy mill. The animals included 117 dogs, 21 puppies and two cats who were all living in filthy cages, crates and kennels, with up to three dogs in each. The SPCA said a

structure behind the residence, where many of the animals were housed, was infested with roaches which were found crawling all over the dogs and cats. The entire structure was coated in feces and drenched in urine and the stench was so strong that it caused investigators to gag and could be smelled from well outside the facility. All of the animals were found to have health issues.

It was not clear what action was taken regarding the children at the property, but Cindy Oliver and Mitchell Gilbert were arrested and charged with 140 counts of Class A Misdemeanor Cruelty to Non-Livestock Animals and ordered to make \$33,338.85 in restitution to the SPCA of Texas for the costs of the investigation and animals' care. SPCA officials said they did not realistically expect to receive such restitution.



Cindy Oliver and Mitchell Gilbert

Texas law neither requires nor permits CPS workers from reporting suspected animal abuse, as is the practice in 12 other states.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

San Diego Prosecutor Initiates Animal Cruelty Unit

The San Diego County, Calif. District Attorney's Office is the latest among a growing list of prosecutors around the U.S. to develop a specialized Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit to provide "investigative support and dedicated expertise for animal abuse cases" which are increasingly being seen as Linked to other crimes.



Summer Stephan

"Animal cruelty can be horrific. It is also one of the earliest and most dramatic indicators that an individual may be developing a pattern of seeking power and control through abusing others," District Attorney Summer Stephan told the [*Times of San Diego*](#). "When animals in a home are abused or neglected, it is a warning sign that others in the household may be in danger. Often, animal abuse crimes also have a nexus to mental illness."

Since 2014, the DA's office has prosecuted 248 animal cruelty-related cases, many of which resulted in lengthy prison sentences for defendants with previous criminal histories. The new unit will be housed within the Family Protection Division and will work closely with police, sheriff's deputies, city and county animal control officers, the San Diego Humane Society, and others. Cases will be handled "vertically," with one prosecutor handling the case from beginning to end.

San Diego County has the second-largest DA's office in California, with over 1,000 employees. Stephan has a national reputation as a leader in the fight against sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

"The creation of the animal cruelty unit is an important step in holding people accountable for their actions," said Dan DeSousa, director of the San Diego County Department of Animal Services. "Together with the animal control and humane officers, the District Attorney's Office will now help protect those without a voice, namely the animals in our communities."

ASPCA, Animal Services Train Miami Police in Cruelty Investigation

Noting that animal cruelty cases are often Linked to other crimes, [NBC-6 TV](#) in Miami on May 8 featured a partnership that is training police officers in South Florida to detect and respond to animal cruelty cases. The training, a partnership between the ASPCA, Miami-Dade Animal Services, and the Miami-Dade Police Department, will help the anti-cruelty task force address some 900 cases of animal abuse each year.

The task force also provides veterinary care to neglected pets and provides legal support in investigations. More than two dozen officers received the training on May 8.

"Sometimes you respond to a scene that maybe it's a domestic violence situation and there's a pet that is malnourished and you may not be able to identify that if you are not trained in that area," said Animal Services Director Luis Munoz.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

Louisiana Updates Bestiality Law

While Louisiana statutes had prohibitions against bestiality, the statutory language was archaic and was categorized as a “crime against nature” in the same definition of homosexuality ([See the April 2018 LINK-Letter](#)).

SB 236 creates a new statute, R.S. 14:89.3, creating the new crime of “sexual abuse of an animal” with numerous activities outlawed including animal pornography. The new law sets enhanced penalties and provisions for removal of the animal, psychological evaluation for sex offenders, and prohibitions against offenders living, working or volunteering with animals for five years or more. The bill was signed into law on May 25 by Gov. John Bel Edwards and became effective immediately.

Effectiveness of Animal Abuse Offender Registries Debated

“Animal abuse is a bridge crime,” said New York State Sen. Jim Tedisco, who sponsored a bill in one of 12 states that are considering legislation to create registries of animal abusers. But while it makes intuitive sense that such lists could raise red flags about people who may commit other violent crimes, some animal welfare advocates question how effective the registries really can be.

The registry movement started in 2014 in several counties in New York as a way to prevent animal abusers from adopting or purchasing other pets. In 2016, Tennessee instituted what is the only statewide registry, but bills are pending in Connecticut, Hawai‘i, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. Several other counties, including those around Chicago and Tampa, have also enacted such ordinances.

But [WGN](#) in Chicago reported that there are questions over the effectiveness of the registries. “Given the limited scope, reach and utilization of animal abuse registries, it is unlikely they would have any significant impact on the incidence of animal cruelty,” said Randall Lockwood, Senior Vice President of Anti-Cruelty Projects for the ASPCA and a member of the National Link Coalition’s Steering Committee. He noted that the number of individuals who wind up on the registries is tiny: Tennessee has only 14. Lockwood also cites experience from the sex abuse offenders’ registries which have had the unintended consequence of increasing the number of plea bargains resulting in reduced charges and even dismissals; courts and prosecutors see the felony charge for failure to register as too burdensome. In addition, the costs of implementing and maintaining a registry are excessive, straining limited state resources; he estimates Connecticut’s costs would be \$200,000 annually.



Randall Lockwood



Leighann Lassiter

Leighann Lassiter of the Humane Society of the US similarly notes that while HSUS agrees with the motivation behind the registries, it’s already possible to do a nationwide background check on potential pet adopters’ criminal records, which would reveal not only cruelty convictions but also other violent crimes.

Lockwood suggests a more effective approach is for communities to strengthen their anti-cruelty laws, issue no-contact orders to prevent offenders from having contact with animals, ordering mandatory psychiatric counseling for offenders, and expanding domestic violence protection orders to include pets, as 32 states have already done. The ASPCA has issued a [policy statement](#) on the subject of animal abuser registries.

Link Webinar Series Scheduled

The National Sheriffs' Association has announced a series of five online webinars addressing the adverse issues of human-animal encounters. The webinars, conducted by some of the leading authorities in The Link and animal cruelty forensics and prosecutions, are offered through the Justice Clearinghouse. Registration is free and available on the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) website.

On May 22, veterinary forensics consultant Melinda Merck conducted a webinar on "The Path from Animal Abuse to Human Abuse," describing the important role that veterinary forensics can play in both animal- and human-related crimes. She described how animal cruelty investigations can support other types of cases.



Melinda Merck

Jessica Rock, co-founder of Animal Law Source, will present three webinars. On June 26 she will address "Animal Cruelty and the Link to Collateral Crimes," describing how



Jessica Rock

and Prosecutions."

animal abuse is no longer considered a peripheral concern for law enforcement but rather part of a larger nexus of such crimes as illegal firearms possession, narcotics trafficking, gambling, child pornography, and more. Taking animal cruelty seriously can lead to identification of other crimes involving humans.

On Dec. 13, Rock will present on "Animal Cruelty Investigations and Prosecutions," and on Feb. 21, 2019 she will discuss more specialized "Dog Fighting Investigations

and Prosecutions."

On Sept. 11, John Thompson, Deputy Executive Director/COO for the National Sheriffs' Association, will present on "The Dynamics of Officer-Involved Shootings of Dogs." He will discuss how officers' shooting of family pets presents an enormous community relations problem that erodes the public's faith in law enforcement.



John Thompson

Police Dogs Get Revenge in Sexual Assault Investigations



A police officer puts "Ziva" through her paces

It's long been known that pets are often the hidden victims in domestic violence situations, pawns that are singled out by batterers, harmed and killed to warn the human victims that they might be the next targets. Now, in an ironic twist, Dutch dogs are getting their revenge.

Dutch police have trained dogs to sniff out semen as a means to catch rapists. A trial program initiated in 2015 has proven so successful that authorities said it has become a part of sexual assault investigations, according to [Newsweek](#).

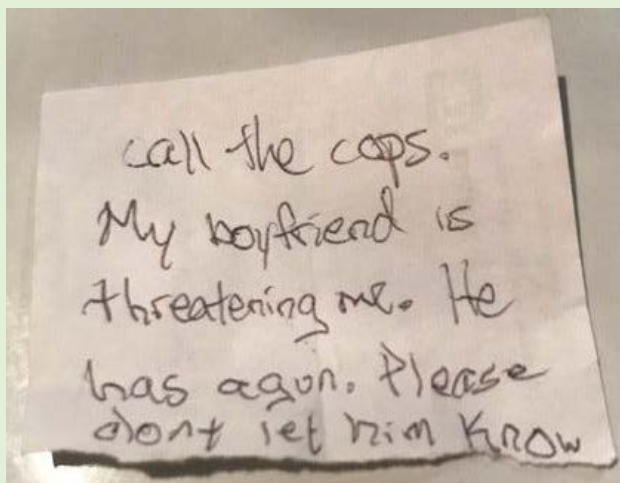
Five dogs were used by officers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and in the eastern part of the Netherlands in as many as 80 cases; a sixth dog will now be trained to join the special unit, which is part of a group of 120 dogs that a dedicated police department trains to sniff out drugs, explosives and money.

The dogs can be trained to detect the smell of human semen using a sample as small as 0.05 milliliters. It took "Ziva," a crossbreed between a Dutch and Malinois shepherd, only 30 minutes to find an invisible drop of semen her handler drizzled on a tree stump in a forest. A trained semen-sniffing dog can find traces up to a week after the assault takes place, authorities said.

Police noted that in at least one case, a sniffing dog played a crucial role in finding key evidence in a rape investigation. The animal discovered traces of semen on a tree twig that led to a DNA match and a conviction.

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Veterinarian Calls Cops to Rescue Woman Held Captive at Gunpoint



A veterinarian in Deland, Fla. came to the rescue of a woman who had been beaten and held captive at gunpoint for two days when she slipped a note to a staff member. The Volusia County Sheriff's Office told the [Daytona Beach News-Journal](#) that she was able to escape by convincing her abusive boyfriend that her dog needed to go to the animal hospital.

"Call the cops. My boyfriend is threatening me. He has a gun. Please don't let him know," the unidentified woman wrote on a note in the bathroom before secretly slipping it to a staff member.

Jeremy Floyd, 39, was arrested at the clinic and charged with domestic violence, false imprisonment, battery, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Floyd has been convicted of burglary, sale of cocaine and grand theft. The woman was treated at a hospital for head injuries, bruises and scratches.



Link Training Reaches Veterinarians in Belgium

Freda Scott-Park and Paula Boyden of our British affiliate [The Links Group UK](#) joined colleagues in the veterinary forensics field to present on the complexities of issues of recognizing and responding to animal abuse in Brussels, Belgium, on May 4-5. The event was part of a [Symposium](#) organized by the Small Animal Veterinary Association Belgium (SAVAB). Other speakers included Nienke Endenburg and Andrea Gröne from the Netherlands. The Links Group's participation was part of its veterinary training initiative.

Australian Veterinarians Learn About Domestic Violence Links



Lesca Sofyan

The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence received significant attention in the news media and at the recent Australian Veterinary Association conference in Brisbane, as two speakers presented on the topic. Lesca Sofyan was featured in [The Daily Telegraph](#) for her efforts to shine a light on the forgotten victims in homes where domestic violence occurs – the pets. Sofyan, 25, is a second-year veterinary student and was the only student selected to present. She reported findings from her masters and honors projects that reported that 90% of domestic violence survivors delayed leaving out of fear for the welfare of their pets.

“Even though we’ve got great women’s refuges it’s sometimes hard for victims to enter a shelter because they’re worried about what’s going to happen to their pets. They need their pets as well because they’re family,” she told the newspaper. She hopes to raise awareness and training among veterinarians to assist domestic violence shelters with these issues.



Magdoline Awad

Also presenting at the conference was Magdoline Awad, Chief Veterinary officer for PetSure Australia. She spoke about human behavior as it impacts animal abuse and domestic violence. The conference attracted nearly 1,000 veterinary professionals.

Veterinary Training Offered on Response to Domestic and Animal Abuse



Christine Goodall

In earlier issues ([October 2015](#), [May 2012](#)) of *The LINK-Letter*, we described the pioneering Medics Against Violence and government-funded programs in Scotland that are training veterinarians, dentists and beauticians -- identified as being most likely to encounter victims of domestic violence – in recognition and response techniques. We recently learned of a PowerPoint presentation that is [available online](#) describing a one-day training offered to veterinarians, including how to recognize the signs of domestic abuse and how to ask clients potentially uncomfortable questions.

“Training veterinary professionals to recognize and respond to human and animal victims of domestic abuse” is available as a free pdf download.

Christine Goodall, Peter Donnelly, Paula Boyden, Libby Anderson, and Freda Scott-Park presented this work at the 2014 American Public Health Association conference in New Orleans. They noted that “the veterinary team are well placed both to help the animal and to signpost human victims towards help.”



What is The LINK?

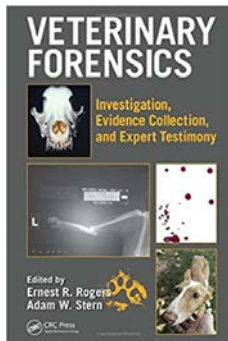
Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

*...to protect **ALL** vulnerable members of the family*



Veterinary Forensics Textbook Features The Link

A chapter on animal abuse and associated human behaviors, including such Link issues as domestic violence, animal hoarding, animal fighting, and other examples of human violence associated with animal cruelty, initiates an informative discussion of veterinary forensics in a new textbook. Co-editor Ernest R. Rogers, DVM, Ph.D., wrote the chapter in this book which offers applied, real-world investigation techniques for the collection of veterinary forensic medical information. Other chapters cover such topics as crime scene investigation, videography, bloodstain pattern analysis, forensic physical examinations, necropsies, radiology, bite marks, DNA evidence collection, toxicology, expert witness testimony, and report writing. National Link Coalition steering committee member Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, collaborated with co-editor Adam Stern on a chapter on animal sexual abuse.

- Rogers, E., & Stern, A.S. (2017). **Veterinary Forensics: Investigation, Evidence Collection, and Expert Testimony**. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Webinar Brings Link Awareness to Law Enforcement Professionals



John Thompson, Deputy Executive Director and Chief of Staff of the National Sheriffs Association, created several effective infographics for a [webinar](#) he conducted in February on behalf of the Justice Clearinghouse. “Partners in Crime: The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence” educated law enforcement professionals on why The Link is significant to them. Thompson serves on the National Link Coalition’s steering committee, the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals, and the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse

Link Training Comes to Estonia

What is believed to be the first discussion of The Link in the eastern European nation of Estonia is scheduled for June 14 at a “[Pop-Up Seminar](#)” at the Talinn University’s School of Natural Sciences and Health. Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers will present on “The LINK between Animal Cruelty, Domestic Violence, Elder Abuse, Child Abuse, and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence,” and Nathalie Norden will discuss “Experience in Sweden Making the LINK,” at the event, entitled “One Health, One Welfare: The Importance of Research, Education and Cooperation.”



Nathalie Norden (left) & Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers

Student-Led Study Explores Building Youths' Empathy by Adding Link to Domestic Violence School Awareness Programs

Humane educators attempt to inspire compassion and empathy among youth by promoting kindness to animals, but have difficulty getting programs into crowded curricula. Might these efforts be more effective by using a Link message embedded in existing school programs about gender inequality and respectful relationships that aim to reduce future domestic violence and sexual assault?



Carl Coorey-Ewings and Lyla Coorey

That was a question explored by Australian researchers Lyla Coorey, of the New South Wales Health Education Centre Against Violence, and Carl Coorey-Ewings, a student. They suggested that a preventive perspective to minimize adult abuse of both humans and their animals might be more effective by highlighting animal abuse within existing domestic violence school awareness programs. Such programs are still relatively rare in Australia but are seen as becoming wide-scale primary prevention programs.

Coorey-Ewings conducted a pilot program at his all-boys school, Trinity Grammar School, working with 39 teenagers. The study aimed to increase his classmates' level of knowledge of animal welfare and bonds with humans; increase their understanding of the Links between animal abuse and domestic and family violence; produce a change in attitudes towards and increase empathy for animals and females; and instill an enhanced sense of responsibility towards nurturing and protection of animals. Additionally, it was hoped the program would increase youths' level of confidence to intervene safely in situations where they witnessed abuse.

[Findings from the pilot](#) were positive. The study reported significant increases in students' confidence, their knowledge of animal abuse as Linked to human violence, and in their attitudes about the importance animals play in people's lives. 49% of students were strongly interested in learning more about preventing violence against animals and humans and 63% were willing to actively encourage others to feel compassion for animals to prevent neglect and cruelty.

The authors concluded that there is a platform for significant public education addressing animal abuse and its Link to domestic violence, not only in schools but also among health and domestic violence workers, police, legal professionals, veterinarians, animal shelters, zoos, community centers, local government councils, and veterinary colleges. Such programs would provide a foundation for promoting the inclusion of animals in domestic and family violence policies and service standards.

-- Coorey, L., & Coorey-Ewings, C. (2018). Animal victims of domestic and family violence: Raising youth awareness, *Animal Studies Journal*, 7(1),1-40.

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Link Legislation Gets Major Media Coverage



The Link between animal abuse and human violence was featured in an article in the May 10 editions of the [Boston Globe](#) describing how nearly 100 animal welfare advocates converging on the Massachusetts State House urged legislators to pass a landmark cross-reporting bill, [S. 2347](#). The measure would require child and adult protection officials to report suspected animal abuse to a police officer or special state police officer, and would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons.

“Animal advocates have long known about the link between animal abuse and violence toward humans. When there’s domestic violence in a home, the family pet can easily be used as a tool of manipulation, specialists say. The animals can also become victims of that abuse,” the Globe wrote.

“People do not leave that abusive, very bad relationship because they’re afraid of what is going to happen to their pet,” Dr. Edward Schettino, vice president of animal welfare and veterinary services at the Animal Rescue League of Boston, told the newspaper. “Or they can’t leave because they have to leave the pet behind and know the pet is going to be abused.”

Ruth Rollins, community coordinator of domestic violence outreach and support groups at the Elizabeth Stone House, told the *Globe* that some of her most difficult cases have involved victims of domestic violence who were fleeing unsafe situations but refused to give up their pets. One woman, who lived in her car with her dogs, began to blossom once advocates helped get her stabilized and into recovery programs. But the first step involved her knowing the dogs were in a safe place, too. “You think of animals as just animals, but they’re like their children,” Rollins said.



May 10 was Humane Lobby Day, and animal advocates went to the State House to talk to legislators about animal welfare bills. Other bills in the legislature include [S.295](#), which would make domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers mandated reporters of child sexual abuse.

Under the provisions of [S.2347](#), individuals who report in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability; confidentiality requirements would not prohibit an individual from making a report. [S.2347](#) passed the Senate 36-0 and is in the House Ways & Means Committee; [S.295](#) is in the Senate Education Committee where it accompanied a Study Order.

INTERVENTIONS FOR AT-RISK AND OFFENDERS

“Dog Dates” Combat Loneliness in Abused Elderly

Social isolation is a significant issue affecting the elderly. An innovative new program in the United Kingdom is working to combat loneliness among the elderly by scheduling “Dog Dates” with equally lonely pooches.

Created by Mars Petcare, a pilot program in Melton Mowbray will soon be expanded nationally. Dogs in the community who need social time and walks are being paired up with older people who need a social connection. The pair can spend as much time as they need with one another, getting outside and exploring nature, playing, or just relaxing with someone by their side, [Metro \(UK\)](#) reported. Elderly residents now have something to look forward to.



One resident, who has been lonely since she was separated from her abusive husband and who consequently lost her trust in people, was able to socialize not only with a dog but with the dog’s human family members. “I separated from my husband because he was cruel, mentally and physically. It really was difficult for a long time,” she said. “There are some days when I never see a soul. To have a dog for a few hours a week has changed my life.”

Louisiana Law Allows Facility Dogs in Child Abuse Testimony

A new measure enacted at the end of May will add Louisiana to the growing list of states where children who testify in cases of child abuse are allowed to be comforted by a therapy dog. [Louisiana HB 292](#) will require courts to allow witnesses who are either under age 18 or developmentally disabled to be accompanied by a facility dog while testifying. Courts will be permitted to allow such facility dogs for any other witnesses. The bill establishes procedures defining facility dogs and their presence in the courtroom. The bill was approved 91-0 by the House and 31-0 by the Senate and **was signed into law** on May 23, taking effect Aug. 1.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Study Examines Teens’ Histories and Attitudes toward Animal Cruelty

While negative interactions with animals during adolescence have been linked with child abuse, domestic violence and later interpersonal violence, little research has differentiated accidental animal abuse from deliberate animal cruelty or among the many types of species involved. This survey of 979 British teenagers investigated these components, plus the respondents’ acceptability of animal cruelty, engagement in antisocial behaviors, and family influences. The study revealed small but significant differences based upon gender and whether the teens lived in rural or urban areas.

– Connor, M., Currie, C., & Lawrence, A.B. (2018, April). Factors influencing the prevalence of animal cruelty during adolescence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-24. Doi: [10.1177/0886260518771684](#)

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

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

Although the 2018 legislative season has concluded in many states, we are still following many bills, many of which are predicated upon how animal abuse and interpersonal violence are LINKed. We are encouraged by this progress and hope to see even more LINK legislation passed this year!

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 909 and S.322 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced and now has 247 bi-partisan co-sponsors in the House and 37 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.



California AB 2274 would allow courts to assign sole or joint ownership of a community property pet in divorce and separation agreements by taking into consideration the well-being of the pet. The bill was approved by the House and is in the Senate Rules Committee.



California AB 1939 would expand provisions of the California Victim Compensation program to allow the costs of temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence victims to be reimbursable as part of relocation expenses. The bill was approved by the Assembly and was sent to the Senate.



Colorado law included animals among the property that can be included in a protective order. **Colorado SB 18-060** now will specifically allow courts to issue a protective order prohibiting the taking, transferring, concealing, harming, disposing of, or threatening to harm an animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by the alleged victim or witness. **The bill was signed into law** by Gov. John Hickenlooper on March 22 and will take effect Nov. 1.



Illinois HB5668 would amend the Domestic Violence Shelters Act and require the Department of Human Services to prioritize funding to domestic violence shelters and service programs that provide shelter assistance to victims' pets. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



Kentucky HB 447 would prohibit courts from offering probation, early release or a suspended sentence to offenders convicted of torturing a dog or cat with the intent of threatening, intimidating, coercing, harassing, or terrorizing a family member or person in a dating relationship. Kentucky law defines "family members" as current and former spouses, child or stepchild, grandchild, parent or grandparent. **The bill was in the Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.**



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.



Michigan HB 4332 would make it a 1st, 2nd or 3rd-degree offense, depending on severity, to knowingly torture or kill an animal with the intent to cause mental distress or exert control over a person. The bill was passed the House 90-15, approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate.



Mississippi SB 2232 would have authorized courts to include the protection of pets in the order and require that the respondent not remove, damage, hide, harm or dispose of any companion animal owned by the person protected by the order. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri HB 2374 would add “intimidation,” the coercive, vengeful or punitive injuring, killing or threatening of an animal, as grounds for which a court could issue an order of protection. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New Mexico HJM 3 would have requested that the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Public Safety consider providing training on the Link between animal abuse and family violence in training delivered to appropriate personnel. The measure was approved by the House and two Senate committees but **further action was postponed indefinitely.**



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 expands the ability of courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include animals to individuals seeking protection orders in cases of dating violence. It would allow a court order 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 to remove a companion animal owned by that petitioner from the possession of the respondent. **The bill was signed into law by Gov. John Kasich on April 5.**



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.



Rhode Island H7032 and S2459 would permit the family court to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint. The House and Senate Judiciary Committees recommended the bills be held for further study.



Rhode Island HB 7167 would expand family court jurisdiction to enter protective orders to provide for the safety and welfare of household pets in domestic abuse situations. The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.



Rhode Island HB 7585 would create a custody procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee where it was held for further study.



West Virginia HB 2855 would have allowed courts to make provisions within a divorce order for the temporary custody and care of pets, including joint custody, allocation of costs and visitation rights for the noncustodial party, taking into consideration the well-being of the animal. **The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.**

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 Senate version passed unanimously on Dec. 14 and heads to the Judiciary Committee in the House, where it has 279 co-sponsors.



Existing **Alabama** law prohibits the dissemination, display and possession of obscene material including child pornography and bestiality. **SB 35** would clarify the definition of dissemination by removing the requirement of monetary consideration and would add sharing or trading such visual depictions. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



California AB 3040 would address the state’s bestiality law. Existing law makes it a misdemeanor to sexually assault certain animals to gratify a person’s sexual desires. The bill would prohibit sexual contact with any animal punishable as a misdemeanor; such animals could be seized. Veterinarians would be mandated to report suspected animal sexual abuse with immunity from civil liability, as they currently are for reporting animal abuse. The bill was approved 73-0 by the Assembly and is in the Senate Committee on Public Safety.



Hawai’i SB 2289 would have created a new crime of sexual assault of an animal as a Class C felony, or a Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor, and order forfeiture of all animals; prohibit living, working or volunteering with animals for five years; and require psychological or psychiatric counseling or treatment. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**



Kentucky SB 239 would establish the crime of sexual activity with animals as a Class A misdemeanor. **It was in the Senate Agriculture Committee when the legislature adjourned.**



Louisiana SB 236 updates the current statute, replacing what was called a “crime against nature” with the new crime of “sexual abuse of an animal” with enhanced penalties and provisions for removal of the animal, psychological evaluation for sex offenders, and prohibitions against living, working or volunteering with animals for five years or more. **The bill was signed into law** on May 25 by Gov. John Bel Edwards and became effective immediately.



Maryland HB 1134 and **SB 800** would replace the more archaic terms “sodomy,” “bestiality” and “unnatural or perverted sexual practices” with the more contemporary “sexual activity with an animal” and prohibit a wide range of activities designed to promote, coerce, observe, or abet such practices. Convicted offenders would be barred from owning, residing with, or coming into contact with an animal for 30 years. The law would take effect Oct. 1, 2018. **HB 1134** passed the House and joined **SB 800** in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where both bills received an unfavorable report.



Massachusetts S.2347 would prohibit “sexual contact with animals.” Existing statutes prohibit the more archaic terminology of the “abominable and detestable crime against nature.” The bill also would establish *Cross-Reporting* among child, elder and animal abuse personnel and affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and passed the House 147-0.



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 was included in a Study Order by the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Washington SB 6076 would change the definition of illegal animal sexual contact to include sexual penetration or touching of the sexual or other intimate parts of an animal by force, intimidation, coercion, or where motivated by sexual arousal, sexual gratification or financial gain. The bill is in the Law & Justice Committee.



West Virginia HB 4455 passed the House 96-0 and was sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee, but **failed to make it out of committee when the legislature adjourned**. The bill would have prohibited sexual abuse of an animal, either by engaging in, aiding or abetting, organizing or promoting, making animals available, or permitting it to be conducted on one’s premises. Violations would have been misdemeanors; however, committing animal sexual abuse in the presence of a child, having prior convictions for sex crimes, or causing serious bodily injury or death to the animal would have made offenses a felony. Courts would have been able to order offenders to surrender all animals and pay for their care and maintenance, prohibit ownership or residence with animals for either 5 or 15 years, and order offenders to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation to be eligible for probation.



Wisconsin AB 666 and companion measure **SB 802** would have updated the state’s archaic bestiality law and made it a felony to have sexual contact with an animal, to coerce another to have sexual contact with an animal, or to promote, advertise, harbor, transport, or obtain an animal for the purpose of sexual contact. Current law only makes sexual gratification with an animal a misdemeanor and does not include the other provisions. The bill would have also created escalating degrees of felony if the other person is a child. **AB 666** and **SB 802** were approved by the Assembly and a Senate Committee but **were not allowed to come to a vote in the full Senate**.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



Louisiana HB 292 will require courts to allow witnesses who are either under age 18 or developmentally disabled to be accompanied by a facility dog while testifying. Courts will be permitted to allow such facility dogs for any other witnesses. The bill establishes procedures defining facility dogs and their presence in the courtroom. The bill was approved 91-0 by the House and 31-0 by the Senate and **was signed into law** on May 23, taking effect Aug. 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.



Michigan HB 5645 would allow witnesses of child abuse and child sexual abuse to be accompanied by a trained and evaluated “courtroom support dog.” The bill passed the House by a vote of 107-1 and is in the Senate.



New Jersey A3729 would allow assistance dogs to be used to help facilitate the taking of testimony of victims or witnesses in open court in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



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 now 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 **A3845** in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

“CASA for Animals”



New York A9701 would allow a court to order a separate advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice in animal welfare proceedings. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

Animal Hoarding



Florida SB 86 would have defined animal hoarding as keeping a large number of companion animals in overcrowded conditions; failing to provide them with minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter and medical care; and failure to acknowledge these conditions and the impact on the well-being of the animals or persons. **The bill died in the Criminal Justice Committee.**



New Jersey S 2242 and **A3762** would define animal hoarding as possessing too many animals with inadequate care which leads to death, bodily injury or other serious adverse health consequences, a 4th-degree crime. Courts would be required to order psychological evaluation and counseling for convicted offenders. The bills are in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee and the Assembly Agriculture and 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 S2778 would allow the Rhode Island state veterinarian, the R.I. SPCA, or any law enforcement officer to seize animals that are “hazardously accumulated” or otherwise abandoned or neglected. The bill is in the senate Environment & Agriculture Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



California SB 1024 would require individuals convicted of any of several animal cruelty offenses to complete and pass a 5-hour course on responsible animal owner education and would allow courts to consider ordering mandatory mental health evaluations for such offenders. The bill's authors noted that current sentencing options for animal abuse crimes are limited and are not particularly well suited to "addressing the underlying causes behind animal abuse as observed by law enforcement, mental health and animal welfare experts. The link between animal abuse and violence towards humans is well documented," they wrote. Citing the Parkland, Fla. school shootings and cases of child abuse and domestic violence, they added that "mental health intervention early is the key to stopping this progression and escalation of violent behavior." The bill was approved by the Senate and was sent to the Assembly.



Iowa SF 2181/HF 2468 would allow courts to require adult animal cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation and treatment and would mandate such provisions for juveniles and individuals convicted of animal torture, abandonment, endangerment, or aggravated cruelty. The bills are in the Senate Judiciary and House Agriculture Committees.



Maryland HB 1629 would allow a court to order psychological counseling for a defendant convicted of an animal abuse crime. The bill received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee.



Mississippi SB 2172 would have allowed courts to order persons convicted of aggravated cruelty to receive a psychiatric or psychological examination and counseling or treatment. **The bill died in the Senate Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.**



Missouri HB 2359 would allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment upon convicted animal cruelty offenders. The bill would also affect [Cross-Reporting](#). The bill is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.



New Jersey law currently requires juveniles (but not adults) convicted of animal cruelty to undergo mental health counseling. **A3049** and **S 1636** would require a mental health evaluation for juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders, to be followed by mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Health, Human Services & Senior Citizens Committee. **A3856** and **S2165** would require both juveniles and adults to undergo mental health counseling; those bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Economic Growth Committee.



Existing **Virginia** law permits courts to impose anger management or other appropriate treatment programs, or obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling, upon animal cruelty offenders. **HB 425** would have made such provisions mandatory unless the court finds that the person presents no current or future likelihood of repeating the violation or causing harm to himself or others. **The bill was tabled indefinitely in the Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake & Natural Resources.**

Cross-Reporting



Indiana SB 332 and companion bill **HB 1261** (“Protecting pets in distressed homes”) would have required Adult Protective Services employees conducting assessments or investigations who have reason to believe an animal is a victim of cruelty, abandonment or neglect to make a report to a law enforcement or animal control agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. **The bills died in their respective committees.**



Indiana SB 431 gives APS and CPS workers who observe suspected animal cruelty, abandonment or abuse while conducting an assessment or investigation immunity from civil and criminal liability if they report it to law enforcement or animal control. **The bill was signed into law** on March 15 and becomes effective July 1, 2018.



Iowa HF 2065 and **SF 129** would require veterinarians to report any conclusion of animal cruelty to the local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. It would also require law enforcement agencies investigating animal cruelty complaints to file a child endangerment report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnessed the abuse. The bill also increases penalties for various animal abuse offenses including committing animal torture in the presence of a child, and would allow courts to ban offenders’ ownership of animals. The measure would also allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment upon convicted offenders; such orders would be mandatory for juvenile offenders. The bills are in their respective Agriculture Committees.



Kansas HB2530 would have added animal control officers to professionals who are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. The bill was approved by the Committee on Children and Seniors and **the provision was deleted by the House.**



Massachusetts S.295 in the Education Committee would make domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers mandated reporters of child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee where it accompanied a Study Order.



Massachusetts S.2347 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 to a police officer or special state police officer. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. Individuals who report in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability; confidentiality requirements would not prohibit an individual from making a report. The bill would also affect **Animal Abuse and Other Crimes** and **Animal Sexual Abuse**. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and passed the House 147-0.



Michigan HB 4441 would amend the Child Protection Law to add animal control officers as mandated reporters of 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, 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 intentional false reporting of animal abuse a felony. The bills are in the 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. **HF 787** is in the Agriculture Policy Committee and **SF1167** is in the Agriculture, Rural Development & Housing Policy Committee.



Mississippi SB 2172 would have required law enforcement officers investigating animal abuse cases to utilize a uniform form to conform with the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. The bill would also have enhanced penalties for animal cruelty and require youths convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation. **The bill died in committee.**



Missouri HB 2359 would grant veterinarians, teachers and school personnel immunity from civil liability for reporting suspected animal abuse in good faith to law enforcement agencies. The bill also imposes *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*. The bill is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.



New York S621 and **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 agencies and to turn over necessary records. New York veterinarians are currently permitted but are not required to report. 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 professionals mandated to report child abuse. 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.



Ohio HB 523 would mandate veterinarians, child protective services, and counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists to report suspected animal abuse, with immunity from liability for good-faith reporting, if a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator. Dog wardens and animal control officers would be required to report suspected child abuse. Military family advocacy programs would have to be notified when military personnel are investigated for child maltreatment or domestic violence. Fines collected from civil penalties for violating pet protective orders would be used to fund shelter and support programs for the animals belonging to victims of domestic violence. The bill was approved by the Community & Family Advancement Committee.



Pennsylvania SB 176 would add animal control and humane society police officers as mandated reporters of child abuse, and social services employees to report animal cruelty. The bill was laid on the table in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H 7986 would grant immunity from civil and criminal liability to “any person entrusted with the care and custody of an animal,” including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal shelter and kennel employees, who reports suspected animal abuse, neglect or abandonment to the police or humane agency in good faith. Failure to report would be punishable by a fine of up to \$500. The reporter would not be obliged to investigate the alleged abuse. The House Health, Education & Welfare Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.



West Virginia HB 4014 would have required adult protective services workers to report reasonable suspicions of animal abuse or cruelty to the county humane officer within 24 hours, and humane officers to immediately report suspected abuse, neglect or emergencies affecting an incapacitated adult or facility resident. The provisions were part of a larger reorganization of the Department of Health & Human Resources and **did not survive the committee amendment process.**

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



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



Hawai’i SB 2014 would create a registry of animal cruelty offenders based upon the premise that “acts of cruelty to one animal has been linked to cruelty to other animals and violence against humans, it is necessary to ensure that persons convicted of cruelty to animals are restricted from interacting with animals.” The bill is in the Senate Judiciary and Ways & Means Committees.



Massachusetts S.2347 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-Reporting* among child, elder and animal abuse personnel and affect *Animal Sexual Abuse*. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and passed the House 147-0.



New Jersey A3693 and **S2239** would add individuals convicted of animal cruelty to the list of offenders of other crimes who are prohibited from possessing a firearm and obtaining a permit to purchase a handgun. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



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 but the Assembly Agriculture Committee returned it to the Senate for amendments; **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.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Deputy Killed in Dispute Over Cat with Convicted Felon with History of Elder Abuse

A Highlands County, Fla., deputy sheriff was shot and killed while responding to a neighborhood dispute over a cat. The [Highlands News-Sun](#) reported that Deputy William Gentry was trying to resolve the dispute when he approached Joseph Edward Ables, 69, suspected of having shot his neighbor's cat. Ables is a convicted felon with a history of violence toward police dating back to 1983. Investigators were attempting to determine why Ables allegedly shot the cat and how he was able to possess a handgun. Ables was sentenced to four years of probation in 2016 on an elder abuse charge of battery of a person over age 65. Gentry, 40, had been with the sheriff's office for nine years.



Joseph Edward Ables

Father Said to Shoot Daughter's Dogs to Punish Her for Not Doing the Dishes



Jeffrey Don Edwards

Jeffrey Don Edwards, 35, of Harrah, Okla., was charged with animal cruelty for allegedly shooting his teenage daughter's two dogs to punish her for not doing the dishes. The [Associated Press](#) reported that Edwards' daughter, 17, was visiting her father when he got mad about a messy house. His ex-wife came to pick her up and when she returned the next day the dogs' bodies were found 100 yards from the residence. A co-worker of Edwards who witnessed the incident allegedly told authorities that Edwards had shot the dogs as discipline.

Couple Charged with Child Sexual Abuse is Feces-Filled Home



Violet and Daniel Tilbe

Daniel Arnold Tilbe, 57, and Violet Tilbe, 49, were charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child after investigators in Merkel, Texas found a young girl who said she had been sexually assaulted for years and forced to sleep in a bed soiled with animal feces. [KRBC-TV](#) and [KTXS-TV](#) reported that a resident of the home tipped off police officers and showed them a room where the floor and couch,, as well as the animal bed on which the girl slept, was covered with feces. The girl, who is younger than 14, reportedly said that Jeanette Tilbe had sexually assaulted her since she was 5 and that Daniel Tilbe had done so since she was 7. There was no word as to whether animal cruelty charges were also filed.

Dog Dies in Arson Case; Woman Charged

A woman in Tucson, Ariz., has been charged with arson and animal cruelty for allegedly dousing a dog and part of a house with two gallons of gasoline and setting them on fire. The [Arizona Daily Star](#) reported that Dean Sherfield Finley, 39, was charged with three felony counts. The dog, named "Lovely," was transferred to the Pima Animal Care Center where, despite specialized around-the-clock medical treatment, she later died.



"Lovely" perished from her injuries

Pregnant Deaf Woman and Her Service Dog Punched Aboard Plane



Ramirez with her partner, children and “Zariel”

The increasingly contentious issue of service dogs and emotional support animals on airplanes took a violent turn on May 18 when a passenger reportedly punched a deaf, pregnant woman and her service dog because he felt the dog, a Great Dane named “Zariel,” took up more space than it deserved. The [Orlando Sentinel](#) reported that the Frontier Airlines flight from Colorado Springs was taxiing to the gate in Orlando when the dog, who had been sleeping throughout the flight, stood up and stretched. According to police reports, Timothy Manley, 59, punched the dog, causing it to yelp and try to hide under a seat. The dog’s owner, Hazel Ramirez, 21, who is 20 weeks pregnant, and her partner, who is also deaf, tried to yell at Manley as best as they could. Manley then reportedly punched Ramirez. The partner tackled Manley and held him until police arrived. All parties declined medical treatment and the matter was turned over to the FBI because the incident occurred on the plane.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

June 14 – Talinn, Estonia: Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers will present on “The LINK between Animal Cruelty, Domestic Violence, Elder Abuse, Child Abuse, and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence,” and Nathalie Norden will discuss “Experience in Sweden Making the LINK,” at a [Pop-Up Seminar](#) on “One Health, One Welfare: The Importance of Research, Education and Cooperation.”

June 17 – Edinburgh, Scotland: The Links Group UK and the BSAVA will conduct a [Veterinary Training Initiative](#) to help veterinary teams deal with cases of suspected abuse, set up a practice protocol, and identify an “abuse advisor” who can aid practice staff.

June 18 – New Orleans, La.: “The Link and School Shooters,” and “Animal Crimes: The Hidden Link for Protecting Your Community,” will be discussed at the [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) .

June 21 – Richmond, Va.: Randy Lockwood and Michelle Welch will discuss animal hoarding at the [Virginia Fair Housing Office](#)’s seminar on chronic hoarding.

June 26 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Animal Cruelty and the Link to Collateral Crimes” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association.

July 3 – 5 – Sydney, Australia: The International Society for Anthrozoology’s 27th Annual [Conference](#) will include several Link-related presentations: Cheryl Krause-Parello will present on “The effect of an animal-assisted intervention on biological stress indicators in children undergoing forensic interview for child sexual abuse allegations.” Tania Signal will present on “The potential of dogs to improve the acceptability of trauma-focused therapies for sexually-abused children.” Roxanne Hawkins will present on “Children’s attitudes towards animal cruelty.” Michal Pregowski will present on “Attitudes to animal abuse in veterinary practice in Poland.” Shelby McDonald will present on “The role of callous/unemotional traits in mediating the association between animal abuse exposure and behavior problems among children exposed to intimate partner violence.”

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.

July 9 – Lafayette, Calif.: Jennifer Woolf will present to the Contra Costa [County Veterinary Medical Association](#) on “What Private Practitioners Need to Know about Animal Abuse.”

July 13 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

July 23 – Oxford, U.K.: Randy Lockwood will discuss “Bringing Animal Cruelty Investigation into Mainstream Law Enforcement” at the 5th Annual [Oxford Animal Ethics Summer School](#). Kathy Hessler will discuss the new laws in Alaska and Illinois allowing courts to grant custody of pets in the animals’ best interests in divorce settlements. Hessler and David Rosengard will discuss “Desmond’s Law,” the Connecticut provision for “CASA for animals,” pro bono representation of animals in court in cruelty cases.

July 23-27 – Loudoun County, Va.: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)’s Level III training for Expert investigators.

Aug. 6 -9 – Aurora, Colo.: Phil Arkow will speak to the [Metro Denver Animal Welfare Alliance](#), [Aurora Animal Services](#), and the [Aurora City Attorney’s Office](#) about The Link.

Aug. 15 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Phil Arkow will conduct a Link training for the [Pennsylvania Bar Institute](#) Animal Law Conference.

Sept. 6 – Buffalo, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will present at the [Buffalo Academy of Veterinary Medicine](#)’s lecture series.

Sept. 9-14 – Aurora, Ill.: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)’s Level III training for Expert investigators.

Sept. 11 (online): John Thompson will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “The Dynamics of Officer Involved Shootings of Dogs” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association.

Sept. 18 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Leanne Sillers will discuss “Lifting Barriers: How Animal Safekeeping Programs Can Help the Victims of Violence,” and Jessi Rassmussen will present “Supporting the Victims of Domestic Violence in the Workplace,” at the [Saskatchewan SPCA](#)’s 2018 conference.

Oct. 5 – Madison, Wis.: Phil Arkow will speak at [Sheltering Animals of Abuse Victims](#) (S.A.A.V.)’s conference on “The Link between Family Violence and Animal cruelty: A Community-Wide Approach to Breaking the Cycle of Abuse.”

Oct. 11 – Windsor, Ont., Canada: The University of Windsor Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group, the Windsor-Essex County Humane Society, and Hiatus House will hold an all-day pre-conference [Institute](#) on research, theory and practice specific to the intersection of violence against animals and women within the context of domestic violence.

Oct. 12 – Rochester, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will conduct a multi-disciplinary Link training on behalf of the [Humane Society of Greater Rochester](#).

Oct. 12 – Denver, Colo.: Chris Schindler will present “Breaking the Sickest Link: Conducting Effective Bestiality Investigations” at the National Animal Care & Control Association’s [Training Conference](#).

Oct. 17-19 – Plano, Texas: The [Collin County Council on Family Violence](#) will hold its 16th Annual North Texas Families Facing Violence conference.

Oct. 18 – Guelph, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present on “Making the Cruelty Connection: A Species-Spanning Approach to Safer Families and Communities” to the [Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario](#).

Oct. 22-23 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The Kirkpatrick Foundation will sponsor the [Oklahoma Animal Conference](#) as part of its Safe & Humane initiative.

Nov. 14-17 – Atlanta, Ga.: Nuria Querol will present on The Link at the [American Society of Criminology](#) conference.

Nov. 15 – Anchorage, Alaska: Allie Phillips will speak at the [Alaska Children’s Alliance](#) conference on “The Co-occurrence of Animal Abuse and Violence to Humans: Investigation and Prosecution Strategies,” “Detecting and Reporting Animal Abuse for Human Welfare Professionals and Communities,” and “Incorporating Therapy Animals with Crime Victims.”

Nov. 17-18 – Melbourne, Australia: [Lucy’s Project](#) will hold its national conference addressing practical perspectives of the domestic violence/animal abuse Link.

Nov. 23 – Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Phil Arkow will speak at the [Alberta Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Veterinary Forensics Workshop.

Dec. 3-7 – San Antonio, Texas: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)’s Level III training for Expert investigators.

Dec. 13 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Animal Cruelty Investigations and Prosecutions” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association.

Feb. 21, 2019 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Dog Fighting Investigations and Prosecutions” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association.



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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