



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



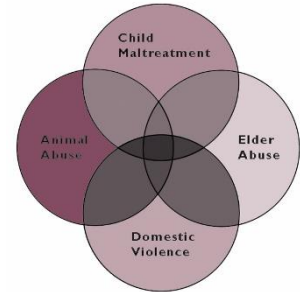
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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April 7-13 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week
ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Rep. Ana-Maria Ramos

Texas Bills Would Call Animal Abuse Family Violence, and Educate Public About Pet Protection Orders

Texas has become the latest state to consider legislation that would add the coercive and controlling threat or harm to companion animals to the definition of family violence. **HB 2516**, sponsored by Rep. Ana-Maria Ramos (D – Dallas/Garland/Richardson), would add cruelty to non-livestock animals with the intent to coerce, control, punish or intimidate another family member to the definition of “family violence.”

The bill defines coercion as using force or threat to compel a person to engage in conduct from which the person has the right or privilege to abstain, or to abstain from conduct in which the person has the right or privilege to engage.

Similar bills were introduced earlier in the 2019 legislative sessions in New Mexico, New York, Utah, and Virginia ([See the February 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). Such provisions have already been enacted in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Tennessee. Minnesota allows courts to double criminal penalties for felony animal abuse that is committed to threaten, intimidate or terrorize another person.

A second bill introduced by Ramos would help publicize the availability of provisions that allow petitioners to have their pets included in domestic violence protection orders. Texas enacted Pet Protection Order (PPO) provisions in 2011 but it is unclear how many domestic violence survivors have utilized the process.

HB 3021 would direct the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to develop information to provide to the public about the availability of provisions that allow pets to be included in protective orders. This is believed to be the first legislation introduced in any of the 35 jurisdictions with PPOs to address the need for additional publicity about critical PPOs. The bill is in the Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee and if enacted would take effect on Sept. 1.

Rhode Island Considers Pet Custody in Bitter Divorce Settlements

Rhode Island has joined the growing list of states that are considering allowing courts to award custody of pets in contentious divorce settlements to the party who would be in the animals' best interests, similar to long-standing child custody procedures. Two bills in the General Assembly are considerably more detailed than measures already enacted or being considered in other states:

H 5483, introduced by Rep. William O'Brien (D - North Providence), would allow the district court to determine the contested ownership of a pet between "formerly cohabiting parties," based on the well-being of the pet including:

- Who purchased the pet.
- Who has paid the majority of the pet's expenses.
- Who cared for the pet on a daily basis.
- Who can provide the safest and appropriate living environment for the pet. **Rep. William O'Brien**



Courts could award ownership of pets to a third party, such as an animal welfare organization, "if the court finds that none of the formerly cohabiting parties can provide a safe and appropriate living arrangement for the pet." A court could award costs and attorneys' fees as it deems equitable and just, but could not award joint ownership, visitation rights, or pet financial support or damages.

The measure is based on a legislative finding that Rhode Island has enacted many laws protecting animals' well-being and that pets are unique and irreplaceable, evoke strong emotions, and have special sentimental value above any mere property value. Because of these factors, "determining ownership of pets between formerly cohabiting parties can be an emotionally charged and complicated process."

H 5822, introduced by Rep. Charlene Lima (D – Cranston, Providence) would allow courts to award sole custody of pets in a divorce or separation proceeding based upon considerations affecting the animals' best interests including:

- Who owned the animal first or if it was acquired jointly during marriage.
- Who assumed most responsibility for tending to the animal's needs.
- Who spent more time with the animal on a regular basis.
- Which living arrangement would be in the animal's best interest.
- Who wants custody and the potential for shared custody.
- "Whether there are children involved in caring for the animal and the nature of their attachment to the animal, including consideration of which parent has custody of the children, and whether it is in the best interests of the children to keep the animal in their domicile for care and affection."



Rep. Charlene Lima

This bill would allow joint custody arrangements which would consider:

- How long the animal will stay with each party.
- How veterinary visits and costs will be handled.
- Who will be responsible for the animals' basic needs.
- Any additional relevant criteria.

Both bills are in the House Judiciary Committee, but **H 5483** has been ordered held for further study.

Similar bills were introduced in Rhode Island in 2017 and 2018. Provisions to award pet custody in the animals' best interests were enacted in Alaska in 2016, Illinois in 2017 and California in 2018. Similar measures have been introduced in recent years in Hawai'i, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Wyoming Enacts Pet Protection Law, Updates Animal Cruelty Statutes



Rep. Dan Zwonitzer

Wyoming has become the 33rd state and the 35th political jurisdiction to enact a law allowing courts to include household companion animals in protection-from-abuse orders. Gov. Mark Gordon signed **HB 235** into law on March 8. The measure, which takes effect on July 1, will allow courts to issue protection orders that grant sole possession of any household pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child to the petitioner “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order can also order the respondent to not have any contact with the animal and to not abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet. The bill was sponsored by Rep. Dan Zwonitzer (R – Laramie).

Other states and regions that have enacted PPO (Pet Protection Order) bills are, in chronological order:

- **2006:** Maine, Vermont, New York
- **2007:** Colorado, Nevada, Tennessee, Connecticut, Illinois, California
- **2008:** Louisiana, Puerto Rico, District of Columbia
- **2009:** Washington, Hawai'i, North Carolina
- **2010:** Oklahoma, Arizona, Minnesota, West Virginia
- **2011:** Arkansas, Texas, Oregon, Maryland
- **2012:** New Jersey, Massachusetts
- **2014:** Virginia, Iowa, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Ohio
- **2016:** Wisconsin, Michigan, Alaska
- **2017:** Indiana

Unlike many of the other PPO laws that have been enacted since the concept was introduced in 2006 in Maine, which just addressed the need to protect pets that are often harmed or threatened in domestic violence situations, the Wyoming law also makes a significant change in the state's misdemeanor anti-cruelty statutes. Cruelty to animals is now defined as simply knowingly and unnecessarily beating or injuring an animal. Previously, prosecutors had to prove the defendant had “intent to cause death, injury or undue suffering” and “cruelly beats, tortures, torments, injures, mutilates or attempts to kill” an animal. Those stricter standards now define the felony-level crime of aggravated cruelty to animals.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT



New York State Bills Address Link Impact on Children

Four bills introduced by Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal (D – New York City) in the current New York State Assembly’s legislative session incorporate The Link between animal abuse and child maltreatment as justifications for their passage.

A 831 increases the potential term of imprisonment from two to four years when aggravated animal cruelty is committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Ass. Linda Rosenthal

A 2664 and **S 3327**, sponsored by Kenneth LaValle (R – Suffolk County), would amend the definition of child endangerment and other related statutes to include committing acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child and to strengthen penalties for existing animal cruelty charges when committed in the presence of a child. The bills are in the Assembly Codes and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.

The memo justifying the need for these bills reads: “Adults who commit acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child inflict psychological damage on the minor who is forced to witness these crimes. They can also permanently imperil a still-developing minor’s sense of judgment and ethical conduct. By increasing the potential punishment penalty for animal cruelty when engaging in such cruelty in the presence of a child, this behavior can be curtailed and its consequences can be more thoroughly recognized.”

A 955, also sponsored by Rosenthal, makes it a misdemeanor to knowingly cause a minor to attend an animal fight. That bill is also in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

The justification for that bill reads: “Our state should recognize the extremely harmful impact on children who witness animal fighting. A growing body of research indicates that cruelty to animals done in the presence of children can damage their emotional development. Such children are more likely to become abusive, anti-social, less empathetic, and desensitized to abhorrent social behavior.”

ANIMAL ABUSE &... SEXUAL ABUSE

Kentucky is 46th State to Outlaw Bestiality

The powerful Links between animal sexual abuse and child sexual abuse/child pornography were finally accepted in Kentucky, when Gov. Matt Bevin signed **Kentucky SB 67** into law on March 26. The new law creates a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the offense of sexual crimes against an animal and amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. Sexual crime against an animal is a Class D felony, with offenders facing up to five years in prison, forfeiture of animals, and a five-year prohibition of living, working or volunteering with animals. Offenders will also have to undergo counseling or treatment and make financial restitution.

With Kentucky’s enacting the law, only Hawai’i, New Mexico, West Virginia, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia remain where sex with animals is legal.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Link Cited in Call for More Comprehensive Public-Nonprofit Animal Cruelty Enforcement

In recent decades, numerous communities in North America have relocated their animal cruelty investigation processes from nonprofit SPCAs and humane societies into governmental functions. These moves have been driven by governmental concerns over the liability of having outside, non-sworn contractors enforcing laws and by the nonprofits' concerns over charitable dollars subsidizing a governmental function.



This issue recently arose in Canada, where the Ontario SPCA – which had been conducting animal cruelty investigations for a century – stopped investigating cruelty to horses and farm animals, and later stopped all front-line law enforcement, citing a lack of funding. Shortly thereafter, a Superior Court ruled the OSPCA's enforcement powers to be unconstitutional because private entities lack the same channels of oversight and accountability as public enforcement agencies.

Kendra Coulter, Chair of the Department of Labour Studies and the Chancellor's Chair for Research Excellence at Brock University, has been leading a team studying Canadian and international cruelty investigations and prevention models to assess their relative effectiveness for best protecting animals, officers and public safety (*See the [December 2018 LINK-Letter](#)*).

Coulter has published [a report](#) that includes findings from a survey of more than 20,700 Ontarians. The survey reaffirmed that animal cruelty remains a matter of great public concern. It discussed 10 distinct options for investigating animal abuse and neglect and their implications for animals, officers and the public. Among the reports' findings:

- There are very high levels of public support for police playing a central role in animal cruelty investigations, whether through force-wide involvement or through specialized units. The public strongly supports partnerships between law enforcement, animal welfare organizations who could provide supportive services in animal care, shelter, training, and transportation, and veterinarians who could provide forensic expertise.
- Because animal cruelty also affects the well-being of other species and is also linked to violence against women, child abuse and other crimes, the public's views on these inextricable dimensions encourage the creation of a comprehensive and thoughtfully-conceptualized public enforcement model.
- **92%** of respondents saw the well-established Link between animal cruelty and the abuse of women and children and other criminal activities as an important reason to strengthen enforcement. As one respondent noted, "Animal abuse is the canary in the coal mine of abuse. If you save the canary, you save all the others who follow."
- **95%** believed the legal system of prosecutors and judges should take crimes against animals more seriously.
- **87%** supported greater or more formal collaboration between animal cruelty investigators and social service/nonprofit groups focused on people's wellbeing.

Respondents included individuals who have seen The Link firsthand. A police officer described cases where a defendant skinned two live rabbits to scare his wife and other defendants who killed their girlfriends' pets: "the judges barely batted an eye at this."

"Animal abuse is the canary in the coal mine of abuse. If you save the canary, you save all the others who follow."

-- Ontario survey respondent

In the specific case of Ontario, the most promising options involve a strategic combination of police for enforcement and nonprofits for support and animal care. Coulter suggests a specialized provincial anti-cruelty unit is a particularly compelling route because of its likely benefits to animals, officers' safety, and public safety.



Dr. Kendra Coulter

Training law enforcement officers to address animal cruelty would follow a trajectory established in the past with other forms of family violence. "Intimate-partner violence and child abuse were handled very differently decades ago, for example. Police forces changed as social views and morals evolved, and empirical research helped inform and improve law enforcement practice. The same could occur for crimes against animals. This is particularly true since animal cruelty often occurs alongside the abuse of women and children," Coulter writes.

"If some commanding or front-line officers have been resistant to investigating animal complaints in the past, this may be because they have not yet learned about the links between violence against animals and the simultaneous or subsequent abuse of people, including women, children, and the elderly; or that animal cruelty is often a and gateway into other crimes," she adds. "Crimes against animals are not a distraction from public safety; addressing them are essential to ensuring it."

"Crimes against animals are not a distraction from public safety; addressing them are essential to ensuring it."

-- Dr. Kendra Coulter

Many police officers not only have animals as part of their families but also "recognize that abuse is abuse, regardless of the species, and understand the connections among animal cruelty and other crimes and anti-social behaviors," she notes.

Coulter cites several police/SPCA partnership models, particularly New York City, where the ASPCA – which had only a handful of investigators to cover the sprawling city – has now trained 14,000 police officers in the skills of animal cruelty investigations ([See the September 2013 LINK-Letter](#)). This transformation has resulted in a multi-faceted combination of law enforcement and nonprofit programs and services and a significant increase in the number of cases investigated and prosecuted.

"Animal cruelty is, first and foremost, about animals and their well-being. But animal cruelty is also directly connected with many social issues including violence against women and children, other kinds of crimes, mental health, income levels, animal care costs, and public safety. For all of these reasons, Ontario needs a thoughtful and well-coordinated public model," Coulter concludes.

-- Coulter, K. (2019, March). *A More Humane and Safer Ontario: The Future of Animal Cruelty Investigations*. St. Catharines, Ont.: Author.

Link Cases Cited in Stiffer Michigan Sentencing Provisions

Two Link cases in Michigan, in which someone who was angry took out their aggression by killing animals, were featured in the [Detroit News](#) as the rationale for two bills that were recently enacted into law that increase penalties for animal cruelty.

In one case cited, Lawanda Alford, 38, of Detroit, who was angry with her boyfriend, took it out on his pets by cutting his six geckos in half and stabbing the man's pit bull to death. Alford pled guilty to animal abuse and received a two-month jail term, three years of probation, and a no-contact order with her boyfriend.

In the second case, Timothy Crow, 24, of Lathrup Village, was angry with his mother; he grabbed her dog and beat it to death. He was convicted of animal abuse and sentenced to six months in the Oakland County Jail.

Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor John Pietrofesa said he believed Crow "will remain a danger to society" because of a history of mistreating other animals. "The defendant stated he punched, kicked, strangled and slammed on the ground [every] pet they had ever owned," Pietrofesa wrote in a presentence memorandum. Crow was seen as particularly dangerous because he had video-recorded the killing.

The new laws now give judges the ability to impose stiffer sentences. Under the Michigan Code of Criminal Procedure, courts' sentencing guidelines calculate sentences based upon a formula that considers offense variables (OVs). OV 10 is "exploitation of a vulnerable victim" and included offenders who exploited a victim's physical or mental disability, youth or agedness, or a domestic relationship. The new law adds killing or torturing animals for the purpose of manipulating a victim for selfish or unethical purposes to the conditions applicable under OV 10.

The measures, **HB 4332** and **HB 4333**, increase the maximum penalty for killing or torturing an animal from four years to 10 years. The bills' sponsor, State Rep. Tommy Brann (R-Wyoming), hopes the new laws will encourage judges to take animal cruelty laws more seriously because the victims are somebody's loved one.

Brann was motivated by a conversation he overheard some 25 years ago between two women in the restaurant he owns. "They said the way to get even with someone is to kill their dog," he told the newspaper. "When I came to [the state capital in] Lansing, I thought about Booth 99."



State Rep. Tommy Brann

Kristina Rinaldi, executive director and co-founder of Detroit Dog Rescue, said there is usually a secondary crime discovered when animal abusers are arrested. Typical offenses include domestic violence, possession of child pornography and drug dealing, she said.

"I've been pushing and pushing for animal abuse to be taken more seriously," said Rinaldi. "If someone is torturing an animal, they're a danger to society."

Prosecutor Cites Link in Asking Why Offender Didn't Get Jail Time

The prosecutor in a spectacular animal cruelty case in Miami cited The Link in her disappointment over the juvenile offender's receiving only probation and community service and the judge's concern that the prosecutor's office was seeking jail time when offenses against humans often don't result in incarceration.

Roberto Hernandez, now 19, pleaded guilty on March 8 to a felony count of animal cruelty for setting a caged animal on fire in 2016, watching it writhe in pain, and then feeding the animal to his pit bulls to finish killing the animal or to dispose of its remains. The incident was captured on a graphic video that showed him squirting a flammable liquid over the animal and tossing matches into the cage until the creature burst into flames, [WPLG-TV](#) reported.



Roberto Hernandez

The prosecution argued that the animal was a cat; Hernandez's attorney argued that the charge was excessive because Hernandez thought the animal was a rabid raccoon. Judge Nushin Sayfie agreed that the animal appeared to be a raccoon but that that was immaterial. "I don't think a raccoon should be treated in that manner either," she said.

Nevertheless, and despite the cruelty, she imposed a sentence of five years of probation and 100 hours of community service. "I find it curious that, in this case, the state is seeking jail time when human victims don't warrant the same approach," Sayfie added. A psychiatric examination was not ordered because Hernandez had already had one.

"While we are disappointed with the sentence imposed on Roberto Hernandez, which excluded our recommendation he serve time in jail, it is our sincere hope that this young man who brutally caused the torture and death of a defenseless caged cat, will adhere to any suggested psychological or psychiatric treatment imposed by a duly qualified physician," said Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle.

"As I have said many times, research shows that individuals who commit acts of cruelty against helpless and trusting animals don't just stop there. Many of these individuals move on to commit violent acts against their fellow humans."

Berkshire County, Mass., DA Forms Animal Abuse Unit

The Berkshire County, Mass. District Attorney's Office has become the latest prosecutor to add a specialized unit to handle the complexities of investigating and prosecuting cases of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect. The newly formed program is called the Animal Cruelty and Abuse Unit. Three assistant district attorneys attended a recent training offered by [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network Link coalition in western Massachusetts. The group is actively discussing the lack of options currently available when charging someone with animal cruelty. Andrea Harrington serves as the District Attorney.



Andrea Harrington

Houston Link Task Force Reports 200% Increase in Arrests



The Harris County, Texas, [Animal Cruelty Taskforce](#) – a centralized reporting hotline and website for residents to report suspected abuse, cruelty or abandonment of animals ([See the March 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) conducted a four-day sweep seeking 145 individuals for whom there were outstanding warrants; 21 were arrested on charges of animal cruelty, child sexual abuse, and other felonies.

At a press conference held at Crime Stoppers of Houston, representatives noted the Taskforce has resulted in a 200% increase in animal cruelty charges filed by the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

Many suspects sought in the sweep had moved, but officials are trying to locate and arrest the fugitives, reported [KPRC-TV](#). "The task force has made a real difference in our community in the fight against animal cruelty and abuse. We know that people who abuse animals will often do the same to people. Getting them off the streets and holding them accountable for their actions makes us all safer," said Sheriff's Office Lt. Alvarado.

Nichole Christoph, Crime Stoppers Deputy Director, said her organization is serious about addressing serious crimes against both people and animals in Houston. The organization features pages on its website offering Link information on [animal cruelty](#), child abuse, and domestic violence. "We're very proud to be a partner with this unified collaboration of agencies taking a proactive approach," she said.

New York Proposals Link Dogfighting to "Enterprise Corruption"



Assemblyman Lavine & Senator Boyle

Two companion measures in the New York State Assembly use The Link between animal abuse and community violence as the rationale for declaring animal fighting as enterprise corruption, similar to racketeering statutes.

A 2509, sponsored by Charles Lavine (D - Glen Cove), and **S 609**, sponsored by Phil Boyle (R – Suffolk County), state that by including animal fighting as an enterprise corruption offense, law enforcement and prosecutors will gain valuable tools in combating "this heinous category of crime." The bills are in the respective Codes Committees.

In justifying the need for the measures, the sponsors explain: "Animal fighting fuels some of the most violent enterprises which corrupt our neighborhoods. Apart from the well-established social science link between violence against animals and violence against people, the New York law enforcement community has seen first-hand that vigorous investigation and prosecution of animal fighting exposes gang networks, narcotics rings, weapons trafficking activity, and other sophisticated and violent criminal enterprises."

The sponsors argue that a "significant financial machine" comprising a billion-dollar industry lurks behind dogfighting in the U.S. In addition to the gambling at matches, animal thefts, illegal use of medications, and "dark web" communication platforms are often involved. Law enforcement officers have seized guns and heroin, uncovered domestic abuse and child abuse, and rescued countless dogs from a lifetime of torture, they note.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE



Sen. Kel Seliger & Rep. Drew Springer

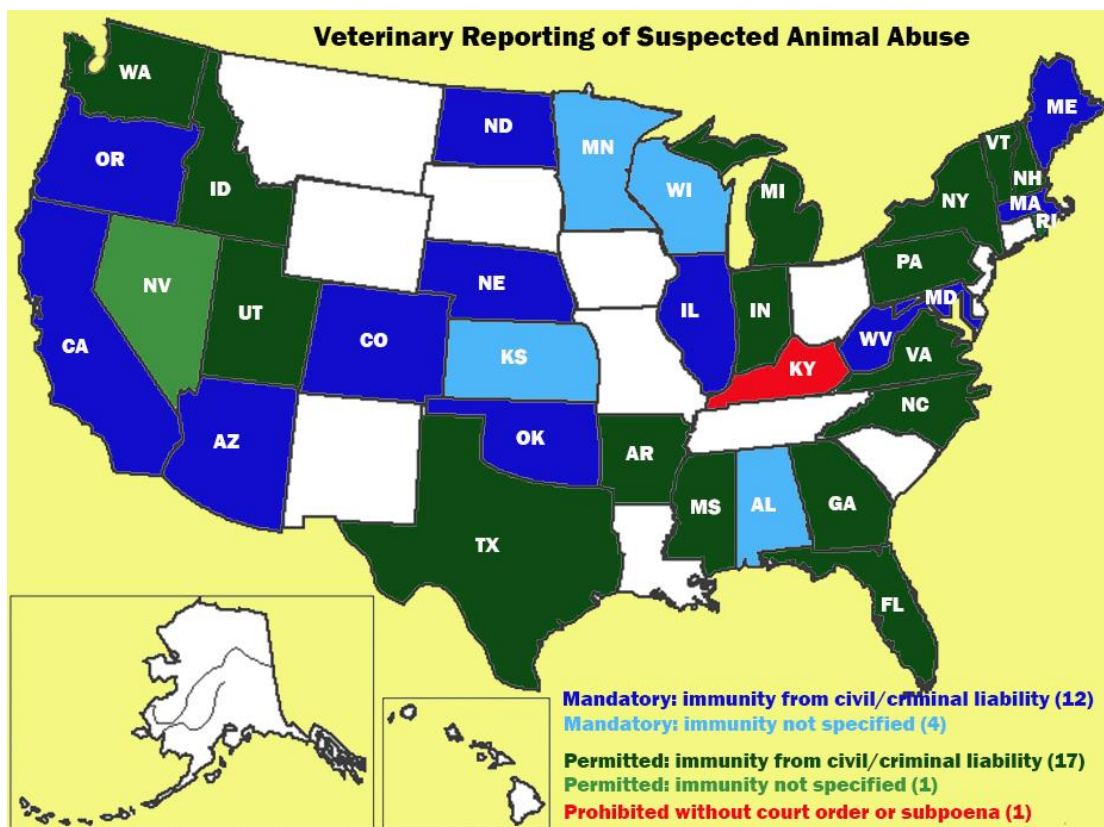
Texas Bills Would Ease Confidentiality Concerns in Reporting Suspected Abuse

Thirty-three states now either mandate or permit veterinarians and/or their staffs to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse or neglect, generally with immunity from civil and/or criminal liability.

However, a recurring issue is whether such reporting – even when authorized by statute – violates the sacred confidentiality relationship between practitioner and client.

Two bills in the Texas State Legislature address this loophole in a state that already allows practitioners to report, with immunity. **Texas SB 1750** and companion measure **HB 2787** would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to appropriate governmental entities without violating veterinarian/client confidentiality. The bills are in the Senate Business & Commerce and House Agriculture & Livestock Committees.

The bills were introduced by Sen. Kel Seliger (R – Amarillo) and Rep. Drew Springer (R - Gainesville). Under the provisions, the agency to which the information is reported would be required to keep the details confidential unless the information is directly related to a law enforcement purpose or the protection of public health and safety.



The above map is believed to be the most current status of veterinarians' requirements to report suspected animal maltreatment and their immunity from civil and/or criminal liability for doing so in good faith.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Link Pioneer Honored with Albert Schweitzer Award



Thompson displays the Albert Schweitzer award

National Link Coalition steering committee member John Thompson, who in his roles as Deputy Director/COO of the National Sheriffs' Association and currently Executive Director of the National Animal Care & Control Association, was honored recently with the [Albert Schweitzer Medal](#). The prestigious award, established in 1951 by the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), recognizes outstanding achievement in the advancement of animal welfare.

Thompson has almost single-handedly brought the issue of animal cruelty in general, and The Link between animal cruelty and human violence in particular, to the attention of the nation's law enforcement community. He has helped persuade law enforcement officials to prioritize identifying, investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty crimes — not only for the benefit of animals, but also to strengthen families and communities.

“As a law enforcement insider, John Thompson laid the groundwork for public safety officials to take animal crimes seriously and to understand the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence,” said AWI President Cathy Liss. “He exemplifies the legacy of Dr. Schweitzer by recognizing the inherent value in all living creatures.”

Nearly 70 years ago, Schweitzer, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning scientist and humanitarian, gave AWI permission to strike a medal in his honor. Previous award recipients include former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, children's author Astrid Lindgren, and primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall.

“Being honored with the Schweitzer medal is overwhelming,” said Thompson. “I share it with all the law enforcement officers who have taken to heart the urgency of addressing animal cruelty. And I share it with [my late dog] Mr. Po, who opened my heart to the place of animals in our lives. I also must thank the National Sheriffs' Association for being open to allowing me to pursue this mission and for continuing its commitment to addressing animal cruelty.”

Thompson has been instrumental in assisting the FBI to add animal cruelty crimes to its National Incident-Based Reporting System; convincing the CDC to consider animal abuse as a data element in the National Violent Death Reporting System; and establishing the [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) and the [National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse](#).

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS FOR AT-RISK/OFFENDERS

Animal-Assisted Therapy Seen to Benefit Maltreated Children

A new research study out of the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work is reporting that adding animal-assisted therapy as an adjunct can improve evidence-based clinical interventions aimed at enhancing the caregiving contexts of children in the Child Protective Services system.

Erin Flynn, Julia Roguski, Julie Wold, Kate Trujillo, Phil Tedeschi, and Kevin Morris examined the effects of animal-assisted therapy delivered as an adjunct to standard-of-care intensive family preservation services, compared with usual care alone. Twenty-eight families referred by Child Protective Services were individually randomized to experimental or control intervention. Family functioning outcomes were measured using the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for Reunification.

All four targeted family functioning outcomes were significantly increased for participants who received animal-assisted therapy as an adjunct to intensive family preservation services with medium to large effect sizes. These improvements were sustained in two of the subscales through discharge. No significant differences were measured for the distal clinical outcome of disposition of children at discharge.

-- Flynn, E., Roguski, J., Wolf, J., Trujillo, K., Tedeschi, P., et al. (2018). A randomized controlled trial of animal-assisted therapy as an adjunct to intensive family preservation services. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077559518817678>

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Los Angeles SPCA Brings Link Message to Taiwan

Denisse Bernal, Director of Humane Education for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Los Angeles (spcaLA) recently traveled to Taiwan to share expertise on the Link between domestic violence and animal cruelty and spcaLA's Link programs. Those programs include the youth violence-prevention program, [Teaching Love and Compassion \(TLC\)™](#); [Animal Safety Net \(ASN\)™](#); Pet Housing for survivors of domestic violence and their pets; and Animal Safety Net: Youth & Families, a program for survivors and their children in partnership with the [WomenShelter of Long Beach](#).



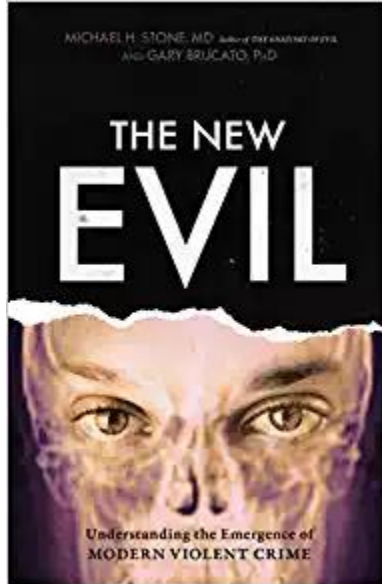
Bernal's presentations included a symposium of the National Animal Enterprise Group in Taichung, a network of veterinary clinics that includes animal welfare charity work; and the Association of Asian Environmental Ecology and Conservation Associations. The meeting at the Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault was well-attended by the non-profit and government sectors.

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THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Animal Torture Categorized in a “Gradations of Evil” Scale



A new book that attempts to help the public understand the nature of serial and mass killers by categorizing them on a 22-point Gradations of Evil Scale includes extensive references to killers whose troubled histories included animal torture and abuse. Michael H. Stone and Gary Brucato explore the underpinnings of extremely violent crimes using a typology of violence.

The 22 escalating categories include: self-defense or justified homicide; impulsive murderers without psychopathic features; persons with a few or no psychopathic traits; marked psychopathic features with malice aforethought; spree and multiple murders; and serial killers, torturers and sadists. In this 22-point scale, they categorize torture and/or sexual assault isolated to animals as vicious acts associated with Category 16, “Psychopathic persons committing multiple vicious acts including murder.”

Among their rogues’ gallery of 465 men from the U.S. and other countries who committed serial sexual homicide, serial and mass murders, many had extremely troubled lives marked by parental abuse, substance abuse, psychiatric disorders, broken families, and other problems. It is important to note that not all of the killers profiled had animal abuse in their backgrounds, and that the animal abuse and torture that did appear were only one part of a much greater constellation of youth and adult antisocial behaviors.

Category 16 is the ranking for self-centered, psychopathic individuals who commit two or more acts of extreme violence. This may include attempted or completed murder, but someone displaying a pattern of highly vicious acts even without homicide, such as intentionally disfiguring or crippling a victim, can be in Category 16. This is often also the most appropriate ranking for offenders who repeatedly commit rape or sodomy with adults or children but do not kill their victims, as well as individuals who commit two or more acts of necrophilia, in the absence of murder. However, the torture, killing, mutilation, or sexual maltreatment of animals, in the absence of any torture of human beings, can be assigned here.

The book explores the full and very graphic histories of such killers with histories of animal torture as Richard Chase, Keith Jespersion, Gary M. Heidnik, John Wayne Gacy, Luke Magnotta, Ed Kemper, Luke Woodham, Kip Kinkel, Nikolas Cruz, Cayetano Godino, Sal Inghilleri, Eric Williams, and Graham Young. Their atrocities against humans and animals are extremely disturbing and help paint portraits of what the authors call “the types of actions that virtually anyone, regardless of faith, time, or place, would find unspeakably horrible and utterly depraved.” These actions demonstrate premeditation, the infliction of excessive degrees of suffering, and actions that would be incomprehensible to the average individual.

-- Stone, M.F., & Brucato, G. (2019). *The New Evil: Understanding the Emergence of Modern Violent Crime*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books.

A Classic Link Case from Victorian England

While the overwhelming majority of serial and mass murderers are men, there have been instances of women who committed multiple murders. One early case from Victorian England is a classic example of The Link in action.

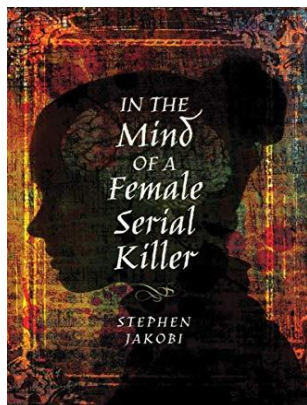
In January, 1869 in London, Agnes Norman, then 13 years old, entered the service of Ralf Milner; by the end of February, baby Thomas and infant Amelia Milner, were found dead.

In April, 1870, Norman entered the service of a Mr. Gardner: by the middle of May, baby John Stuart Taylor and infant James Gardner were found dead. In August of that year, she stayed two weeks in the service of a Mr. Brown: during that period there was an attempted murder of 10-year-old Charles Parfitt.

In April, 1871, she entered the service of a Mr. Beer: two days later, infant Jesse Jane Beer died.

She stood trial in the summer of 1871. She was acquitted of the murder of Jesse Jane Beer but was convicted of the attempted murder of Charles Parfitt and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

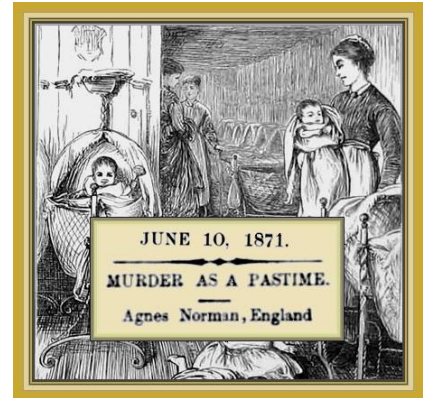
A recent book by Stephan Jakobi profiling the case of Agnes Norman and three other British female serial killers introduces her history with disturbing Link evidence. During Agnes Norman's service with Mr. Gardner, three dogs, one cat, a parrot, 12 canaries and linnets, and several goldfish also died mysteriously. During her two-week service with Mr. Brown, the cat, a canary, a linnet, and some goldfish died and the parrot was thought to be dying. During the three days she was in service with Mr. Beer, a cat and a canary both died mysteriously. She also served for a month with a Mr. Thomas, during which time a fowl and three canaries died mysteriously.



A grand total of three dogs, three cats, at least 17 canaries and linnets (a species of finch), many goldfish, one parrot and a fowl had been killed over a two-year period when she was between 13 and 15 years old. During this killing spree, she also murdered four babies and toddlers and attempted the murders of two older children.

Jakobi also notes a similar contemporaneous case in the U.S., where a girl named Laura Humber, aged 10 or 12, was charged in 1900 in Chippewa Falls, Wis. with the attempted murder of her parents and three sisters. She was alleged to have also tortured to death three domestic animals and a dozen chickens. She was committed to an industrial school in Milwaukee and by 1905 was living at home with her parents and siblings: she later married and had several children.

-- Jakobi, S. (2017). *In the Mind of a Female Serial Killer*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire, U.K.: Pen & Sword Ltd.



A contemporary cartoon of Agnes Norman

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

As the 2019 legislative season opens, we're following a record number of bills impacting animal abuse and its Links with other crimes. ***If you know of any such bills not included here, please let us know.***



Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Arizona HB 2161 would allow a petitioner to request an ex parte severe threat protection order based on the respondent's ownership of a firearm; in determining whether ground exist for an order, courts shall consider all relevant evidence including the respondent's cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would require the respondent to relinquish all firearms and ammunition.



California AB 415 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 Committee on Public Safety approved the bill and sent it to the Appropriations Committee.



Colorado HB 19-1i77 would create "Extreme Risk Protection Orders" that would allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a significant risk to self or others. In determining grounds for the issuance of such an order, courts could consider the person having been convicted for domestic violence and/or animal cruelty. The bill was approved by the House and is under consideration by the Senate.



Florida HB 379 and **SB 774** would allow courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or otherwise disposing of any animals owned by the petitioner and/or respondent and minor children in the home. The bills are in the House Business & Professions Subcommittee and the Senate Innovation, Industry and Technology, Judiciary and Rules Committees. *The bills also address Cross-Reporting.*



Indiana HB 1615 amends existing provisions in IC 31-9-2-42 which include "beating" an animal without justification within the definition of "domestic or family violence" to read "abusing" an animal. The bill passed the House 81-13 and is in the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Committee..



Kentucky HB 25 would: prohibit pretrial diversion for a person charged with torture of a dog or cat; make torture of a dog or cat a Class D felony; and prohibit early release for those who torture a dog or cat as a way to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family member or member of a dating relationship. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Mississippi SB 2014 would have prohibited respondents from removing, damaging, hiding, harming, or disposing of any companion animal owned or possessed by a person protected by the order. The court could have also authorized the removal of a companion animal from the respondent. The bill passed the Senate 51-0 but **died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri HB 370 would add “intimidation” – the injuring, killing, or threat to injure or kill an animal if such act is done to coerce, control, punish, or be an act of revenge against a household member – as grounds for a court to issue a protection order. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Hampshire HB 361 would add animals to the tangible property whose disposition courts may determine during divorce or annulment settlements; this property settlement “shall address the care and ownership of the parties' animals, taking into consideration the animals' wellbeing.” The bill passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New Mexico HB 52 would define an act of animal abuse intended to coerce, control or intimidate a domestic violence victim as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty. The bill passed the House 50-13 and is in the Senate Judiciary and Public Affairs Committees.



New York A 588 would create a felony-level crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if the act is committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 767 and **S 1251** would amend the language of the state’s pet protection orders to allow the court to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals kept by the petitioner, respondent or child, and to order the respondent to stay away from, take, transfer, conceal, harm, or dispose of the animal. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Children & Families Committees.



New York A 1097 would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



North Dakota HB 1537 would have allowed family members to file a petition for a “public safety petition order” prohibiting the respondent from having or obtaining a firearm if the respondent is believed to pose a risk of injury to self or others; among the criteria to establish such risk is a history of violence or cruelty toward an animal. **The bill died in the House.**



Pennsylvania SB 90 would create “Extreme Risk Protection Orders” that would allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a risk of suicide or of causing death or serious bodily injury to another person. Factors that could help make such a determination include a history of domestic abuse and/or animal cruelty. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H 5023 and **SB 225** would add a provision allowing courts to provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets in protection orders for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. The House Judiciary Committee recommended **H 5023** be held for further study; **SB 225** is in the Senate Judiciary Committee. A related measure, **H 5076**, would allow courts to award custody of household pets and to impose enforcement remedies including a restraining order or other injunctive relief. The House Judiciary Committee also recommended this bill be held for further study.



Rhode Island H 5483 and **H 5822** would allow the district court to determine the ownership of a pet between “formerly cohabiting parties” based on what would be in the pet’s best interests. Both bills are in the House Judiciary Committee, which has held **H 5483** for further study.



Texas SB 194 and **HB 309** would add “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions for illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims could obtain a protection order that includes harming or threatening the victim’s animals. Such pet protection orders are already in place for victims of domestic or family violence, sexual assault or abuse, and stalking. The bills are in the Senate Criminal Justice and House Criminal Jurisprudence Committees.



Texas HB 3021 would direct the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to develop information to provide to the public about the availability of provisions that allow pets to be included in protective orders. The bill is in the Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee.



Texas HB 2516 would add cruelty to non-livestock animals with the intent to coerce, control, punish or intimidate another family member to the definition of “family violence”.



Utah SB 45 defines an act of aggravated animal cruelty intended to coerce, control or intimidate a spouse or partner as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on March 27.**



Virginia HB 2642 and **SB 1276** would have made any animal cruelty violation a Class 6 felony if carried out with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. **The bills were passed by indefinitely by the House Finance Committee.**



Wyoming HB 235 will allow courts to issue protection orders that grant sole possession of any household pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child to the petitioner “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order will also order the respondent to not have any contact with the animal and to not abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet. The bill was signed into law on March 8 and takes effect July 1.



Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment




New York A 831 would increase the penalty for aggravated cruelty to animals from two to four years when the crime is committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.




New York A 955 would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine, to knowingly cause a minor child under age 16 to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.





New York A 1211 and **S 3415** would require all individuals responsible for enforcing animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and all persons required to report child abuse or maltreatment to report suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bills are in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families and the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.


 **New York A 2664** and **S 3327** would amend the definition of child endangerment and other related statutes to include committing acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child and to strengthen penalties for existing animal cruelty charges when committed in the presence of a child. The bills are in the Assembly Codes and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.


 **Washington HB 1235** would create a new crime of “providing a harmful material to a minor” that includes bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill is in the House Committee on Public Safety.


Animal Abuse and Other Crimes


 **Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths between the ages of 14 and 18 if the offense involved the infliction or threat of serious bodily harm to a person or an animal. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.


 **Mississippi HB 843** and **HB 984** would have required law enforcement officials investigating animal cruelty to use a standardized form compliant with the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). **The bills died in the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.**


 **New Jersey A3693** and **S2239** would add individuals convicted of animal cruelty to the list of offenders 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 Jersey A 1334** and **S 3294** expands the definition of animal cruelty to include the theft or release of an animal from the residence of the owner during a burglary. The bills are in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

 **New York A 1069** would add a conviction for felony animal abuse for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the definition of a “serious offense” which would affect the ability of someone to possess a firearm. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.

 **New York A 1834** and **S 186** (“Kirby and Quigley’s Law”) would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture Committee and the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

 **New York A 2509** and **S 609** would allow animal fighting charges to be eligible for an enterprise corruption charge. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.

 **Pennsylvania HB 353** would add animal fighting to the definition of corrupt organizations’ “racketeering activities.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Washington HB 1541** would add a conviction for 2nd-degree animal cruelty as a crime making it illegal for a person to possess a firearm. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



Maryland HB 561 would have added the crime of psychological abuse of a vulnerable adult, defined as the intentional use of verbal or other conduct resulting in a vulnerable adult's apprehension of fear, confusion, intimidation, depression or emotional distress; such conduct would include the destruction or harm of an animal owned by the vulnerable adult. **The bill was withdrawn from the Judiciary Committee.**



New York A 1153 would prohibit a person 62 years of age or older from being denied residential occupancy or being evicted solely because the person keeps a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of such pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing Committee.

Animal Hoarding



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 A 261 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as keeping more than 25 companion animals in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well being of the animals and people living in the household. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may have to complete treatment and counseling. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



California SB 580 would amend current procedures requiring animal abuse offenders on probation to complete counseling for behavior or conduct disorders, to instead undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation, treatment, and a responsible animal owner education course as the court deems appropriate. The bill is in the Public Safety Committee.



Colorado HB 19-1092 would allow courts to order mental health treatment to offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill would also require courts to impose a ban of either five or 10 years upon conviction for a misdemeanor or felony offense, respectively. The bill passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Mississippi HB 984 would have required offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. **The bill died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri HB 111 would allow courts to require adults and juveniles convicted of animal abuse to undergo psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment; these would be mandatory if the offense were torture or mutilation, or upon a second conviction for animal abuse. **The bill also addresses Cross-Reporting** and is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.



New Jersey currently requires juveniles (but not adults) convicted of animal cruelty to undergo mental health counseling. Five bills would expand that to include adults as well. **A3049** and **S1636 (“Shyanne’s Law”)** 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. **S2749** would likewise require mental health counseling for all persons convicted of animal cruelty; it is in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



New York A 984 and **S 385** would require courts to impose mandatory psychiatric evaluation and treatment for juvenile and adult offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals. **S 384** would require juvenile offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate bills are in the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.



New York A 987 and **S 2007** would prohibit a person convicted of “Buster’s Law” from having a companion animal unless authorized by court order after they complete appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing. **A 987** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **S 2007** is in the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

Animal-Assisted Interventions for Crime Victims and Witnesses



New Hampshire HB 513 would allow victims and witnesses of child abuse and sexual abuse, and persons with intellectual disabilities, to have a comforting facility dog or therapy animal accompany them to court. The court would have to consider the age of the victim or witness currently and at the time of the incident, the interests of the victim or witness, the rights of the parties to the litigation, and any other factor deemed relevant. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



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.


Animal Sexual Abuse




California AB 611 would expand prohibitions against animal sexual abuse. It would: change the prohibition against sexually assaulting certain animals to prohibiting defined sexual contact with any animal; authorize the seizure of animals in such cases; expand the ban of owning or keeping animals to animal sexual abusers; and require veterinarians to report suspected animal sexual abuse as they are already mandated to do for animal abuse or cruelty. The bill is in the Public Safety Committee.





Hawai’i HB 24 would have added a new crime of sexual assault on an animal with eight specific actions considered illegal. It would have been a Class C felony unless a minor were involved, in which case it would be a Class B felony. Offenders would have had to surrender or forfeit all animals to a humane society; pay the organization for the animals’ care; obtain psychiatric or psychological treatment; and be prohibited from owning, keeping, residing, working, or volunteering with animals for at least five years. **The House Agriculture Committee recommended it be deferred.**


 **Kentucky SB 67** creates a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the felony offense of sexual crimes against an animal, and amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. **The bill was signed into law** on March 26.




 **Kentucky HB 98** would create a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to prohibit cruelty to equines including situations involving abuse, neglect and sexual contact. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.


 **Maryland SB 355** and **HB 641** would amend §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include “sexual contact with an animal” and further define aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal would be included among Tier III sex offenders. **SB 355** was withdrawn from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, where **HB 641** is now being considered after being approved by the House.


 **Massachusetts S.891** would amend Chapter 272, Section 34 of the General Laws to replace the archaic “Crime against nature” – the “abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast” – with a new crime of a “sexual act on an animal.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.


 **West Virginia HB 2792** prohibits activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal; establishes criminal penalties; and provides for forfeiture of animals, payment of associated costs, and restrictions on owning animals upon conviction. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.


Cross-Reporting


 **Florida HB 47**, prefiled for the 2019 legislative session, would have exempted veterinarians who report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement agencies from lawsuits. Florida veterinarians are already immune from liability for participating in the investigation of animal cruelty. **The measure was withdrawn prior to its introduction.**


 **Florida HB 379** and **SB 774** would allow veterinarians to bypass the usual confidentiality restrictions in order to report suspected criminal violations to a law enforcement officer or certified animal control officer. Medical records could not be furnished except under a court order. The bills are in the House Business & Professions Subcommittee and the Senate Innovation, Industry and Technology, Judiciary and Rules Committees. *The bills also address domestic violence pet protection orders.*


 **Iowa SF 3** would mandate veterinarians who “conclude that an animal is being subjected to animal cruelty” to complete an animal cruelty report and submit it to a local law enforcement agency. Individuals who report, cooperate with or assist in such investigations in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.


 **Minnesota HF 1530/SF 1517** would grant veterinarians, who are already mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, immunity from civil and criminal liability for making such a report in good faith. **HF 1530** is in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division; **SF 1517** is in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee.


 **Missouri HB 111** would grant immunity from civil liability to all persons, including veterinarians, teachers and school personnel, who report suspected animal abuse to a law enforcement agency in good faith. *The bill also addresses Psychological Evaluations* and is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.


 **New York A 1170** would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal is the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect to report the incident and disclose necessary records to law enforcement and humane investigators. Currently, N.Y. veterinarians are permitted to make such reports. Both the existing and proposed law accord veterinarians who report in good faith – to protect the health and welfare of the patient or the public – immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.


 **Ohio HB 33** would require veterinarians, children’s services agencies, adult protective services, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected animal abuse in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability; however, penalties and court costs would be assessed if reports are made maliciously and such penalties would go towards providing funding for domestic violence shelters to assist victims in finding temporary shelter or other support for their companion animals. The bill would also add dog wardens and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. The measure is in the House Criminal Justice Committee.

 **Oregon HB 2227** would add animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. The measure was approved by the House and has moved on to the Senate.

 **Oregon HB 2500** would allow veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail could collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Rhode Island S 82** would amend §4-1-37 of the General Laws, which permits veterinarians, technicians, and animal shelter and kennel personnel to report suspected animal abuse, to mandate such reporting with immunity from lawsuits if made in good faith. The measure would also impose a \$500 fine for failing to report. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **Texas SB 1750** and **HB 2787** would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to appropriate governmental entities without violating veterinarian/client confidentiality. The bills are in the Senate Business & Commerce and House Agriculture & Livestock Committees.

 **Washington HB 1919** increases penalties and expands provisions against animal fighting, but a requirement that the Washington State Patrol establish and maintain a statewide toll-free hotline to allow the public to report animal abuse **was deleted in a substitute bill**. The deleted section would have facilitated community reporting and law enforcement response to animal abuse by creating a central repository of incidents of animal abuse, neglect fighting, and sexual abuse for inclusion in the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System. The State Patrol would have referred incidents to local law enforcement agencies for investigation as appropriate. The animal fighting amendments passed the House and are in the Senate Committee on Law & Justice.

“CASA for Animals”



Illinois HB 1631 would allow a special pro bono attorney or law student advocate to be court-appointed to represent the health or safety of a cat or dog in judicial proceedings. The bill is in the Criminal Administration and Enforcement Subcommittee.



New Jersey A4840 and **S 3322** would authorize courts to appoint advocates in criminal cases that affect the welfare or care of cats or dogs. Advocates would monitor the case, attend hearings, consult with relevant individuals, review records, and present information and recommendations to the court in the animals’ best interests. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees.



New York A 25, S 3027 and **A 702** would allow for the creation of a court-appointed advocate for animals. A 25 and S 3027 are in the respective Judiciary Committees; **A 702** is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

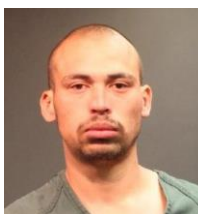
THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Torturer of Dogs in Neighborhood Dispute Gets 9+ Years in Prison



David C. Herbert

David C. Herbert, 37, of Oceanside, Calif., was sentenced to almost 10 years in prison and fined \$10,000 on March 15 for six counts of animal cruelty, one count of burglary, and four misdemeanor counts of vandalism for harming dogs belonging to two neighbors (*See the [September 2017 LINK-Letter](#)*). Herbert will serve eight years and eight months on the cruelty charges plus one year on the misdemeanor counts for the incidents which Vista Superior Judge Carlos Armour called “particularly shocking.” The [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) reported that Herbert repeatedly targeted his next-door neighbors, slashing their tires, poisoning their dogs and pouring a caustic chemical on the animals. The neighbor and her 4-year-old son came home one day to find someone had harmed their two huskies, one of which had an eye gouged out. After the family moved out, another family moved in; less than 48 hours later, one of the new family’s pets went missing and the dog’s blood was found in Herbert’s car. The attacks were “a planned and sophisticated effort to bring pain and suffering to other people through the suffering of their pets,” Armour said. “How do you explain to a 4-year-old that a human being gets to be so cruel?” asked the woman whose dog lost an eye.



Jose Manuel Pantoja

Transient with Criminal History Booked on Animal Cruelty

A homeless transient on probation with a long criminal history was arrested by police in Santa Ana, Calif., and charged with animal cruelty for allegedly tying a Chihuahua with electrical wires and kicking it around like “a soccer ball,” according to police. [KTLA-TV](#) reported that Jose Manuel Pantoja, 28, was in custody and the dog, a 10-year-old Chihuahua named “Max,” had a bungee cord tied around its throat and chest and electrical wires around its legs. Max was treated for multiple injuries including a broken pelvis. Officers said Max had gone missing from his home and was reunited with his family. Police said they had dealt with Pantoja “numerous times.” He had pleaded guilty last November to felony assault and a robbery charge was dropped in the plea agreement, which resulted in a sentence of three years’ probation and a year in jail.



Lawrence Graham

Man Charged with Killing Girlfriend's Puppy Because She Didn't Come Home On Time

A North Lauderdale, Fla. man who bought his 16-year-old girlfriend a puppy was charged with six counts of animal cruelty for allegedly killing the dog because she didn't come home on time. Lawrence Graham, 19, was accused of killing a one-year-old Shih Tzu named "Jordan" after his girlfriend wouldn't answer his calls or texts.

[WTVT-TV](#) reported that an arrest report said Graham texted his girlfriend, "U got til 1030 if u not here by then I swear 4 God I'll finish Jordan off."

When his girlfriend didn't arrive home by 10:30, police said he choked and slammed the dog to the ground and then put it in a plastic bag. The dog was still alive and tried to scratch holes in the bag, then Graham choked the dog again and killed it, police said.

Graham went to her house the following morning. She wasn't there, and he told police he was jealous that she might be with someone else. The report said Graham then placed the dog next to the front door with a towel over it, flowers next to the dog with the dog's collar, and a note that read: "Coulda made it RIP Jordan."

Police said Graham then texted his girlfriend to tell her he killed Jordan. One text message read, "If u really loved him u woulda made it in time 2 save him. Hope it was worth it."

"This is a heinous crime that he did this to this poor dog that's a year old," Broward Sheriff's Office Detective Sira Arroyo told [WSVN-TV](#). "Also, I mean, it's a small puppy he eventually ended up killing. Thank God she didn't come home 'cause who knows what he would've done to her."

Woman Charged with Stomping Neighbor's Ferret and Poisoning Her Own Dog



Melissa Snead

A Providence, R.I. woman who police said wanted to exact "payback" against her neighbor for allegedly coming into her apartment and taking things was charged with animal cruelty and felony breaking & entering. The [Providence Journal](#) reported that Melissa Snead, 32, was charged with stealing her neighbor's ferret and crushing its back, and poisoning her own dog. Police said that while making a well-being check they found "Bear" the ferret and "Rhody" the Chihuahua suffering and unable to stand inside Snead's apartment. Both animals were rushed to a veterinary hospital but died. Police said Snead had told a patrol officer that she took her neighbor's ferret

"as payback," accusing the neighbor without evidence of coming into her apartment and taking a photo of her daughter and coins from a piggy bank. Snead's estranged husband, when asked by a reporter about the incident, replied, "That sounds about right. She's violent. You can see it in her eyes." He said that Melissa is allowed to see their daughter only during court-supervised visits and that he fears for the safety of the daughter and of his own mother.

Three Arrested on Cruelty, Hunting and Weapons Offenses



Lee Bunch, Amy Leigh Faunce, and Dallas Lee Potter

Three Bulloch County, Ga., individuals were charged with felony animal cruelty, illegal firearms possession, hunting violations, and eluding police after they were caught allegedly shooting farmers' cows. The sheriff's office told [Fox28 Media](#) that several complaints about illegal night hunting alerted authorities. Deputies arrested Justin Lee Justin Bunch, 23; Amy Leigh Faunce, 21; and Dallas Lee Potter, 17.

Boyfriend/Caretaker Charged with Double Homicide and Animal Cruelty

Shannon Scott, 51, of Murray, Ky., was indicted on two counts of murder and one count each of animal cruelty and tampering with evidence for allegedly killing two women and a dog and trying to clean up the scene to hide the evidence. [WPSD-TV](#) reported that Scott was charged with killing Evelyn Scott, 77, for whom he served as a caretaker, her dog, and his girlfriend Tera Todd, 37, last Feb. 8. Investigators said they found Shannon Scott standing in the bathroom of the house with blood on his hands and evidence that he had tried to mop up the scene. Scott had also been charged in January with theft in a separate case. He was being held on a \$2 million bond pending a competency hearing scheduled for April 30.



Shannon Scott



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.*

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

April 10 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The Kirkpatrick Foundation will sponsor a [panel discussion on The Link](#) between Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence at the Oklahoma City University School of Law.

April 11 – Aykley Heads, U.K.: The Durham County Council [Safeguarding Adults Board](#) will offer training on recognizing abuse of vulnerable adults to RSPCA animal abuse first responders.

April 12 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will offer a 3-hour CE & CEU training on “Child Abuse, Sexual Assault and The Link.”

April 12 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Maya Gupta and Mary Lou Randour will present on “What Every Psychologist Should Know about The Link between Animal Abuse and Family Violence” for the [British Columbia Psychological Association](#).

April 14 – Montreal, Que., Canada: Sarah May Lindsay will present “Co-Sheltering Companion Animals in Emergency Women’s Shelters: From Model to Practice & Solutions,” and Margaret Doyle and Brad Nichols will present “CSI Animal: Veterinary Forensics in Practice” at Humane Canada’s [National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

April 16 (online): Michelle Welch will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Advanced Techniques for Fighting Prosecutions” on behalf of the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse and the National Animal Care & Control Association.

April 16 - 18 – New Orleans, La.: Martha Smith-Blackmore will present on “Putting the ‘Doc’ in Documenting Animal Cruelty,” and Katie Campbell will present on “Domestic Violence Shelters and Pets: How Animal Care Organizations Can Help” at the [HSUS Animal Expo](#).

April 23 – New Brunswick, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train the NJ [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#).

April 23-26 – Honolulu, Hawai’i: Katie Campbell of RedRover will present on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse and strategies for co-sheltering pets and people at the [Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma](#) 16th International Summit.

April 25 – London, U.K.: [The Links Group U.K.](#) will meet.

April 26 – Edinburgh, Scotland: The Children, Adolescents & Animals Research (CAAR) program at the University of Edinburgh will present a [reflective workshop](#) on “Children’s Relationships with Different Types of Companion Animals.”

April 28 – Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on “Introducing The Link to Students: The Cruelty Connection” at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

May 1 – Pittsfield, Mass: [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network – will meet.

May 6 – Sewell, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train on the Link for the [Center for Family Services](#).

May 10 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

May 15 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct two webinars on “Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

May 15 – Denver, Colo.: Michelle Welch will present on the animal abuse/domestic violence Link at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys’ 3rd National [Domestic Violence Prosecution Conference](#).

May 21 (online): Claudine Wilkins will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Criminal Cases Involving Multi-Animal Impounds” on behalf of the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse and the National Animal Care & Control Association.

May 23 – Newtown, Pa.: Phil Arkow will present on “Animal Abuse, Animal Hoarding and Elder Abuse: Challenges and Strategies for Adult Protective Services” at the [Bucks County Area Agency on Aging](#).

May 23 – João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil: Melinda Merck, Nestor Calderon, Marcelo Robis, and Janina Hammerschmidt are among the speakers presenting on “Veterinary Expertise and Animal Abuse: Advances and Challenges,” “Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse: Theory of The Link,” and “Animal Hoarders” at the [9th International Conference of Collective Veterinary Medicine](#).

May 31 – Edinburgh, Scotland: The Children, Adolescents & Animals Research (CAAR) program at the University of Edinburgh will present a [reflective workshop](#) on “New Advances in Animal Cruelty Prevention.”

June 3 – Niagara Falls, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present on “The Link between Animal abuse and Human Violence, and its Implications for Educators and the Humane Movement,” at the [OSPCA](#) Annual Educational Conference.

June 3-4 – Bloomington, Ill.: Belinda Lewis and Adam Ricci will present on forensic photography, cruelty scene processing, and bloodstain pattern analysis at the [Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference](#).

June 7 – Dallas, Texas: Jamey Cantrell of Plano, Texas will speak on animal hoarding at the Mental Health Association of Greater Dallas’ [9th Annual Southwest Conference on Hoarding](#).

June 12 – Regina, Sask., Canada: Christiana Bratiotis and Colleen Marion will present a [workshop](#) on interagency approaches to animal hoarding for human and animal service providers.

June 12 – Stratford, N.J.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link and Domestic Violence for the [S.A.S.H.A.](#) Foundation.

June 14 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

June 15-16 – Louisville, Ky.: The Link will be addressed at the meetings of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals and the National Sheriffs Association’s Animal Cruelty Advisory Committee.

June 25-26 – Hartford, Conn.: Phil Arkow and Aubrey Fine will discuss cross-reporting between child and animal protection agencies and therapeutic interventions for child abuse victims at the [Paws for Kids](#) conference.

July 12 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will offer a 3-hour CE & CEU training event.

July 18-19 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: Jyothi Robertson will present four sessions on animal welfare, animal hoarding and forensics, and Rebecca Ledger will present four sessions on forensic behavioral analysis, at the [joint conference](#) of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

July 25 – Novato, Calif.: Phil Arkow will train on The Link to a community collaborative group and staff of the [Marin Humane Society](#).

Aug. 2-6 – Washington, D.C.: Phil Arkow will present on “Preparing the Practice to respond to Suspected Animal Abuse” at the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Convention 2019.

Aug. 9 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

Aug. 27 (online): Terry Mills of the ASPCA will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “What Dog Fighters Don’t Want You to Know: Considerations for the Justice Professional.”

Sept. 9 – Edinburgh, Scotland: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Scottish SPCA and University of Edinburgh](#) conference on “The Links between Animal Cruelty, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Human Violence: Research and Practice.” Other Link speakers will include Paula Boyden, Jo Williams, and Mike Flynn.

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

Sept. 18-19 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Positive Links’ biennial [New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence](#) will be held.

Oct. 1 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Creating an Animal Abuse Task Force: How Law Enforcement Can Work with Local resources to Investigate and Prosecute Crimes” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association and the National Animal Care & Control Association.

Oct. 11 – Dallas, Texas: Chelsea Rider will present at a 3-hour CE & CEU training event hosted by the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Oct. 23 – Plano, Texas: Phil Arkow will present “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse” at the [North Texas Facing Family Violence conference](#). The conference’s theme is “All Systems Go: Working Together – Family Violence Across the Lifespan.”

Nov. 8 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

Nov. 21-22 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: The [Canadian Violence Link Conference](#) will examine the Link between violence to humans and animals, look at the vulnerabilities among both populations, and explore how various sectors can learn from each other and gather the necessary tools to stop the cycle of violence.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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

Paul Needham

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