



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 12, No. 9 September 2019**

*A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER*



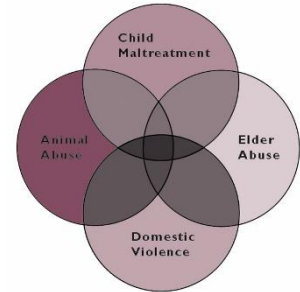
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



[www.NationalLinkCoalition.org](http://www.NationalLinkCoalition.org)

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## ***THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE***

### **Juvenile & Family Court Judges Get Technical Assistance Bulletin on Animal Cruelty Issues**

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) have published a comprehensive 64-page [technical assistance bulletin](#) that will help judges to understand the significance of The Link in their cases and take specific steps to address animal issues that emerge in cases of domestic violence, juvenile delinquency and child and elder abuse that come before their courts.

Citing hundreds of studies over the past 40 years, the bulletin emphasizes that:

- First and foremost, animal cruelty is a violent crime committed against vulnerable members of the community and thus is a public health and safety issue.
- Animal cruelty is Linked with other crimes against property and humans.
- Animal cruelty is more likely part of a pattern of general antisocial deviance rather than the “graduation hypothesis” whereby animal abuse escalates to violence against humans.
- Animal abuse frequently is a coercive control tool to intimidate children and intimate partners.
- Animal cruelty inflicted by juveniles is one of the earliest indicators of conduct disorder and a sign of moral disengagement; hands-on abuse of animals for entertainment may be a statistically significant predictor for extreme violence.
- Family and juvenile court judges should regularly screen cases that appear before their courts to determine if animal cruelty may be occurring in the parties’ homes; if so, they should refer any previously unreported or uninvestigated information uncovered to law enforcement agencies and ensure that human victims receive proper support, counseling and protection.
- When judges include pets in domestic violence protection orders they are not only protecting the animals but are also removing or reducing barriers to the safety and wellbeing of adult survivors and their children.



- Judges should view child abuse allegations as a red flag for a variety of concerning and possibly dangerous dynamics, in the present and in the future, not only for a child but also for any pet in the child's life.
- At early investigation and decision points, such as differential response, safety planning, child removal, or alternative placement, judges should inquire as to whether pets are in the home and the condition of their care and well-being. Knowing about community resources that include trauma-informed mental health and treatment services that address a child's witnessing or being forced to engage in animal abuse will be extremely helpful.
- Because of the multiple layers of co-occurrence of animal cruelty and child abuse, domestic violence and juvenile delinquency, and the variety of court orders and treatment service plans to be developed and monitored, it is especially important that one judge have responsibility to work with the family and all the allied professionals assigned to it, including guardians *ad litem* and CASA.
- Juveniles who commit animal cruelty should be required to undergo psychological evaluation and, if necessary, treatment. It is not necessary to seek out a clinician specializing in animal cruelty cases: because there are so many root causes and underlying factors for animal cruelty, any competent clinician should be able to identify those issues.
- Coercive-control animal abuse against a disabled person's service animal has additional and more serious, and possibly life-threatening, impacts on the elder survivor.
- Civil protection orders for elder abuse should include provisions to include pets and service animals and provisions for restitution by the perpetrator to provide for financial support of care required for the victim's animals.

**“The association between animal abuse and all forms of violence is well documented. If we don't address pets, we are missing the mark and reality of who and what people consider as ‘family.’”**

*-- Hon Carroll J. Kelly,  
11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Miami, Fla.*

The bulletin identifies numerous gaps in the judicial system which may exist when complex family violence cases include animal issues. Multiple courts which normally do not communicate with each other may be involved, such as criminal courts addressing animal cruelty, family courts addressing victims, civil courts hearing divorce, delinquency and requests for protection and restraining orders, municipal courts handling code enforcement issues, and other courts holding probation and parole hearings. The bulletin recommends that cross-court training and processes should

be instituted to ensure the health and safety of all vulnerable family members.

### **Judges Can Build Bridges**

Building bridges for collaboration and communication among various stakeholders is vital in these cases, and judges are well-positioned to facilitate such collaboration, particularly among other municipal and family courts, the bulletin states. Sharing information, establishing protocols for cross-reporting, and participating in task forces can pave the way for cross-disciplinary training among groups and individuals committed to justice and safer communities.

The bulletin includes extensive considerations and specific steps for judges when deciding how to handle:

- domestic violence cases when survivors and children have pets;
- child abuse cases that effectively safeguard the wellbeing of children and the animals they are attached to;

- cases of juvenile offenders who have harmed animals that promote youth rehabilitation, protect animals and humans and help prevent future offending;
- Elder abuse cases where self-neglect, animal abuse or animal hoarding may also be present.

It also includes summaries of relevant state and federal legislation and first-person accounts from judges who have handled Link cases, plus numerous citations and resources for further information.

The bulletin is an outcome of the Judicial Responses to Animal Cruelty Issues Convening held earlier this year ([see the June 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). Ten judges from across the U.S. met with NCJFCJ and ALDF staff to:

- discover what judges are doing in their communities to address animal cruelty;
- identify what judges need to know about animal cruelty and its Link to violence; and
- determine what actions, recommended practices, tools, and resources are needed to assist judges to address animal cruelty in their juvenile and family court cases.

### A Significant Resource

The resulting bulletin is the most significant resource produced for the field by NCJFCJ, which has explored the connections that animals have with the justice system intermittently since 2010. Earlier works have addressed protecting domestic violence victims by protecting their pets, and The Link between juveniles committing animal cruelty and crimes against humans. Three national conferences addressed animal therapy interventions for at-risk youths and at-risk dogs, trauma-informed justice, and the correlation between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence.

**“It is so important to communicate about The Link between animal abuse and the impact on domestic violence, dependency and juvenile justice.”**

*-- Hon. John J. Romero, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Judicial District Children’s Court,  
Albuquerque, N.M.*

The partnership with ALDF, whose grant made the bulletin possible, is the first intentionally coordinated work by the NCJFCJ to address judicial responses in animal cruelty court cases. “Research shows that acts of cruelty against animals can be a sentinel indicator and often a predictor of other forms of family and community violence,” the bulletin advises.

The NCJFCJ bulletin will become increasingly important in states like South Carolina, which enacted [S105](#) this past May. That measure requires all South Carolina magistrates and municipal court judges to receive at least two hours of instruction on issues concerning animal cruelty every four years as part of their mandatory continuing legal education programs. The content of that training will be established by the South Carolina Court Administration at the direction of the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court.

*-- Balkin, D., Blomquist, M., Bowman, S., Chitwood, H.L., & Dunn, L., et al. (2019).  
Animal Cruelty Issues: What Juvenile and Family Court Judges Need to Know.  
Reno, Nev.: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.*

## NCJFCJ Resolution Addresses Animal Abuse and The Link

At its annual conference in Orlando on July 27, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges also adopted a [Resolution Regarding Animal Cruelty and Its Link to Other Forms of Violence](#). The Resolution cites The Link, the role of animals as family members, laws that include pets in protection orders and cross-reporting between animal control and child welfare agencies, and high incidence of animal abuse in terrorism suspects and elder abuse cases. The document offers 12 resolutions including:



- Animal cruelty is a crime of violence and may be indicative of past or future violent acts.
- Because of the demonstrated link to the safety of humans at the hands of the animal abuser, when animals are subjected to cruelty, juvenile and family courts should consider the welfare of abused animals in reaching their decisions.
- Judges should be given the time and resources necessary to address animal cruelty allegations to achieve just results and prevent future violence.
- The gravity of animal cruelty perpetrated by juveniles may indicate the juvenile has been or is being abused, and early intervention is essential to address the harm and to prevent the juvenile from committing future violent acts.
- Juvenile and family court judges should consider exposure to animal cruelty and trauma-informed assessment and interventions in disposition orders for juveniles who have engaged in animal cruelty.
- Juvenile and family court judges should consider the safety of all household members, including pets and other animals, when assessing domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and animal cruelty cases and when deciding protection orders, visitation and custody.
- There should be collaboration and communication among agencies devoted to animal welfare, child welfare and the care of the elderly and individuals with disabilities to better detect and address concurrent forms of abuse.
- The NCJFCJ supports measures which minimize an abuser's access to animals, including the issuance of protection orders and the implementation of limitations on contact with or possession of animals.
- The NCJFCJ does not support sentencing animal abusers to serve community service at animal shelters or other organizations which permit or require unsupervised contact with animals.
- The NCJFCJ supports efforts to increase access to offense-specific psychological assessment, evaluation, and treatment for individuals charged with animal cruelty offenses.
- The NCJFCJ will collaborate with allied organizations and experts to develop and make available educational resources and trainings to assist judges in better understanding the issues and implications of juvenile and family court cases involving animal cruelty.

### *Permission to Reprint*

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

## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

### DVM Argues for Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Animal Abuse



**Jennifer Woolf**

A recent article in the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) reviews the issue of veterinary reporting of suspected animal abuse by noting the irony that veterinarians are more often mandated to report suspected child abuse than to report suspected animal abuse. Jennifer Woolf, a California veterinarian, wrote in a [June 10 blog on VETzInsight](#) that mandatory reporting of suspected animal abuse is significant because of The Link between animal cruelty and other forms of violence.

Woolf cautions that the introduction of immunity from liability for reporting suspected abuse helps ease concerns about practitioners who fear violating the veterinarian-client-patient relationship. She notes that animal cruelty is a legal definition, not a medical one, so the determination of whether abuse has occurred will be determined by the courts and not the veterinarian. The report may be the first step to getting animals and people the help that they need and few cases make it all the way through the court systems.

Mandatory reporting also offers another advantage: “It makes a level playing field for all veterinarians in the state,” she notes. “If everyone has to report then the report is part of the system, it is not personal.”

Veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal abuse in 16 states. They are specifically named as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse in two states (California and Colorado) but are also mandated reporters of child abuse in the 18 states where all residents are mandated:

**States in which  
EVERYONE is a mandated  
reporter of child abuse:**

Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wyoming

### Support Available to Help DVMs Assist Pet Victims of Domestic Violence

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation's [Veterinary Care Charitable Fund](#) has been established to enable participating practitioners to offer charitable veterinary services to clients facing personal hardships. Veterinary hospitals that enroll in the program have a way to support animals who are injured or rescued from abuse and neglect, including:

- Victims of domestic violence
- Disabled veterans needing a service dog
- Low-income senior citizens
- Good Samaritans who rescue domesticated animals.

The Foundation does not provide funding to individuals in need of financial assistance. All requests for aid must come from a veterinarian whose practice is enrolled in the program.



## AVMA Conference Link Track Offers Handy Tips for DVMs

The American Veterinary Medical Association graciously invited the National Link Coalition to help organize an all-day track on animal welfare and Link issues at AVMA's annual convention in August. The seven speakers presented a series of workshops which highlighted the roles of veterinarians in animal abuse and other family violence. Here are just a few of the many ideas and suggestions which were offered:

### Phil Arkow – “Preparing the Practice to Respond to Suspected Animal Abuse”

- Veterinarians do not have to know that a situation is abuse in order to report it. *(Veterinarians are medical experts, not legal experts, and the determination of whether a case can be prosecuted as abuse will be made by others.)*
- Consider housing an animal suspected of being abused at least overnight. *(Sequestering the animal protects it from the abuser, gives it additional time to recover, and gives the practitioner additional time to reflect on the nature of the case and get a second opinion.)*
- Not all clients will be confrontational when suspected animal abuse is reported. *(Many clients may be relieved that something is finally being done.)*
- Dealing with contentious clients and possible animal abuse does not have to be difficult. *(More and more clinics are hiring Veterinary Social Workers who can work with clients.)*



### Martha Smith-Blackmore – “Crime Scenes, Evidence and Veterinary Forensics”

- Keep a dedicated camera handy for any photographic evidence you may need to gather for cruelty investigations. *(Your cellphone camera could be subpoenaed and held as evidence pending the trial and you won't have access to it.)*
- Keep any trace evidence collected (fur, fibers, etc.) and the paws of deceased animals secured in paper envelopes or bags, rather than plastic. *(Moisture and condensation inside plastic can deteriorate the DNA in the samples.)*
- If you can do so without compromising the timely treatment of an animal in a suspected abuse case, photograph it before you do anything to change its condition. *(Before-and-after photos may be critical for a successful prosecution.)*



### Maya Gupta – “Responding to Animal Abuse in the Domestic Violence Context”

- Domestic violence can affect pets' welfare in many ways beyond abusers' hurting or killing them to retaliate against their partners. *(His controlling her access to finances may prevent the animals from getting necessary veterinary care and flea, tick and heartworm prevention.)*
- Set up lines of communication in advance with local domestic violence crisis centers, legal aid and law enforcement victim services units. *(Those agencies may not routinely ask survivors about their animals or know what veterinary resources might be available to help them.)*
- Abusers may be selective in which animals they target to control and intimidate their victims. *(If they each had their own pets prior to their relationship, he may not hurt his own animals.)*
- Large-animal practitioners may be a particularly important resource. *(As challenging as it is for a woman escaping domestic violence to find shelter for her pets, there are additional logistical and transportation challenges if horses or livestock are threatened.)*



### Randy Lockwood – “The Role of the Veterinary Pathologist”

- Don't ignore animal neglect, the most common form of animal maltreatment. *(Even though neglect is an act of omission rather than deliberate commission, it is still an act that creates animal suffering.)*
- Gunshot and projectile injuries to animals cannot easily be explained as being an accident. *(Weapons must be made ready, so these injuries to animals always establish a degree of premeditation.)*
- Don't believe that “animal abuse doesn't happen in our community,” or “he's such a nice guy I can't believe he'd hurt animals,” or “people who hurt their animals don't bring them in for treatment.” *(These are all myths.)*



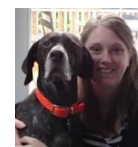
### Jyothi Robertson – “The Veterinarian's Response to Animal Hoarding”

- Not all animal hoarders are elderly or lower-income. *(Animal hoarding cuts across all socioeconomic lines, and the [largest percentage of hoarders](#) being seen today are posing as rescue groups.)*
- There are key questions to ask clients that can differentiate animal hoarders from legitimate rescue groups. *(Ask if they are a 501-c-3, have a mission statement and a board of directors, have a physical location where people can visit and see how the animals are housed, and if they screen potential members and foster homes.)*



### Rachel Touroo – “The Veterinarian's Role in Investigating Animal Fighting”

- Dogs bred and trained for fighting are not necessarily the largest dogs. *(Smaller dogs are more agile and have more stamina for fights that can last several hours.)*
- Professional dogfighters' animals are generally not aggressive to humans. *(However, dogs owned by street dogfighters are.)*
- Fighting dogs may appear thin and have a body condition score of only 3 or 4. *(These dogs may be well-muscled and in a rigorous conditioning program to get down to a fighting weight, much prizefighters experience.)*
- Fighting dogs may be killed by their owners. *(If a dog loses a match, it's seen as an embarrassment and a personal failure.)*



### Todd Stosuy – “Collaborating with Animal Care and Control Officers”

- Veterinarians can assist animal care and control agencies in many ways. *(They can help with day-to-day questions, large-scale seizures of animals, providing information needed for search warrants, consulting with prosecutors, providing expert court testimony, and performing necropsies.)*
- All the evidence in a cruelty case may not be on the animal itself. *(Ideally, the veterinarian should visit the scene to examine the animal's housing conditions and environment.)*



## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Rhondda Waddell

### Article Calls for Increased Respect for Animal Issues in Domestic Violence Situations

A new article reviews the impact of animal abuse within domestic violence. Rhondda Waddell, Professor of Social Work at Saint Leo University, notes that not only does animal abuse precede and/or accompany human abuse as a way to exert power and control over victims, but also that companion animals may sacrifice their own health or give their lives by functioning as sentinels of unsafe environmental conditions.

In addition to animals being harmed, many pets are surrendered to animal shelters or given to other families in order to avoid harm coming to them. The women, in return, experience despair, profound grief over the loss of their pets and disrupted relationships. If she has children, they suffer this loss as well. The article calls for screening and assessment procedures and first responders to look for signs of animal abuse. "Without animals the human species may not have survived, and we must give animals the same considerations," she concludes.

-- Waddell, R. (2019). *Women and their best friends: "A social commentary."* *Frontiers in Women's Health*, 4, 1-2.

### Network Links Domestic Violence Shelters with Resources for Pets

What started out as a final project for an Oklahoma State University veterinary student completing a master's degree in veterinary forensics has turned into a new charitable organization that aims to help domestic violence shelters become more aware of the resources available from local animal protection organizations that can help provide services for survivors' pets. The [Network for Pets of Domestic Violence Victims](#) is dedicated to connecting animal care resources with the domestic violence shelters that need them, explains Jonna Whetsel, founder. "Many victims will delay leaving a dangerous situation if they cannot bring their pet with them, however, most domestic violence shelters do not have the facilities for companion animal care. NPDVV aims to bridge the gap."



Jonna Whetsel

Based in Oklahoma, Whetsel was tasked with creating a training presentation addressing the Link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. As she built the presentation illustrating how animal shelters and veterinarians can help domestic violence shelters, she decided to lead by example. She finished the presentation and added a companion website, which became the basis for the Network.

The website features separate pages where domestic violence shelters, veterinarians, animal shelters and foster programs, and individuals can learn how they can help and fill out a form listing the assistance that they need or can provide. The database developed will put domestic violence shelters in touch with animal care facilities that can assist them; by having this information and these connections in advance will facilitate assisting survivors and their pets when the need arises.

## Animal Shelter Offering Care for Pet Survivors of Domestic Violence

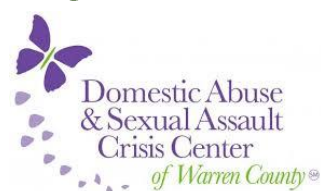


A new program of Animal Care Services in San Antonio, Texas, is caring for the pet survivors of domestic violence and making it easier for women and children to escape

abuse. Under the new plan, whenever the San Antonio Police Department investigates a case of domestic violence and an animal is present, police officers notify Animal Care Services. Assistant Shelter Director Shannon Sims told [news media](#) that the shelter will then care for the animal in areas out of public view until the domestic violence survivor has found a new home for herself and the pet.

## BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

### Dog Walk to Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence Link



The Warren County, N.J. [Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center](#) will hold its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Safer in Warren County Dog Walk on Oct. 26 to celebrate Domestic Violence Awareness Month and to bring additional attention to how animals are abused to coerce and control survivors of intimate partner violence. The dog walk will showcase services geared toward animal health and safety and feature area animal shelters with adoptable animals.

“Domestic violence happens among all races, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. It impacts all members of the family, including our pets,” says Morgan Stiles, Community Engagement Coordinator. “By recognizing the overlap of domestic violence and animal abuse, we can help create a Safer Warren County.”

### Australian Pet Fostering Program Featured on TV

The Australia Broadcasting Corp. aired a [seven-minute feature](#) about how [Safe Pets Safe Families](#) is fostering the pets of domestic violence survivors in Adelaide, South Australia. The program noted that victims of domestic violence are more likely to delay leaving an abusive relationship if they own a pet; that the animals are abused as a means to coerce and control; and that few domestic violence refugees allow pets.



Safe Pets Safe Families Founder Jennifer Howard tells The LINK-Letter that the Women’s Safety service of South Australia has commitments from all four of their shelters to become pet-friendly this year. Safe Pets Safe Families is hosting free pop-up veterinary clinics and supplying the shelters with welcome packs for pets. An animal behaviorist is also training shelter staff on proper interactions with pets.



### What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

## ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT

### Customizable Templates Developed for Cross-Reporting Child and Animal Abuse



The National Link Coalition has produced two templates that can be customized by local child protection and animal protection agencies to help them cross-report to each other. The respective cards list common telltale signs of suspected child and animal abuse and neglect.

The template for child protection agencies is a handy 4" x 10" card that can be distributed to staff workers with the name and phone number of the agency that investigates animal abuse in their community added in. The template for animal care and control agencies is similarly designed to be distributed to staff with the name and phone number of their child abuse investigating agency.

Inspiration for the cards came from the Connecticut Department of Children &

Families, which uses a similar card to encourage DCF workers to report suspected animal abuse. The cards come with simple instructions that show agencies how to customize and print them. The templates for [Child Protection Services](#) and for [Animal Care & Control](#) agencies can be downloaded for free from the National Link Coalition's website in the resource section on Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty.

Local agencies can identify their local child protection or animal care/control agency and phone number to call on the National Link Coalition's [National Directory of Abuse Investigating Agencies](#).

## New Jersey Bill Would Mandate Cross-Reporting



Assemblyman Dancer

**New Jersey A-5512** would require employees of the Department of Children and Families to report suspected animal abuse. Cases involving domestic pets would be reported to township humane law enforcement officials or the state police if the town lacks a designated humane law enforcement officer; suspected abuse of livestock would be reported to the Department of Agriculture.

Individuals who report, provide records or information or testify in any judicial proceeding would be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative penalty if the employee acted in good faith. The bill is in the Assembly Women and Children Committee.

The bill is sponsored by Deputy Republican Leader Ronald Dancer. The introduction to the bill identifies the need for the legislation on the premise that, “In recent years, a growing body of research, including studies published in the *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* and *Violence Against Women*, has explored the co-occurrence of animal abuse and domestic violence. In the wake of these studies, state legislatures have introduced and adopted bills mandating the cross-reporting of animal and child abuse between humane law enforcement agencies and child protective agencies.”

Currently, child protection personnel are mandated to report suspected animal cruelty in Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Nebraska, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. They are permitted to make such reports in California, Florida, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, and Oregon. It is believed that such employees have immunity from liability and administrative penalties in all these states.

## Paws for Kids Initiative Links DCF and Animal-Assisted Interventions

The Connecticut Department of Children & Families has initiated a [Paws for Kids Initiative](#), Linking dedicated DCF staff and animal advocates who are committed to developing animal-assisted interventions (AAI) programming for children in the DCF system. The program hopes to utilize animal therapy’s potential to reduce abused children’s anxiety and stress, teach responsibility, improve self-esteem, increase children’s confidence in reading, and assist children with physical disabilities.

The initiative coordinates numerous team members from across the state to develop an AAI credentialed service and support existing AAI services in Connecticut. The initiative is also educating DCF staff and animal advocates and working to improve cross-reporting systems between DCF and animal control officers.

Coordinator Diane Rosell says the initiative’s mission is to increase child and animal well-being through education, cross-reporting, marketing, and AAI for DCF children with trauma. Current objectives include:

- Launching an AAI service for traumatized DCF children that inspires hope, healing and confidence.
- Marketing the positive benefits of AAI for vulnerable populations.

### PAWS FOR KIDS – OUR TEAM



- Implementing an educational curriculum for DCF staff, animal control officers and the Department of Agriculture about the Link between child and animal abuse and the need for cross-reporting.
- Conducting statewide trainings ([See the July 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).
- Reviewing DCF processes and policies to better communicate cross-reporting procedures and the importance of The Link in child welfare work.

## ***THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE***

### **Animal Abuse Publication Series Inviting Proposals**

Emerald Publishing, a British publications house that manages some 300 journals and 2,500 books to champion new ideas that advance research, policy and practice, has announced a new edited book series on animal abuse studies. Books within the series will focus on types of animal abuse which may be defined by the nature of the abuse inflicted on the animal, the animal on which the abuse was inflicted, or the purpose of inflicting the abuse.



Series editors Harriet Pierpoint, Jenny Maher and Piers Beirne have invited interested parties to contact them with proposals. Details are available on the [Emerald website](#).

### **Study Explores Cruelty and Bullying as Markers for Delinquency**

A research study of 1,170 male adolescents who had been adjudicated delinquent or convicted of a felony in Philadelphia and Phoenix has reported that animal cruelty and bullying not only serve as early behavioral markers of delinquency risk but also play a potentially important role in causing future and persistent delinquent behavior. The increase in future offending was seen as a result of a rise in proactive criminal thinking as measured by moral disengagement, rather than from reactive criminal thinking or cognitive impulsivity.



**Glenn Walters**

Glenn D. Walters, a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Kutztown University, has conducted previous research on parents' and children's self-reporting of animal cruelty and delinquency ([see the March 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) and whether animal cruelty and firesetting serve as markers for fearlessness and future antisocial behaviors ([see the February 2017 LINK-Letter](#)). The current study examined the possibility that animal cruelty and bullying are more than just markers of a fearless temperament or correlates of future delinquency. Instead, they may play a pivotal role in creating a delinquent lifestyle through moral disengagement.

Walters recommended that if animal cruelty and bullying do more than mark fearlessness, they should also serve as targets for intervention. Even if they are nothing more than markers of fearlessness, animal cruelty and bullying could still be helpful in conducting interventions with at-risk youth and in identifying those at highest risk for future delinquency. In the event animal cruelty and bullying are more than markers, he argued, clinicians should still consider proactive criminal thinking a target for intervention given the critical linking function it serves.

-- Walters, G.D. (2019). *Animal cruelty and bullying: Behavioral markers of delinquency risk or causal antecedents of delinquent behavior?* *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 62, 77-84.

## LINK POSITION OPENINGS

### Animals & Society Institute Seeking Human-Animal Studies Program Director



The [Animals & Society Institute](#) has announced a search for a Human-Animal Studies Program Director to succeed Margo DeMello, who is stepping down from the position in September after 15 years with ASI. The successful candidate will have a Ph.D. related to human-animal studies, although a master's degree will also be considered. The position manages ASI's Summer Institute, International Development Program, video series, undergraduate paper prize, and research coordination. To apply for the position, submit a resume or CV, cover letter and writing sample to [Ivy Collier](#) at ASI.

### ASPCA Seeking Director of Research



The ASPCA has announced a search for a Director of Research to join the Strategy & Research team to address program evaluation and original research on a wide range of animal welfare topics. The remote-based position requires a graduate level degree or equivalent experience with a minimum of six years of research or program evaluation experience applicable to animal welfare. An [online application](#), supported by a cover letter and resume, is available.

### Veterinary Social Work Position at Purdue University



The Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine is accepting applications for a 12-month, full-time position of Therapist/Counselor to provide individual counseling and crisis intervention for veterinary medical and nursing students, interns, faculty, and staff. The position requires a doctorate in clinical or counseling psychology, social work, marriage & family therapy, or a related field, plus two years of clinical services experience. [Details and application forms](#) are available from Purdue.

## THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

### Link Bills We're Watching

The majority of the 2019 state legislative sessions have ended, but 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 have allowed 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 would have considered all relevant evidence including the respondent's cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would have required the respondent to relinquish all firearms and ammunition. **The bill died when the Legislature adjourned.**



**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 bill passed the Assembly 76-0 and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.



**Colorado HB 19-1177** creates “Extreme Risk Protection Orders” that 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 can consider the person having been arrested for domestic violence and/or animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on April 12.**



**Florida HB 379** and **SB 774** would have allowed courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or disposing of any animals owned by the petitioner and/or respondent and minor children in the home. **The bills died when the Legislature session adjourned.**



**Georgia HB 582** would have allowed courts to create a detailed “pet care plan” of responsibilities and schedules to ensure animals’ best interests in marriage dissolutions. **The bill was in the House Judiciary committee when the Assembly adjourned.**



**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 both houses overwhelmingly and **was signed into law on April 29.**



**Kentucky HB 25** would have: prohibited pretrial diversion for a person charged with torture of a dog or cat; made torture of a dog or cat a Class D felony; and prohibited 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 died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



**Michigan HB 4498** would enjoin and restrain respondents served with personal protection orders, which include protection of pets, from possessing, using, transporting, selling, purchasing, carrying, shipping, receiving, or distributing a firearm or ammunition. The bill is in the 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 have added “intimidation” – 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 died in the Judiciary Committee.**



**New Hampshire HB 361** adds animals to the tangible property whose disposition may be determined by courts 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 was signed into law by Gov. Chris Sununu.**



**New Jersey A 5549** and **S 3886** would prohibit persons undergoing a divorce from surrendering a dog or cat to an animal shelter without the consent of the other party. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Environment & Energy Committees, respectively.



**New Mexico HB 52** would have defined 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 but **died in the Senate.**



**New York A 588** would create a felony crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if 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 language in 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 Rules Committees.



**New York A 1097** and **S 6222** would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.



**New York A 7395** and **S 6158** would require police officers and prosecutors investigating a domestic violence incident to advise the victim of many options, including the ability to include pets and service animals in an order of protection. The bills were consolidated and have passed both the Assembly and Senate and are back in the Assembly.



**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** and **HB 1075** 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. **HB 1028** would allow household members to file a petition for a “Firearm Restraining Order” prohibiting a respondent from having firearms, weapons or ammunition if the respondent presents an immediate and present danger to physical safety, as represented by acts of domestic violence or killing or threatening to kill pets or other animals. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.



**Rhode Island H 5023** and **SB 225** now allow 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 measure was signed by the Governor on June 28** and took effect immediately.



**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 were held by the House Judiciary Committee for further study.



**Texas SB 194** adds “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions of illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims can 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 measure was signed into law on June 14 and took effect Sept. 1.**



**Texas HB 3021** would have directed the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to provide information to the public about the availability of provisions that allow pets to be included in protective orders. The bill **died when the legislature adjourned.**



**Texas HB 2516** would have added 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 was in the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



**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 to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. **The bills died in the Senate.**



**Wyoming HB 235** allows courts to issue protection orders granting sole possession of any pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order orders the respondent to not contact, abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet. **The new law took effect July 1.**



### *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 bar landlords from denying residential occupancy or evicting persons over age 62 solely for keeping a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing 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.



**New Jersey A3558** would appropriate \$100,000 to establish a pilot program in the Department of Children & Families to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence and trauma. The bill is in the Assembly Human Services Committee.

### *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*



**Colorado HB 19-1220**, which allows any witness, including victims of child sexual abuse, to be accompanied by a court facility dog while testifying, **was signed into law on May 1.**



**New York A 831** would increase the penalty for aggravated animal cruelty from two to four years if 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 permit individuals already mandated to report suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding other provisions of confidentiality, if the act were committed by a person also suspected of child abuse or maltreatment. Individuals already permitted to report suspected child abuse (which includes everyone in New York State) would also be permitted to report suspected animal cruelty. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. **S 3415** passed the Senate and both measures are in the Assembly Children & Families 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.



**North Carolina H 507** would make it a felony to bring a minor under the age of 18 to a dog- or cockfight. The bill passed the House 113-0 and is in the Senate Rules & Operations Committee.



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

### *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths for inflicting 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. **The bills died when the legislature adjourned.**



**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** would define the theft or release of an animal during a burglary as animal cruelty. The bills are in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



**New York A 1069** would add a felony conviction for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the “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 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 Rules Committee.



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



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



**Pennsylvania HB 1071** would add sentencing enhancements to crimes of burglary and criminal trespass if a domestic animal is killed or harmed. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**Washington HB 1541** would have made it illegal for offenders convicted of 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree animal cruelty to possess a firearm. The bill **died when the legislature adjourned.**

### *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 4<sup>th</sup>-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 criminalize companion animal hoarding of more than 25 pets in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of animals and people in the home. 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 passed the Senate 38-0 and is in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.



**Colorado HB 19-1092** allows courts to order mental health treatment to adult and juvenile offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill also requires courts to impose a ban of three to five years upon a felony conviction for adults and permits such a restriction for juvenile offenders. **The bill was signed into law on May 1.**



**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 have allowed 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 addressed Cross-Reporting*. It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**



**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 Sexual Abuse*



**California AB 611** would: close loopholes to make any sexual act with an animal a crime; 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 passed the Assembly 72-0 and is in the Senate Appropriations 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 have created a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to prohibit cruelty to equines including situations involving abuse, neglect and sexual contact. **The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



**Maryland HB 641** amends §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include "sexual contact with an animal." It further defines aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal will be included among Tier III sex offenders. **HB 641 was signed into law by the Governor on April 18.** The new law takes effect on Oct. 1, 2019.



**Massachusetts S.891** would 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.



**Pennsylvania HB 1312** would deny offenders convicted of sexual intercourse with animals the right of having their criminal records expunged. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.




**West Virginia HB 2792** would have prohibited activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal; establish criminal penalties; and provide for forfeiture of animals, payment of associated costs, and restrictions on owning animals upon conviction. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee **when the regular legislative session ended.**





**Wisconsin AB 152** and **SB 139** would increase penalties for bestiality from current misdemeanor levels to a variety of felony charges for sexual contact with an animal; advertising, harboring, transporting, providing or transporting animals for sexual contact; and creating, distributing or possessing animal pornography. Penalties would be further enhanced if a child is involved. The bill would also require offenders to register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration. The bills are in the respective Committees on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.


## *Cross-Reporting*


 **Florida HB 7125** allows veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officers without notice to or authorization from the client unless the suspected violation occurs at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land. **The measure was signed into law.**





 **Illinois SB 1778** would designate domestic violence crisis line and program personnel and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. The bill passed both the Senate and the House with extensive amendments and was sent to the Governor on June 28.


 **Iowa SF 3** would have mandated 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 have been immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill was in the Senate Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**

 **Michigan SB 352** would require Child Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be a crime, with escalating penalties based on whether the animal abuse is a misdemeanor or a felony. The bill is in the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee.

 **Minnesota HF 1530/SF 1517** would have granted 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** was in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division; **SF 1517** was in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee, **when the legislature adjourned.**

 **Missouri HB 111** would have granted 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 addressed Psychological Evaluations.* It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **New Jersey A 5512** would require employees of the Department of Children and Families who investigate child abuse and neglect to report suspected animal abuse to humane law enforcement officials or the state police; suspected abuse of livestock would be reported to the Department of Agriculture. The bill is in the Assembly Women and Children 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** adds animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. **The measure was signed into law** by the Governor on May 22.



**Oregon HB 2500** allows veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail will be able to collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. **The bill was signed into law and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2020.**



**Rhode Island S 82** would amend the law 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 Senate Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study.



**Texas SB 1750** and **HB 2787** would have allowed veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to appropriate governmental entities without violating veterinarian/client confidentiality. Both bills died **when the legislature adjourned.**



**Washington HB 1919** expands provisions against animal fighting to include fighting paraphernalia and mutilating or abandoning fighting animals, 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 provisions were **signed into law by the Governor on April 29 and took effect July 28.**



### ***"CASA for Animals"***



**Illinois HB 1631** would have allowed pro bono attorneys or law student advocates to be court-appointed to represent the health or safety of a cat or dog in judicial proceedings. The bill was in the House Rules Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



**Maine LD 1442** would allow a court to appoint volunteer advocates for justice in animal cruelty cases, either under its own initiative or upon the request of a party or counsel. Advocates could monitor the proceedings, consult with individuals and records relevant to the case, and present appropriate information and recommendations. The bill passed both the House and Senate and is being held by the Governor for review at the beginning of the next legislative session on Sept. 19.



**Michigan HB 4592** would allow courts to appoint pro bono lawyers or law students as advocates to represent the interests of animals in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



**New Jersey A 4840** 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 create court-appointed advocates for animals. **A 25** and **S 3027** are in the Judiciary Committees; **A 702** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

### Texas Mass Shooting Gunman Reportedly Had History of Shooting Animals



Seth Ator

As *The LINK-Letter* was going to press, news media were beginning to surface that the gunman who randomly killed seven people and wounded more than 20 others in Midland and Odessa, Texas with an assault-style rifle had a history of shooting animals. The [New York Post](#) was reporting that a neighbor of Seth Ator had told CNN that Ator, 36, would often sit on top of his home and shoot animals at night, which he would later retrieve. Police tried to confront Ator following the animal shootings but were unable to locate his property. Ator, 36, who was killed by police in a shootout, reportedly also had a criminal record of misdemeanor charges in Waco in 2001.

### Suspect Freed on Bond for Killing Cat Charged with Returning Home and Stabbing Pregnant Wife to Death

A suspect who was out on bond after allegedly killing his wife's cat was charged with capital murder for reportedly stabbing his pregnant wife about 20 times. The [Houston Chronicle](#) reported that Alex Guajardo, 22, of Pasadena, Texas had been released only 18 hours before the fatal stabbing. Pasadena Police Chief Josh Bruegger said he was outraged at the timeline and said that Guajardo had admitted to killing his wife because he didn't want another man raising his child. Guajardo was charged with assault on July 31 after police said he had killed a cat and assaulted his wife; he was released from jail on Aug. 1. Guajardo had also been released on a personal bond in May after being charged with DWI and failing to stop after a crash.



Alex Guajardo

### Grandson Charged with Homicide, Assault and Animal Cruelty

A Kentucky teenager has been charged with homicide, assault and animal cruelty for allegedly shooting his grandfather, assaulting his grandmother and killing a family dog. The [Louisville Courier-Journal](#) reported that the youth, age 16, whose name was not released due to his age, shot Richard Barkley, 79, at his home in Scott County on July 31. The grandfather died a week later.

### Father Convicted in Animal Torture That He Made His Son Film

An Iowa man has been found guilty of animal torture in a case where he made his son film the beating of a dog that chewed on a pair of sunglasses and sent it to other children to show what happens when they don't follow instructions. Jason O'Neil Johnson, 42, was convicted in the case in which he held down the family dog named "Daisy" and beat her with his fists and a belt, [KWWL-TV](#) reported. His son had apparently neglected to secure Daisy in her kennel. Johnson will be sentenced later and faces a maximum sentence of up to two years in prison, a fine of \$6,250, psychological evaluation and treatment, and community service. No charges of child emotional abuse were filed.



Jason Johnson

### Domestic Violence Offender Charged with Strangling Girlfriend's Kitten

A barber from North Haven, Conn. who has three prior cases of domestic violence involving three different victims has been charged with strangling his current girlfriend's 8-week-old kitten. Charles Brookins, 35, was charged with animal cruelty, assault and violating probation, the [New Haven Register](#) reported. Police said Brookins and his current girlfriend had gotten into a dispute when he came home intoxicated, whereupon he allegedly punched her and then picked up her kitten and choked it until it died. "The allegations here are vile," said Senior Assistant State's Attorney Tatiana Messina during Brookins' arraignment. "The allegations here are upsetting to say the least," agreed Superior Court Judge Tracy Lee Dayton.

### Man Charged with Assaulting Girlfriend, Strangling and Feeding Meth to Cat



Aaron Spaulding

A Las Cruces, N. Mex. man who was charged with multiple felony counts for allegedly beating his girlfriend was later accused of strangling a cat and force-feeding it methamphetamine. Aaron Spaulding, 39, was charged with felony animal cruelty in the second incident. The [Las Cruces Sun-News](#) reported that while police were investigating the original complaint, in which the woman said Spaulding held her against her will, punched her multiple times and took away her cell phone, they suspected him of also neglecting a dog and a cat. A veterinary examination later found the cat was suffering from neurological deficits and its blood tested positive for meth. The cat was later adopted into a new home.

### Indian Task Force Arrests Animal Smuggler Charged with Murdering 3 Priests

A special task force in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh arrested a suspected animal smuggler who was being sought on those charges as well as the murder of three priests. Nizamuddin Gathiyar was arrested in August in conjunction with the murder and robbery of three priests in 2018; his brother, Jabbar, and son, Sahibe Alam, had been arrested earlier. Gathiyar reportedly confessed that he murdered the priests since they objected to the animal smuggling and had notified authorities, the [ANI news network](#) reported. Police said Gathiyar and his brother and son robbed the temple and later murdered the priests to make it look like a robbery case.

## Domestic Dispute Turns Uglier as Cat is Hurled 17 Floors to Its Death



Melissa Thornton

Police in Euclid, Ohio responding to a domestic dispute that had turned physical wound up charging Melissa Thornton, 24, with felony animal cruelty for allegedly throwing a cat off the balcony of their 17<sup>th</sup>-story apartment. The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) reported that police said Thornton had also thrown a bicycle off the balcony before she tossed the cat over the railing. The cat was euthanized to end its suffering. The roommate was arrested on an outstanding domestic violence warrant from another jurisdiction.

## Wisconsin Man Charged with Hitting Child and Kicking Dog

Trevor S. Hagen, 39, of Sparta, Wis., was charged with child abuse, animal abuse and disorderly conduct for allegedly hitting a child who tossed him a set of keys shortly after he reportedly kicked a dog in the ribs. The [La Crosse Tribune](#) reported that police said Hagen was highly intoxicated and became enraged at the way the youth tossed him the keys, and that earlier in the day he became enraged at his dog and kicked it. He reportedly had a blood-alcohol level of .31.



Vernon Ortiz

## Boyfriend Confesses to Attacking Her Dog for Urinating on Bed

Vernon Ortiz, 40, of San Antonio, Texas, is facing a possible two-to-10 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines after being charged with felony animal cruelty after allegedly stabbing his girlfriend's dog with a 6-inch hunting knife and using pliers to break the dog's teeth after it urinated on the bed. [News Channel 9](#) reported that Ortiz confessed to the crime and that the dachshund, named "Cosmo," was recovering after being treated by veterinarians.

## Denver Sheriff Pleads Guilty to Child Endangerment and Animal Cruelty

A Denver, Colo. Sheriff's sergeant pled guilty to two counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty and child endangerment after Adams County deputies conducting a welfare check at his home found a filthy residence where three dogs lived in cages in the basement. The [Denver Post](#) reported that the cages were surrounded with feces and urine, there was a decomposing cat in the back seat of a car in the garage, and dirty diapers lay on the floor of the bedroom of the children who said they sometimes didn't have food or sheets for their beds. Sgt. Joshua Frank had originally been charged with five counts of child abuse and three counts of cruelty to animals. Frank was fined \$922 and ordered to complete 60 hours of community service and was allowed to keep his job with the sheriff's office.

## ***LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES***

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

**Sept. 9 – 10: Albuquerque, N. Mex.:** The [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) between Animal Abuse and Human Violence will feature multiple Link authorities in a two-day event at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. John Thompson will be the keynote speaker.

**Sept. 12 – Norman, Okla.:** “Removing the Pet Barrier” will be presented at the Oklahoma Attorney General’s [Partners for Change Conference on Domestic & Sexual Violence and Stalking](#). Speakers will include Kathleen Romero of the Oklahoma Link Coalition and representatives from Domestic Violence Intervention Services, the Women’s Resource Center and the Palomar Family Justice Center.

**Sept. 12 (online):** Claudine Wilkins will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Prosecutor & Law Enforcement Tools in Animal Abuse Cases,” including cross-reporting mechanisms.

**Sept. 13 – Dallas, Texas:** Sandra Brackenridge will present on “Crisis Intervention, Workplace Stress and Compassion Fatigue: Veterinary Social Work” at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

**Sept. 16 – Quedgeley, Gloucester, U.K.:** [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

**Sept. 18-19 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.:** 10 world-renowned speakers will be featured at Positive Links’ biennial [New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence](#).

**Sept. 19 (online):** Allie Phillips will conduct a [webinar](#) for Canadian humane and animal protection professionals about “Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T): A Life-Saving Initiative for Canada.”

**Sept. 19 (online):** Richard Samuels and Micelle Welch will present a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Advanced Cockfighting Investigations and Prosecutions.”

**Sept. 19 – West Palm Beach, Fla.:** The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) will meet with community partners to review recent outcomes and conduct strategic planning for the future.

**Sept. 22 – Falls Church, Va.:** Deborah L’Heureux will present on “Animal Cruelty and The Link” at the [VCA SouthPaws CE conference](#).

**Sept. 24 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada:** Leanne Sillers and Tami Vangool will present “Safe and Secure: How Animal Safekeeping Programs Assist the Victims of Violence” at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [2019 Conference](#) on Making Connections: The Human-Animal Bond.

**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:** The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will meet.

**Oct. 14-15 – Sydney, Australia:** Numerous presentations will discuss cross-disciplinary collaborations that foster the Links between animal welfare and human well-being at [One Welfare Conference II](#).

**Oct. 18-20 – Alpharetta, Ga.:** The [21<sup>st</sup> Annual Animal Protection Conference & Expo](#) will feature several presenters discussing Link topics including “Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Gangs, and the Link to Animal Abuse,” “Collateral Crimes and Animal Abuse,” and “Animal Cruelty Task Forces.”

**Oct. 24 – Plano, Texas:** Phil Arkow and Felicia Kerney will present at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual [North Texas Facing Family Violence conference](#) on “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse” The conference’s theme is “All Systems Go: Working Together – Family Violence Across the Lifespan.”

**Oct. 27 – Cambridge, U.K.:** [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

**Nov. 3 – Madison, Wisc.:** Melinda Merck will lecture on veterinary forensics and The Link at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory’s [veterinary forensics seminar](#).

**Nov. 8 – Dallas, Texas:** Cody Pinkham will present “The BATTERERS’ Intervention and Prevention Program” at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#) meeting.

**Nov. 13-15 – Phoenix, Ariz.:** The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will host the [9<sup>th</sup> National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

**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.

**Dec. 12-13 – Novato, Calif.:** Phil Arkow will present on The Link to staff of the [Marin Humane Society](#) and community agencies.



**To subscribe to The Link-Letter (it's free!)  
– Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow  
([arkowpets@snip.net](mailto: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

#### Phil Arkow, Coordinator

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,  
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