



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



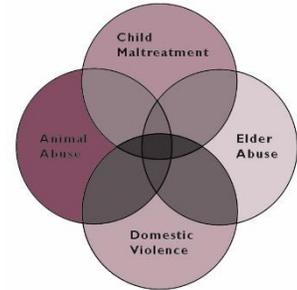
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor



ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Co-Shelter Offers Tips for Safety Planning for Pets

The [Women's Resource Center](#) in Norman, Okla., has prepared a handy tip sheet for survivors of domestic violence about how to include their animals in their safety planning. The Center is a nonprofit that since 1975 has been supporting individuals in Cleveland County, Okla. who have experienced violence, with specialized services catering to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.



Like many domestic violence and sexual assault centers around the world, the Center has recognized how the abuse of pets is a weapon used to coerce and control survivors, and how the lack of facilities to care for those animals is a barrier that prevents many survivors from escaping. In the year before the Center's co-sheltering kennels opened, 43 people had to be turned away due to a lack of facilities for their pets.

The Center is one of only three shelters in Oklahoma believed to offer co-sheltering for the animal survivors of intimate partner violence. [Daisy's Place](#) is a safe and secure environment for survivors' pets, with two kennels and a play space for pets and their people, created in 2017 with the generous support of the Wilshire Charitable Foundation and the OKC Pet Food Pantry.

The Center counsels domestic violence advocates and survivors to take the following steps to provide safety planning for pets:

SAFETY PLANNING FOR PETS

SCREENING IN RESIDENTS:

- Ask about the abuser's access to animals
- Determine if there is another safe place where the animal can go (family? friends?)
- Determine the safest time and way to get the animal away when leaving

BRINGING RESIDENT AND PET INTO SHELTER:

- Grab all vaccination/health records or call vet to get them
- Bring flea/tick and heartworm medications
- Bring food
- Bring leashes, collars, tags, toys, bowls, etc.

WHILE IN SHELTER OR AWAY FROM ABUSER:

- Don't post pictures/updates of animal on social media
- Find another veterinarian that the abuser is unaware of

Seattle Project Explores Lives of Homeless with Pets



Grace Stroklund said the comfort of her pet is a bond that helps both of them strive for a better life

Domestic violence is a significant factor in causing survivors to become homeless. An innovative arts project in Seattle has documented some of the statistics behind barriers that homeless individuals with pets encounter, and the personal stories affecting these pets and people.

Through a grant from the University of Washington's Population Health Initiative, the university's Center for One Health Research created a series of pop-up galleries featuring autobiographical photographs made by people experiencing homelessness with their animal companions.

The galleries are providing insights into the lives and complexities of these individuals with service and emotional support animals and pets.

Photographer Gemina Garland-Lewis gave disposable cameras and notebooks to nearly 20 people to document their experiences. They created some 800 images which convince audiences that they share more in common with the homeless than they might realize, she told the [University's news service](#).

The project also involved 44 qualitative and quantitative interviews with homeless persons to develop an understanding of their needs and the gaps in services when animals are involved. Among the findings:

- 76% reported barriers to resources due to having an animal.
- 64% reported being harassed for having an animal.
- 55% said their pets were designated service or emotional support animals.

California Survivors Can Now Get State Help for Pet Relocation Expenses

California has enacted a new law which will now allow survivors of domestic violence to have the state pay for expenses incurred in relocation that include the costs of temporary housing for any pets belonging to the victim. The law now also authorizes a cash payment or grant to reimburse a victim for a security deposit, pet deposit or both.

Existing California law generally provides for the compensation of victims of specified crimes by the California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board from the Restitution Fund if the expenses are determined by law enforcement to be necessary for the personal safety of the victim or by a mental health treatment provider to be necessary for the emotional well-being of the victim. **AB 415** expanded these provisions to pay for the designated pet-related expenses.

The bill passed both the Senate and Assembly unanimously and was signed into law on Oct. 8 by Gov. Gavin Newsom

Silent Witness Memorials Include Animal Victims



Many domestic violence agencies commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October by displaying life-sized red "Silent Witness" silhouettes to represent those individuals who were killed as a result of intimate partner violence. The Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) in Loudoun County, Va., recognized The Link this year by including dog and cat silhouettes and information about The Link.



"This year our team decided to include animals to ensure the public realizes the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse," Chief Animal Control Officer Chris Brosan tells *The LINK-Letter*. "It has generated a lot of positive response from the community."

This is believed to be the second such Silent Witness Memorial Project to include the animal victims of domestic violence: a similar display was created in October, 2015 in Burlington County, N.J. ([See the October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)).

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

ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Oklahoma Child Welfare Training Manual Addresses The Link



The Oklahoma Department of Human Services' Child Welfare Services division has taken a pioneering step forward with a state training manual for child protection officials that specifically includes The Link.

DHS's Publication #12-36 – [Domestic Violence Manual for Child Welfare Professionals](#) -- was revised in March 2018. The 140-page desk reference guide includes a four-page section on "Animal Abuse, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse." The publication is available as a free download from the Oklahoma DHS.

After providing a brief overview of The Link, a list of resources including the National and Oklahoma Link Coalitions and the ASPCA, and relevant statistics about the intersectionality of animal, child and domestic abuse, the Manual offers the following recommendations for child welfare services personnel:

Screening Questions for Animal Abuse in the Home:

- Are there pets in the home?
- How does each family member treat them?
- Do you worry about something bad happening to the animals?

Signs of Animal Abuse in the Home:

- The animal hides when a new person enters the environment.
- The protective parent and/or the child(ren) appear overly concerned about the welfare of the animal.
- The animal may tremble or flee when the abuser attempts to pet it.
- The animal appears malnourished or in poor health.
- Animals suddenly "disappear" and there is either no explanation, or the explanation offered seems improbable.
- In cases involving a sexual predator, animals may be sexually assaulted or mutilated.

Addressing Animal Abuse in Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Cases

- Document victims' accounts of animal abuse in the home.
- Include steps for animal rescue, protection and placement in the domestic violence safety plan for the family when animal abuse is present.
- Many domestic violence programs in Oklahoma have kennels or have established relationships with groups in their communities to provide foster care for animal victims of domestic violence. Contact the local program to determine their policy.
- Victim protective orders in Oklahoma allow petitioners to include no contact orders for animals and may order the possession and exclusive care of animals, including those belonging to the child(ren) in the home, to the victim.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Veterinary Association Calls for Dedicated Animal Cruelty Unit



In an unusual move, a group of veterinarians in Edmonton, Alberta has launched a petition drive calling for the city's police service to create a dedicated animal cruelty unit. The Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians (EASAV) says the petition became necessary after the Edmonton Humane Society stopped enforcing Alberta's Animal Protection Act last February 1 due to changes in the provincial Police Officer Act. The humane society's departure left only four city Animal Care and Control officers to enforce the law in the province's capital, with a population of over 932,000. Last year, the humane society received 3,500 calls about suspected animal abuse and investigated 761 of them.

[Global News Canada](#) reported that over 2,800 persons had signed the petition. Police Chief Dale McFee said the force was conducting a study to determine if there is enough need for a specialized unit, including contacting an existing animal cruelty unit in the Ottawa Police Service.

"There is some science and some data around the fact that cruelty [to] animals can lead to violence against people," said McFee. EASAV president Natasha Russell added, "If there's an abuse case against an animal, it's often the tip of the iceberg."

Veterinary Social Work Program Launches Certificate Program



Veterinary Human Support
CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The Veterinary Social Work program at the University of Tennessee has launched a [Veterinary Human Support Certificate Program](#) to educate animal-related professionals on the four aspects of veterinary social work, including animal/human violence cross-reporting.

The certificate program is designed to equip participants with skills within their scope of practice that can be used in daily practice. In addition to The Link, these skills include conflict management, communication skills, self-care techniques, emotional CPR, and making referrals.

The curriculum includes nine online, self-paced modules that are available year-round, including a module on The Link between Human and Animal Violence. It also includes seven supervised online video conferences, a keystone project, and three in-person workshops in Knoxville. Applications are now being accepted.

The Veterinary Social Work program is a collaboration between the university's College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Social Work.

THE LINK AND... ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE

California Expands Prohibitions Against Animal Sexual Abuse

California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Oct. 8 signed into law **AB 611** which amends Sections 286.5 and 597.9 of the California Penal Code to expand the state's provisions prohibiting animal sexual abuse.

Existing California law makes it a misdemeanor to sexually assault certain animals for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desires of a person. The new measure, sponsored by Rep. Adrin Nazarian (D – San Fernando Valley), repeals that provision and instead prohibits sexual contact, as defined, with any animal. A violation of these provisions is punishable as a misdemeanor. The new law also authorizes the seizure of animals used in the violation of this offense.



Rep. Adrin Nazarian

Another provision changes existing law which makes it a misdemeanor for persons convicted of certain animal abuse crimes to own, possess, maintain, care for, reside with, or have custody of an animal for a specified period after conviction. The new law adds animal sexual abuse to the list of offenses which result in that prohibition.

Original provisions in the bill which would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal sexual abuse as they are already mandated to do for animal abuse or cruelty were deleted.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE



Grants Available for Animal Law and Public Policy Reform

The [UCLA School of Law Animal Law and Policy Small Grants Program](#) is accepting grant applications until December 16 for research projects that support legal and non-legal empirical scholarship to advance animal law and policy reform. Applications are welcome from any field as long as the potential application of the research to animal law and policy reform is clear. The program values both qualitative and quantitative research, and priority will be given to proposals with well-crafted research methodologies, especially applicable to legal reform focused on animals currently underrepresented in legal animal advocacy. Funding is not available to scholars based at institutions outside the U.S.; however, collaborative projects with non-U.S.-based scholars will be considered so long as the principal investigator is based at a U.S. institution of higher education throughout the funding period.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...
Intervention...
Networking...
Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

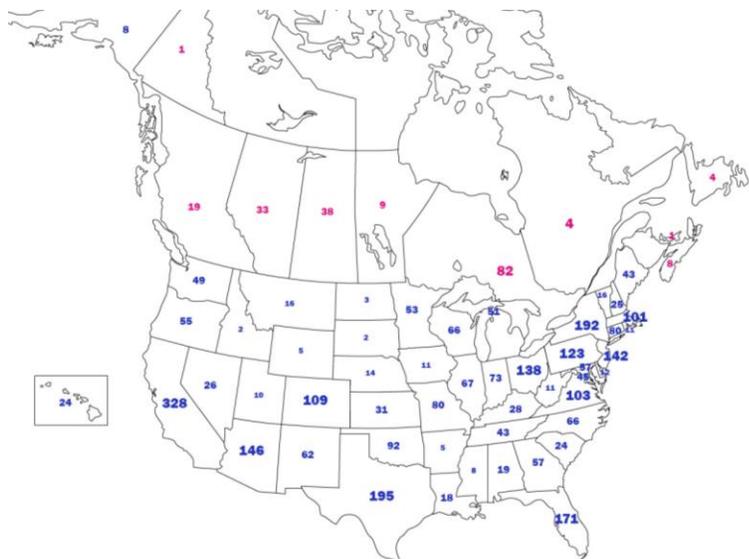
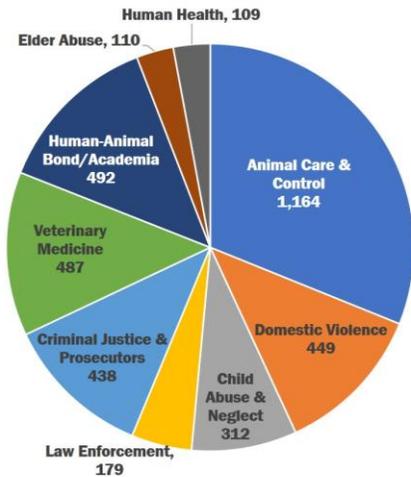
NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Now We Are 4,000!

LINK-Letter Readership Reaches a Milestone

Since the National Link Coalition was organized in 2008, the number of individuals who are interested in preventing family and community violence by recognizing animal abuse's Link to other crimes has grown steadily. We are very excited to announce that readership of our free monthly *LINK-Letter* has just topped the 4,000-mark – a great accomplishment!

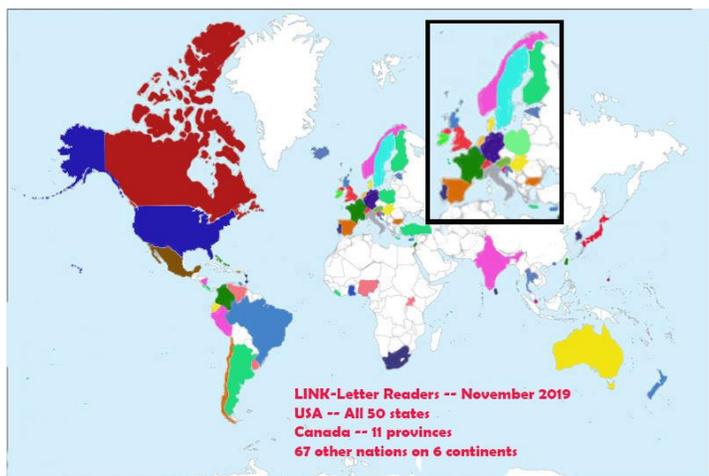
Who are our readers who care so much about The Link? They come from an amazingly diverse group of people, representing different professional and geographic perspectives.



Our 3,129 readers in the U.S. are in all 50 states, with California, New York, Texas, Florida, Arizona, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts leading the list, due to their larger populations and extensive Link trainings that have been conducted there. Increasingly, we're seeing global interest in The Link, with local and national Link coalitions emerging in several nations and with LINK-Letter readers now found in an amazing 67 countries, including such far-flung outposts as Uganda, Guam, Ghana, and Hong Kong.

Leading our growing body of international readers is Canada, with 203 readers in all provinces except Nunavut, Labrador and the Northwest Territories. But not far behind are the U.K., with 118 readers, and Australia, with 73 avid readers Down Under. Sweden, where we also have active national Link coalitions, has 52 readers, and we have large pockets of participants in Spain, Brazil, New Zealand, France, Japan, and Germany.

Thanks to all of you who are working so hard, in your own fields and communities, to help make this a safer world for people and animals!



Alberta SPCA Launches New One Family Welfare Program



**ONE
FAMILY
WELFARE**



The Alberta SPCA in Canada, which has long been a leader in addressing The Link between animal abuse and human violence, has institutionalized its work through a new department called [One Family Welfare](#). The department is based on a concept

that relationships between humans and animals are deeply connected and that when animals are abused, people are at risk, and when people are abused, animals are at risk.

One Family Welfare Director Patricia Mamek tells *The LINK-Letter* that her own experiences include working with domestic violence survivors, children and their pets who had experienced physical abuse and neglect and substance abuse, and volunteer veterinary and pet care outreach to rural and First Nation communities.

When she came to the Alberta SPCA, she was able to apply this background to the society's ongoing work of protecting the safety of animals and people. "Individuals who own companion animals are unable to focus on their own safety and security until they know their companion animal(s) are safe and secure as well. It is for this reason that the One Family Welfare department is so critical. The One Family Welfare department bridges the gap between animal services and human services to maximize the effectiveness of family violence prevention," she says.

The department offers Pet Safekeeping for victims of family violence in collaboration with 40 family violence organizations and 30 animal care organizations throughout the vast province. The Crisis Care program offers customized safety planning, crisis intervention, referrals to community resources and collaborative case management. There are also Educational Outreach and extensive Resources and Referrals available, including a [series of YouTube videos](#) for Alberta's Family Violence Prevention Month recognized in November.

Link Italia Teaches at Veterinary Forensics Conference



Francesca Sorcinelli, founder of our Italian affiliate [Link Italia](#), presented at a master's course in veterinary forensic sciences at University Federico II in Naples. Her program included information on the "zooanthropology of deviance" – the societal danger of cruelty to animals.

At left, participants pose for a group photo following the historic event.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Three Link Experts Recognized for Achievements

Three Link authorities were recently recognized by the [National Animal Care & Control Association](#) for their lifelong work in protecting people and animals.

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, was named Veterinarian of the Year, for her work in advancing the field of veterinary forensics. **Michelle Welch**, Assistant

Attorney General in Virginia, was recognized for her work in prosecuting animal cruelty cases. **Nancy Blaney** of the Animal Welfare Institute was recognized for her work in assisting legislation. Congratulations, everyone!



Martha Smith-Blackmore, Michelle Welch & Nancy Blaney

“Pets’ Lives Matter” at North Texas Family Violence Conference



Linda Yarbrough of the North Texas Link Coalition

Felicia Kerney, Chief Prosecutor for the Dallas County District Attorney’s Animal Cruelty Unit, presented on “Pets’ Lives Matter” at the 17th Annual North Texas Facing Family Violence Conference in Plano, Texas.

Kerney described “the power of a community to get laws

changed,” citing the experience of **Felicia Kerney and “Pets’ Lives Matter” “Loco’s Law”** which used The Link to get Texas animal cruelty penalties increased from a misdemeanor to a felony. She reviewed the process by which Texas enacted a bestiality statute in 2017. Kerney emphasized the importance of having open lines of communication between law enforcement, social service agencies, victim advocates, and the District Attorney’s office. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow was a keynote speaker at the conference and the [North Texas Link Coalition](#) was well represented.



Link Training Comes to Oklahoma Social Workers and Students



Kathleen Romero, Coordinator of the [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#), joined National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow in conducting an afternoon-long training on behalf of the University of Oklahoma School of Social Work. The training, conducted at the National Weather Center’s facility on the OU campus, featured both a global and statewide look at The Link and area resources to help current and future social workers to understand the significance of positive and negative human-animal interactions in the lives of their clients. Romero’s program, “Chasing the LINK,” focused on practical applications for integrating The Link into social work, including psychological evaluations of animal cruelty offenders, procedures for including pets in victim protective orders, cross-reporting strategies, and safety planning for pets.

Link Training and Awareness Expand from Greece into Ukraine and Namibia

In previous issues of *The LINK-Letter* (See the [February 2019](#) and [April 2018](#) issues), we reported how Mark Randell of Hidden-in-Sight has been bringing Link training to police officers in Ukraine. Randell tells *The LINK-Letter* that as a result of focusing on the human impacts of animal abuse, Link awareness can expand globally and there are now significant Link activities under way in Greece and Namibia.



Ukrainian police officers show their support for World Animal Day

animal abuse professionally can make communities safer and tackle priority crimes linked to animal abuse. A total of 21 cities showed their commitment for this project during World Animal Day on October 4th.

He recently presented to the Legal Assistance Centre in Windhoek, Namibia. This led to a draft Animal Protection and Welfare Bill 2019 that was launched by the Minister of Justice in September. Sakeus E.T Shanghala, MP, said, “Globally, there is increased understanding that there is a Link between animal and human violence. This is a link that, when identified, can prevent the abuse of vulnerable victims. Therefore, by focusing on animal welfare, I am also able to focus on the welfare of women and children that are abused in secret.”

The measure is believed to be the first animal cruelty legislation that has been introduced in the African nation of Namibia in 57 years. It also addresses animal abuse committed in front of children and would raise the maximum jail term to 15 years. Ukraine, under their Article 299, similarly increases jail terms when children are present to a maximum of 8 years.

Randell notes that the training has tripled the number of serious cruelty cases reaching court. He thanked the European Link Coalition as being “instrumental to this rapid progression of a Linked crime response.”

[Hidden-in-Sight](#) is a British organization of animal welfare and former law enforcement officials. Randell will be presenting on his international work at [Link Italia](#) and [Canadian Violence Link Coalition](#) conferences this fall.

Randell began raising the profile of The Link in Europe through training in Greece in 2015. His training began initially with Senior European Police Border Commanders and was later expanded in conjunction with the Pan-Hellenic Animal Welfare Group who, in turn, trained the Hellenic Police.

Meanwhile, Randell began training police in Ukraine with the Naturewatch Foundation that has now reached eight cities. The training explains how dealing with

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 the Senate and **was signed into law** by the Governor on Oct. 8.



California AB-109 and **SB 109**, the Budget Act of 2019 which makes appropriations for the support of state government for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, includes the allocation of \$5,000,000 for providing shelter, food and basic veterinarians' services for the pets of individuals in homeless shelters; significant numbers of individuals came to be homeless due to domestic violence. The bills **were enacted into law** on Sept. 27.



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 have allowed 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.



Pennsylvania SB 819 would extensively revise the Older Adults Protective Services Act and would impose a 25-year ban on individuals convicted of having sexual intercourse with animals from working in long-term care nursing facilities, personal care homes, home health care agencies, and adult daily living centers. The bill is in the Appropriations Committee.

Animal-Assisted Interventions for Crime Victims and Witnesses



New Hampshire HB 513 would have allowed 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 bill was retained 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



H.R. 2808, the Child & Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) to include data on animal abuse in the National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The bill was introduced by Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D – N.H.) and John Katko (R – N.Y.) with 20 co-sponsors and is in the House Education and Labor Committee.



Colorado HB 19-1220, allows any witness, including victims of child sexual abuse, to be accompanied by a court facility dog.



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 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 mandated reporters of suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding confidentiality provisions, 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) could also 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**.

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



H.R. 724, the “PACT Act” (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) passed the House and Senate and was sent to the President. The new law builds on the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act, which passed in 2010 to make the creation, sale and distribution of animal “crushing” pornographic videos illegal but which did not make the acts of cruelty themselves illegal. If the PACT Act is enacted, offenders will face fines and up to seven years in prison.



California AB 611 closes loopholes to make any sexual act with an animal a crime; current law prohibits sexual assault of animals only for the purpose of sexual gratification. It authorizes the seizure of animals in such cases. It also adds this misdemeanor offense to the list of crimes which would prevent a convicted offender from owning animals for a specified period. **The bill was signed into law** by the Governor on Oct. 8.





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 took 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 bills would also require offenders to register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration. **SB 139** was passed by the Senate and sent to the Assembly. **AB 152** is in the 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.**



 **Florida SB 7000** was prefiled. It would require all mandated reporters of child abuse to report suspected animal abuse within 72 hours. The Dept. of Children and Families and the Florida Animal Control Association would develop a 1-hour training curriculum for all child protective and animal control investigators. The bill is in the Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee.

 **Illinois SB 1778** recodified language mandating that domestic violence crisis line and program personnel, animal control officers and field investigators of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare immediately report suspected child abuse and neglect. **The bill became law on Aug. 23.**



 **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.**

 **Kentucky Bill Request 205**, prefiled for the 2020 legislative session, would require veterinarians to report suspected abuse and provide immunity for a good-faith report; it would also allow veterinarians to release information in order to report abuse. **Prefiled Bill Request 288** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to an animal control officer.

 **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.

 **Michigan SB 429** would require veterinarians to immediately report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control shelter or law enforcement agency. The bill is in the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.

 **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 have amended 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 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 was held by the Governor for review at the beginning of the next legislative session which began 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

Three Children, 246 Animals Rescued from “Deplorable Conditions”

When the smell of urine and feces were so overwhelming in an Edgewater, Fla. home that a man had to call police to do a welfare check and his girlfriend tried to commit suicide, police rescued three children and 246 animals from what were called “deplorable” conditions. The [Daytona Beach News-Journal](#) reported that Susan Nelson, 43, Gregg Nelson, 57, and Melissa Hamilton, 49, were charged with three counts of child abuse and 66 counts of animal cruelty. Police reports said that three girls, aged 8, 9 and 10, were taken by DCF and placed with another family member. The animals – cats, dogs, guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters, sugar gliders, birds, bearded dragons, mice, rats, geckos, tortoises, and hedgehogs – were taken to the Edgewater Animal Shelter. Animal control and code enforcement had visited the home in recent years but there had been no allegations of child maltreatment. “It was immediately evident neither the children nor the animals were being cared for properly,” according to a statement from the Edgewater Police Department.



One of the rescued dogs

Child Welfare Investigation Also Rescues Six Dogs in Horrid Conditions



Amanda Fuller & Colten Lackey

A couple, four children, and six malnourished dogs were removed from a Weatherford, Texas mobile home and camper trailer that the Parker County Sheriff called “nothing short of disgraceful.” Amanda Nicole Fuller, 34, and Colten Wayne Lackey, 20, were arrested on charges of drugs and child sex abuse. The [Dallas Morning News](#) reported that authorities began investigating after the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services removed the children amid allegations that the couple were using narcotics and neglecting the children. After the children were placed in foster care, one alleged sexual abuse and child pornography. A four-hour search of the two residences found one malnourished dog chained in the living room, living in trash and feces, while five others were chained to a bed and outdoors. The couple reportedly tested positive for the highest levels of methamphetamines. It was unknown if animal cruelty charges would also be filed.

Kentucky State Police Charge Man with Child and Animal Sexual Abuse

An undercover Internet Crimes Against Children investigation by the Kentucky State Police led to the arrest of Larry “Grover” Stewart, 44, on charges of child and animal sexual abuse. [WCLU radio](#) reported that Stewart was arrested in Gracey, Ky., and was being held in the Christian County Detention Center on a total of 14 felony counts of possession and distribution of child pornography and a sexual crime against an animal. The Kentucky State Police Electronic Crime Branch began the investigation after allegedly discovering Stewart distributing files of child sexual exploitation online. The arrest is believed to be the first since Kentucky became the 46th state to outlaw bestiality last March (See the [April 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).



Man Jealous Over Girlfriend’s Love of Her Dog Facing Multiple Charges



Yulong Du

A man who was jealous because his girlfriend was sleeping with her dog and told him he loved the dog more than him is facing multiple charges. [KUTV](#) reported that Yulong Du, 23, of Taylorsville, Utah was charged with felony aggravated animal cruelty, and misdemeanor assault, intoxication and criminal mischief, in the incident which left the dog dead and the girlfriend injured. Police said Du began fighting with the woman trying to get control of the 13-year-old dog and repeatedly telling her he was going to kill the pet.



Cohen Heath

Teen Said to Kill Mother’s Cat Rather than Murder His Friend

A Colorado Springs, Colo. teenager who authorities said was high on meth when he contemplated killing his friend but decided instead to kill his mother’s cat because it was an easier target was charged with felony aggravated animal cruelty. Cohen Heath, 18, allegedly put the cat, named “Ponyo,” in a backpack to muffle its sounds as he stabbed it six or seven times with a paring knife, the [Colorado Springs Gazette](#) reported. He then allegedly cut off a paw because he wanted to make a necklace out of it, saved portions of the cat’s face in a plastic bag, and gave his mother a paper gift bag with the cat’s tail.

Man Arrested for Threats to Farmers Who Denied Him Permission to Have Sex with Their Animals

A Vernon Township, N.J. man who allegedly asked farmers in Sussex County for their permission so he could have sex with their horses and cows, and then allegedly threatened them and damaged their cars when they refused, was arrested after police searched his home and reportedly found a homemade .22-caliber gun, arrows with explosives attached, and metal spikes similar to those found at several of the farms. Richard Decker, 31, was being held without bail on 22 charges, the [New Jersey Herald](#) reported. Police alleged Decker sent threats, placed the spikes on farmers' driveways to damage their tires, and threatened to beat one farmer's wife with a wooden stick when permission was denied.



Richard Decker

Animal Abuse Complaint Leads to Shooting of Animal Control Officer

A man who called himself a “warrior, a soldier and a “sniper” was arrested on charges of aggravated assault with a firearm and false imprisonment for allegedly opening fire, threatening police and holding hostage an animal control officer responding to a call about a neglected dog. The [Palm Beach Post](#) reported that Brian Tran, 43, of Loxahatchee Groves, Fla. told the unnamed animal control officer that he was going to kill his neighbors and the cops who he hated. After he reportedly invited her in to see the dog, he allegedly fired his gun several times into the ground, brandished a knife, grabbed her shoulders, and continued his rant about killing. She managed to leave, fearing for her life, and met Palm Beach County sheriff's deputies. No animal cruelty charges were filed. Court records revealed that Tran, a former police officer in Washington, D.C., had been arrested twice in Maryland for grand theft and assault and had a stalking injunction filed against him in Florida in 2013.



Brian Tran

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Nov. 13 – Bowling Green, Ky.: Joye Estes of the [Kentucky Link Coalition](#) will conduct a training on The Link for social workers.

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

Nov. 14 – Columbus, Ohio: Vicki Deisner and Aviva Vincent will present on The Link at the [Annual Conference](#) of the Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Nov. 15 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will learn about the Batterers Intervention & Prevention Program in its meeting at Dallas CASA.

Nov. 16 – West Palm Beach, Fla.: The ASPCA will present a [free course](#) for veterinarians and veterinary technicians on “Recognizing and Responding to Animal Cruelty.”

Nov. 20 – Houston, Texas: A new analytic tool developed by PetSmart Charities to help animal shelters assess community pet perspectives including domestic violence will be debuted at the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement’s 2019 [Fall Conference and Research Symposium](#).

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. 10 – Pittsfield, Mass.: [HAVEN](#) (the Human-Animal Violence Education network) will meet at the Berkshire Humane Society.

Feb. 19, 2020: Ithaca, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will address the veterinarian’s role in responding to family violence to the Ethics and Animal Care class at the [Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

March 26-27, 2020 – 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)
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.

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