



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

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



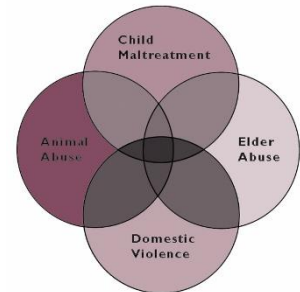
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



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

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## **CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK**

### **Family Violence Risks During Pandemic Worse than Those Following Disasters – And Animal Control Officers Can Be Valuable Sentinels**



**Andrew Campbell**

A [new report](#) is warning that the risk of multiple forms of family violence resulting from COVID-19 shelter-in-place restrictions may be greater than similar risks known to increase following natural disasters and that animal control officers may play increasingly vital roles as sentinels for hidden cases of family violence.

In a “call to action” to improve community collaborations between humane and human services, Indianapolis researcher Andrew Campbell (*See the [April 2020 LINK-Letter](#)*) writes that “we were hardly ‘winning’ the fight to end family violence even before this pandemic shook the world,” and the crisis has exacerbated the risks. Many agencies that were already strained by increasing caseloads and diminished resources are facing new barriers in trying to reach families who have been cut off from the rest of the community; they will have to explore new and expanded partnerships between human and animal welfare agencies in order to save lives.

Though limited precedent exists for the COVID-19 crisis, there are scenarios of rapidly increasing stress, sudden shifts in daily routines, the closing of schools and community resources, and a rapid decrease in available resources after natural disasters. These factors, combined with controlling behaviors as a means of coping with trauma, unemployment, and limited access to social support systems, have all been identified as common family violence risk factors after natural disasters, he writes.

For example, domestic violence reports increased by 46% and increases in alcohol abuse, family stress and aggression were reported in Othello, Wash. after the Mount St. Helens eruption. After Hurricane Katrina, reports of psychological abuse among women by their partner increased 35% and partner physical abuse nearly doubled in Mississippi counties. Significant increases in domestic violence followed

the 2009 bushfires in Australia and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. These increases persisted for several months following the disasters.

“While community togetherness may be often encouraged after natural disasters, physical separation from fellow community members is the course of action promoted in the current crisis,” he notes. Consequently, current increases in family violence may be even greater than those following natural disasters.

Although social distancing, mandated school and business closures and travel restrictions may reduce coronavirus transmission, not all vulnerable victims find safety in the resulting seclusion. Domestic violence, child abuse and pet abuse victims may face a “worst case” scenario, trapped in the home with a violent perpetrator during a time of severely limited contact with the outside world, he writes. Widespread and extended organizational closures, stress and associated risk factors for family violence such as unemployment, reduced income, limited resources, and limited social support are likely to be further compounded. Alcohol abuse may increase with bars and restaurants closed: family violence perpetrators who abuse alcohol may be even more likely to do so in the home. Of particular concern are reports of increased gun and ammunition sales given the clear link between firearm access and fatal domestic violence incidents, and communities releasing prisoners with domestic violence histories to reduce their risk of spreading COVID-19 in confinement.

Noting that domestic violence abusers may often target children or pets as a means of furthering control over the household, Campbell reports that domestic violence perpetrators are using COVID-19 as a weapon against their victims, forbidding handwashing in an attempt to increase the victim’s fear of contracting the virus and threatening to forbid medical treatment if the victim does contract the virus. When quarantine measures are lifted and society returns to “normal”, child abuse victim-serving professionals may find themselves completely buried in reports and unable to meet the needs of an overwhelming number of victims.

**“While community togetherness may be often encouraged after natural disasters, physical separation from fellow community members is the course of action promoted in the current crisis.”**

**-- Andrew Campbell**

Because family violence victims, teachers and physicians may be more restricted from reporting, neighbors who are also sheltering-in-place may take on greater significance as reporters and often do not face the same barriers to reporting. This creates opportunities for animal control officers who are checking on the welfare of animals to also ensure the well-being of humans residing in the home as well.

“If there was ever a time our nation needed animal welfare professionals and human welfare professionals to work together – it’s right now,” he concludes. Citing child welfare’s origins in animal protection, “Now more than ever, we must return to our collaborative roots. With resources so significantly limited and both welfare initiatives facing unprecedented barriers to providing assistance, professionals must unite their efforts to better protect the many vulnerable humans and animals at high risk of abuse.”

-- Campbell, A.M. (2020, April 12). An increasing risk of family violence during the Covid-19 pandemic: Strengthening community collaborations to save lives. *Forensic Science International: Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsir.2020.100089>



## Texas Humane Network Provides Flyers on How to Report Different Types of Family Violence

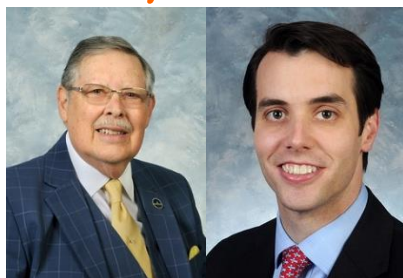
The Texas Humane Legislation Network has published [five handy one-page flyers](#) with guidelines for caseworkers and officers in various professions about how to recognize and report suspected child, elder, domestic, animal, and equine abuse.

The flyers list in user-friendly bullet points the typical physical and environmental signs of child abuse or neglect, animal cruelty or neglect, domestic and intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and equine cruelty or neglect. Each sheet includes a section on who to call if abuse is suspected, listing state law enforcement agencies and state and national abuse hotlines for child, domestic and elder abuse, and the National Link Coalition's [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#) for suspected animal and equine cruelty.

Each flyer also describes the information the reporter should be prepared to provide. The flyers were created in association with Heath Mobile Veterinary Services, a member of the North Texas Link Coalition, to help responders and advocates recognize and understand more quickly the importance of cross-reporting suspected abuse.

## VETERINARY MEDICINE... AND THE LINK

### Kentucky Now Allows DVMs to Report Suspected Animal Abuse



**Sens. Embry (left) and McGarvey**

The Commonwealth of Kentucky, which had long been an outlier with provisions specifically prohibiting veterinarians from reporting suspected animal abuse, has joined the 34 other states that have enacted laws that either mandate or permit practitioners to report suspected animal maltreatment.

**SB 21**, co-sponsored by Sens. C.B. Embry, Jr. (R – Morgantown) and Minority Leader Morgan McGarvey (D-Louisville), was signed into law on April 24 by Gov. Andy Beshear. The measure went through several amendments; the original bill would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement and specifically grant them immunity for making a report in good faith.

The final, enacted version permits veterinarians to report suspected cruelty to animals, torture of a dog or cat, or sexual crimes against an animal if he or she has a veterinarian-client-patient relationship with the animal. Reports will now be made to the Office of the State Veterinarian for suspected violations of laws affecting farm livestock or poultry, and to law enforcement for any other animals.

The specific provision granting immunity was deleted, but existing law states that veterinarians who release information regarding suspected animal cruelty “shall not be liable to any person, including the client, for an action resulting from the disclosure.”

Veterinary reporting of suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect is currently mandated in 16 states and is permitted now in 19 states with the addition of Kentucky. Immunity from liability and/or administrative penalties and sanctions are included in all but five states.

## ***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... AND THE LINK***

### **PAWS Act Funding, Emergency Support Being Implemented at Critical Time, Says ASPCA**

The long-awaited implementation of the federal PAWS Act (Pet and Women Safety) which extends pet protection orders across state lines and makes \$2,000,000 in funding available to help more domestic violence shelters accept survivors' pets "could not have come at a more crucial time," according to the ASPCA in an [op-ed published in \*The Hill\*](#) on April 4.



**Matt Bershadker**

"Incidents of domestic violence are reportedly rising as a disturbing consequence of nationwide stay-at-home orders and recommendations to combat the COVID-19 pandemic," noted ASPCA President & CEO Matt Bershadker. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime announced the process for the grants in April, with a May 29 deadline to submit applications ([See the \*April 2020 LINK-Letter\*](#)).

"This support for survivors of abuse and their pets could not come at a more crucial time. Living with abusive partners — including acts and threats of violence toward pets — makes leaving dangerous situations very challenging even under normal circumstances. Stay-at-home orders, while vital for virus suppression, make this situation substantially more dangerous for both people and their pets," wrote Bershadker. "With social service resources under extreme stress right now, opportunities to escape abusive and life-threatening conditions is a primary safety concern."

Bershadker also announced the launch of an ambitious [ASPCA COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Initiative](#), a \$5,000,000 effort which will grant a minimum \$2,000,000 to animal welfare organizations in critical need of funds and to provide pet food to vulnerable pet owners through regional pet food distribution centers in several U.S. cities. "This is a stressful and frightening period for all of us — with people often turning to their pets for comfort — but this is not a time to lower our guard or our commitment to people and animals who need our help to survive the crisis."

The [OVC FY 2020 Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance Grant Program](#) is open to state, territorial, tribal and local governments; organizations and coalitions addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking; and animal shelters and other animal welfare organizations that collaborate with such governmental or domestic violence organizations. The grants are designed to increase the number of shelter beds and transitional housing options for victims needing co-sheltering for their pets and to provide training on The Link and best practices in serving victims with pets. The bipartisan PAWS Act was passed in 2018 after languishing for years through three Congresses ([See the \*January 2019 LINK-Letter\*](#)).

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The news in *The LINK-Letter* about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence is intended to be disseminated as widely and as freely as possible. 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).

### ***For Additional Information***

Just click on the blue underlined hyperlinks in these articles and it will take you to other websites with additional information about that topic.

## Legislators Ask for More COVID-19 Relief for Animal and Human Domestic Violence Survivors

Following a surge in reports of domestic violence across the country with people and animals confined at home with their abusers, a bipartisan contingent of 80 federal legislators is requesting that more emergency funding be included in the next COVID-19 relief funding package to support survivors of domestic violence and their companion animals.

“We must address this situation immediately and support funding for safe housing for domestic violence victims, their children and their pets,” said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R – Penna.) “Everyone deserves to feel safe and to be safe, and this funding is an important step toward that goal.”

“The impact of the coronavirus has caused significant hardships for Americans across the country and has tragically led to a surge in domestic violence cases,” said Rep. Vern Buchanan (R – Fla.) “Additional funding for domestic violence shelters and housing assistance will help keep thousands of victims safe from being trapped with their abuser. We need to act swiftly and get this support to those who desperately need it.”



The members are requesting that leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives include [Brian Fitzpatrick](#) an additional \$4 million in forthcoming legislation for the U.S. Department of Justice Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance grant program authorized under the 2018 Farm Bill.



[Vern Buchanan](#)

“Reports of domestic violence have risen dramatically across the country in recent weeks as stay-at-home orders subject many victims of family abuse to prolonged periods of isolation with their abuser,” according to a letter from Representatives reported by the [Ripon Advance](#). The letter noted that research has shown that approximately 50 percent of domestic violence survivors cite the fear of leaving their pets behind with their abuser as a reason for why they remain in abusive situations.

While the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act included an additional \$45 million for the Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA) program, the lawmakers wrote in their April 16 letter sent to House leaders about concerns “that more targeted funding will be required to meet the needs of victims and survivors with pets during the COVID-19 crisis.”

Recognizing the importance of addressing this problem, Congress incorporated the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act into the 2018 Farm Bill, creating a grant program to help domestic violence shelters accommodate survivors with pets. Grant applications for \$2 million in funding for shelter and transitional housing for the pet survivors of domestic violence are being accepted through May 29 ([See the April 2020 LINK-Letter](#)).

“We remain concerned that the \$2 million provided in FY20 will be insufficient to meet the growing need for these services,” wrote the lawmakers. “That is why we urge you to include no less than \$4 million in additional investment for these Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance grants as we look to the next phase in our efforts to support vulnerable populations during this crisis.”



## ***ANIMAL ABUSE and... ABUSE OF THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED***



**Phil Arkow**

### **NAPSA Webinar Attracts Largest Audience in Link Training**

What is believed to be the largest audience to hear an elder abuse Link training in recent memory tuned into a [National Adult Protective Services Association webinar](#) on April 29 where a whopping 435 participants learned about challenges and strategies for APS personnel confronting suspected animal abuse and animal hoarding.

Phil Arkow, National Link Coalition Coordinator, summarized key Link findings as to how animal abuse interfaces with child, domestic and elder abuse, with an emphasis on animal hoarding. Stereotypical conditions affecting many APS clients – memory loss, fixed and low income, physical frailties, social isolation, and transportation limitations – conspire to create a complex junction of animal and self-neglect. Emotional attachments and the death of pets can be particularly strong factors in clients' lives, and jealousy over a spouse's attachment to a service animal can cause additional issues, he said.

Animal hoarding is an especially intractable problem that invariably requires a multidisciplinary response, including APS agencies. "This is not a harmless eccentricity but a potentially serious problem for people and animals in the household as well as the community," he said.

He described specific strategies and questions to ask, during intakes, assessments and investigations, planning for transitions of pets and people, opportunities to work with veterinarians and animal shelters and advocacy campaigns to increase cross-reporting among human and humane services agencies.

Jessica Bibbo, researcher, gerontologist and anthrozoologist with the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging in Cleveland, noted that people's social networks tend to shrink as we age and we tend to focus more on deeper relationships rather than peripheral ones or acquaintances. Elderly clients' attachments to their pets can be especially powerful and strong motivators to help people recover from health problems. "For people who are becoming more dependent on others, pets can provide opportunities to care for others," she said. But too often, agencies working with seniors neglect to inquire about human-animal bonds. "Pets are often interwoven into these systems, and are too often overlooked."



**Jessica Bibbo**

Citing the need for more data-informed research to better understand animal and elder abuse, Bibbo suggested the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS) could be expanded to include instances of co-occurring animal abuse. Cross-reporting between animal and elder protection agencies could collect data from disparate systems to enhance intervention, prevention and elder justice.



**Kara Holmquist** investigators from the Department of Elder Affairs and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission ([See the September 2018 LINK-Letter](#)).

Kara Holmquist, Director of Advocacy for the Massachusetts SPCA and Angell Memorial Hospital, described public policy considerations for the elderly and disabled involving The Link, including expanded housing options, pet protective orders and cross-reporting between agencies. She reviewed the patchwork of cross-reporting procedures that affect over 500 animal control officers in 351 Massachusetts municipalities and the state's

"It's so important to learn from each other and to build relationships," she said, describing how inter-agency communications builds trust and the ability of each agency to solve problems. Increased cross-training improves the ability of agents in each field to know who to call.

## THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

### Bioecological Systems Model Seen as Key to Link Cases

While many studies examine how violence to animals and people are often Linked problems calling for transdisciplinary collaboration, few have applied Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems model to better examine the Link's complexity.



Brinda Jegatheesan, Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers, Liz Ormerod, and Paula Boyden

A new paper by four internationally known authorities on human-animal relationships is filling this gap.

The model, widely used across health services for the early detection of abuse, emphasizes that the contexts and relationships in which an individual spends time should be considered as mechanisms that propel development. It describes four nested systems which serve as an individual's influencing factors.

The innermost circle is the microsystem, the immediate physical, social and psychological environment, activities, familial roles, and interpersonal/inter-species relations. The mesosystem consists of interconnections and processes of two or more microsystems. The exosystem includes interconnections and processes in which the individual does not participate but which indirectly influence, such as the relationship between a child's school and the parent's workplace. The macrosystem contains the overarching ideology, including cultural beliefs, societal norms, socio-political factors, economics, and government systems. All systems interact with and influence each other, are reflected in the individual's development processes, and every intervention in a system or between systems will affect the microsystem of the individual (and the companion animals) with potential for positive or negative changes.

Because these systems are interconnected, the authors note that collaborations crossing multiple disciplines can more effectively intervene when cross-species forms of family violence are present, and that these professionals should be considered first responders.

Human and animal health or welfare professionals should build knowledge by first examining the human's and animal's microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the macrosystem to better understand the whole context of the suspected abuse and find more effective approaches to intervention and prevention. The study utilizes four Link case studies in the U.S., U.K., and the Netherlands to demonstrate how such an ecological approach could have helped investigators better identify problems and respond accordingly.

"Psychologists, social workers, veterinarians, educators, and other health and behavioral professionals witness an amalgam of victims/clients whose lives have been tragically impacted by family violence. The complex and fragile nature of this problem cannot be solved using any single discipline nor can it be addressed through the actions of an individual professional," they write. "The old way of working in silos within one's profession and using piecemeal approaches has clearly demonstrated its limitations and ineffectiveness. The bioecological systems model offers more comprehensive effective ways to understand the complexity of animal cruelty and family violence."

-- Jegatheesan, B., Enders-Slegers, M.-J., Ormerod, E., & Boyden, P. (2020). Understanding the link between animal cruelty and family violence: The bioecological systems model. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17, 3116. doi:10.3390/ijerph17093116

## Animal Sexual Abuse Seen as Prevalent in Spain and Portugal

Animal sexual abuse, and veterinarians' encountering suspected bestiality among their patients, may be more common in Spain and Portugal than was previously thought, according to the findings of a survey of Iberian practitioners. 8.2% of veterinarians responding to the online survey reported they had encountered or at least suspected cases of animal sexual abuse. Meanwhile, an analysis of Google Trends confirmed a significant number of people are searching for zoophilic content online. The research will be used in an effort to change Portuguese and Spanish laws which currently do not adequately define or punish this crime.

-- Castanheira, M.M.C. (2019). *Animal sexual abuse: A reality in Portugal and Spain. Derecho Animal (Forum of Animal Law Studies)*, 10(4), 123-154.

## Study Explores Childhood Animal Cruelty and Aggression in Turkey

What is believed to be the first Link study conducted in Turkey explores the relationship between cruelty to animals, aggression, and empathy in primary school children. The relationship between pet ownership, love for animals in the family, and engaging in cruelty to animals was also investigated. The sample consisted of 633 girls and 615 boys between the ages of 8 and 11 and 41 classroom teachers living in Istanbul. Students completed the Turkish version of the Children and Animals Inventory and the Empathy Index for Children and Adolescents; their classroom teachers completed the Teacher Assessment of Social Behavior. Results indicated that cruelty to animals was significantly correlated with aggression and empathy. Children whose parents did not like animals were more cruel to animals and those who did not own a pet also exhibited higher levels of animal cruelty. Gender, owning a pet, love for animals in the family, aggression, and empathy accounted for 25% of the total variance.

-- Akdemir, S., & Gölge, Z.B. (2020). *Cruelty to animals in Turkish children: Connections with aggression and empathy. Anthrozoös*, 33(2), 285-299.



Lorine Hughes & Ekaterina Botchkovar

## Study Examines Animal Abuse in Russia and Ukraine And Gaps in Criminological Research

What is believed to be the first empirical assessment of the prevalence, perpetrators, and theorized causes of animal abuse in the nonwestern cultural contexts of Ukraine and Russia laments that animal abuse largely remains an understudied topic in the social sciences, particularly sociology and criminology, a situation described as unfortunate, in part, due to the negative consequences of animal abuse on human society and well-established associations between animal abuse and interpersonal violence.

The study draws on survey data from 1,435 randomly-sampled adults in Lviv, Ukraine, and Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, to estimate the prevalence of animal abuse in those cities and assess the sociodemographic characteristics of animal abusers. The study also provides the first empirical test of Agnew's theory of the sociodemographic characteristics, theoretical mediators and proximal causes leading to animal abuse in a nonwestern setting.

Animal abuse was reported to be quite rare among respondents and committed mostly by males and younger individuals. However, 9% of respondents reported having been cruel to animals during the



previous five years, projecting an even greater likelihood of 11% of being cruel to animals in the future, figures considerably higher than similar studies in the U.S.

Consistent with Agnew's theory, low self-control, the presence of animal-abusing peers, justifying beliefs, and perceived benefits of animal cruelty all were associated with statistically significantly increased likelihood of animal abuse. The more often friends had abused animals, the more likely such behavior was modeled and reinforced among respondents. As expected, past animal abuse significantly and strongly affected projected animal abuse directly.

In addition, justifying beliefs and perceived benefits mediated a significant and substantial share of the effects of self-control and animal-abusing peers on animal abuse. Contrary to theoretical expectations, however, the perceived costs of abusing animals appeared unrelated to animal abuse net of the effects of other predictors. People who abuse animals appear to do so partly because, due to low self-control and exposure to animal-abusing peers, they hold beliefs justifying the behavior and perceive greater benefits associated with it.

The authors note that they were unable to address Link correlates of animal abuse in their analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of offenders, including adverse childhood experience, childhood exposure to animal abuse, and psychiatric traits such as personality disorders. Still, they expressed regret that criminology has failed to engender a view of animal abuse as a worthy object of study, despite the seriousness of animal cruelty crimes.

"This is unfortunate not only because of the criminal status of animal abuse but also because of the integral role of animals in human society, the sheer number of animal victims, and the pain and suffering they are forced to endure," they write. "The paucity of relevant data on animal abuse is particularly problematic given the extensive negative consequences of such behavior for animal victims and human society.

"Countless animals perish each year as a result of abuse, while surviving animal victims often are maimed, physically disabled, suffering chronic health problems and shortened life spans, and prone to a range of undesirable behaviors, such as separation anxiety and aggression that increase the likelihood of abandonment, overpopulation of animal shelters, and euthanasia. In addition, animal abuse appears to be associated with a host of antisocial behaviors among perpetrators," they add.

"Results show that, although animal abuse was more common among our respondents than has been documented in the U.S., this type of crime still is quite rare and committed mostly by males, younger individuals, and people with a history of abusing animals. However, the rarity of animal abuse does not justify its neglect within the social sciences, especially given the seriousness of the crime, harmful consequences for sentient beings, integral role of animals in human society, and Link between animal abuse and problems extending beyond the suffering experienced by animal victims, including violence against other persons."

-- Hughes, L.A., Antonaccio, O., & Botchkovar, E.V. (2019). The crime of animal abuse in two nonwestern cities: Prevalence, perpetrators, and pathways. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-019-09417-w>

## Persons with Psychopathic Traits Pay Less Attention to Animals' Cuteness

Certain facial characteristics in companion animals perceived by humans as being “cute”, such as large eyes, a round head and a small nose and mouth, are shared with human infants and trigger care-giving responses. Despite this, however, companion animal abuse occurs. A British research study investigated the abilities of people with pro- and anti-social personality traits and positive and negative attitudes towards animals to detect and pay attention to cues of cuteness in animal and human infant faces. Findings indicated that the ability to detect cuteness cues is widespread, regardless of personality or attitudes. However, individuals with anti-social personality traits and negative attitudes towards animals chose to pay less attention to “cute” stimuli. The findings support the theory that individuals with psychopathic traits recognize facial cues of vulnerability but choose to give them reduced attentional priority. This may have implications for animal welfare. The study was seen as an initial step in determining how individuals who are at risk of committing animal abuse process information on infant features in animals.

-- Carroll, G.A., Cohen, L.R., McParland, A., Jack, S., & Montrose, V.T. (2020). Individuals with psychopathic traits and poor attitudes towards animals can recognise infant features but give them reduced attentional priority. *Animals*, 10(4), 721. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10040721>

## NEWS from LINK COALITIONS

### Steve Dale joins the National Link Coalition

The National Link Coalition is proud to announce that nationally syndicated pet journalist Steve Dale has been named to serve on the Steering Committee of the National Link Coalition.

Dale is a certified animal behavior specialist who has been a trusted voice in the world of pet health for over 20 years. His contributions to advancing pet wellness have earned him many awards and recognitions around the world.

He is currently the host of two nationally syndicated radio shows, *Steve Dale's Pet World* and *The Pet Minute*, together heard on over 100 radio stations. He also is a writer, columnist and contributing editor for such publications as *CATster*, *Veterinary Practice News*, *PetVet* magazine, and the *Journal of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America*. He previously hosted the nationally broadcast *Animal Planet Radio* and had a twice-weekly newspaper column syndicated by the *Chicago Tribune*. He's been a contributing editor for *USA Weekend*, a columnist for *Cat Fancy* magazine, and has appeared on such TV shows as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *National Geographic Explorer*, *Animal Planet*, and Fox News.

He has authored and edited numerous animal behavior publications and has served on many boards of directors including the CATalyst Council, American Humane, the Winn Feline Foundation, and the Human Animal Bond Association, and advisory boards including the Grey Muzzle Organization, Pet Partners and the American Association of Feline Practitioners. He co-founded Veterinary Professionals Against Puppy Mills and created the Task Force on Companion Animals and Public Safety in his home town of Chicago, where he also convinced the Chicago White Sox to become the first Major League Baseball team to allow dogs at a game in 1996. He was the youngest person ever to be inducted into the Dog Writers' Association Hall of Fame.



Steve Dale and friends

## Oklahoma Link Coalition Holds Virtual Strategic Planning Meeting

The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) conducted its quarterly meeting in a virtual mode, using Zoom technology to review the results of a strategic planning evaluation that will help shape a better future to meet the needs of people and animals in Oklahoma. Louisa McCune, Executive Director of the Kirkpatrick Foundation which has served as the host for the coalition since its inception seven years ago, and coalition coordinator Kathleen Romero traced the trajectory of the group's progress and current status as the coalition transitions to a new home.



Louisa McCune



Kathleen Romero

The meeting showcased nonprofit organizational consultant Matt Biggar, Ph.D., who conducted extensive analyses of the coalition's network, operations, progress and impact. A survey of many of the coalition's 270 members, based in 135 nonprofit, government, private and academic organizations, depicted what he called "a tremendous potential to have this much cross-sector participation."

The survey mapped the "density" of inter-organizational relationships among coalition members, how much they value each other and the levels of trust among them. These represent the amount of power and influence, levels of involvement, resources brought to the group, reliability, congruence of missions, and openness to frank discussions which enhance the ability of coalitions to get things done.

He found high levels of engagement among coalition members and increased public awareness across Oklahoma about The Link. A growing number of professionals have been trained in Link principles, and the coalition has high ratings for many of the factors that make for successful collaborations, such as bringing stakeholders together, sharing resources, exchanging knowledge, and shared missions and goals.



Matt Biggar

The study also examined six aspects of the coalition's operations, structures and processes which are necessary for organizational success: a common agenda, tools for measurement and evaluation, good membership and governance, alignment and action, stakeholder engagement, and backbone support.

Thirty-one participants, representing such diverse fields as state investigators, victim services, foundation leaders, animal shelters, social work, Native American interests, and legal aid participated in the meeting which featured breakout sessions to help identify key takeaways from Biggar's research and identify next steps.



### What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

## New Mexico Link Coalition Posts COVID-19 Webinars Online



[Positive Links](#), our New Mexico Link affiliate, organized two webinars in March and April to help service providers in animal, child, domestic and elder abuse prevention respond to the dynamic issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent quarantine responses. President Tammy Fiebelkorn tells *The LINK-Letter* that the series was extremely successful and dozens of people around the globe are still watching the [recordings of the webinars](#) daily. The webinars have been made available for free online.

“Life in Lockdown: Protecting All Family Members from Violence” is an hour-long webinar featuring Andrew Campbell discussing how the necessary steps of social distancing and isolation taken to slow the virus’ spread are impacting the risk of family violence. Spanish physician and Link program coordinator Nuria Querol presents an 86-minute webinar, “Family Safety During COVID-19 Confinement: Experiences in Spain,” describing steps that country’s government has taken to address The Link in general and COVID-19 implications in particular.

## THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

### Link Bills We’re Watching

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many state legislatures to abruptly cancel or temporarily suspend their legislative sessions. Nevertheless, we’re keeping an eye on 93 bills that have already been introduced. Please let us know if you hear of other measures not included here:

#### *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**Arizona HB 2321** and **SB 1626** would allow courts to issue “severe threat orders of protection”, which would prohibit respondents from possessing firearms based upon a credible threat of death or serious injury, against individuals who committed or attempted to commit acts of violence including cruelty to animals involving torture, serious injury or protracted suffering within the previous six months. **SB 1626** is in the Judiciary and Rules Committees.



**Connecticut Raised Bill 107** would establish a task force to address various issues at shelters for the homeless, many of whom are survivors of domestic violence, including accommodating homeless persons who have pets and service animals. The bill is in the Joint Committee on Housing.



**Florida HB 705/SB 752** would require every county in the state to designate at least one emergency shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. Pets would have to be contained in secure enclosures in a separate area. **SB 752** was tabled as **HB 705** was approved by the House 115-0 and by the Senate 39-0 and was sent to the Governor on March 6.



**Florida SB 1082/HB 241** would allow courts to award temporary exclusive custody and care of non-agricultural animals to petitioners and to order defendants to temporarily have no contact with the animal and to not harm or take the animal away. **HB 241** was tabled as **SB 1082** was approved by the Senate 38-0 and by the House 117-0 and was sent to the Governor on March 11.



**Georgia HB 582** would allow courts to create a pet animal care plan in marriage dissolution proceedings that would include the prevention of cruelty to animals and the provision of food, water, shelter, and veterinary care. Courts would have to determine whether the parties have joint ownership of the animals and recognize that a close and continuing owner-pet relationship and continuity in the pet's life will be in the pet's best interest. The bill was in progress when the legislative session was suspended indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**Indiana HB 1423** would have excluded a party's service animals from a court's division of property in any actions for a dissolution of marriage. *The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.*



**Kentucky HB 216** would have included violence against a domestic animal used as coercive conduct within the definitions of "domestic violence and abuse" and "dating violence and abuse" and would have allowed judges to award possession of a domestic animal to the petitioner in a protection-from-abuse procedure. The bill passed the House 81-3 and *was in the Senate Judiciary Committee when the General Assembly adjourned.*



**Massachusetts H.3833** would cause individuals convicted of animal cruelty to be civilly liable to another individual for the infliction of emotional distress if the person knew, or should have known, that the conduct was extreme and outrageous and would cause severe emotional distress. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



**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 2299** would have authorized courts to include pets in orders of protection from domestic abuse. *The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.*



**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 Children & Families 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.





 **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.

 **Pennsylvania HB 1432** would recognize that “companion animals are living beings that are generally regarded as cherished family members that offer their owners companionship, security and assistance,” and as a “special category of personal property” need to be granted special consideration in the division of property during marriage dissolution. Parties could enter into an enforceable agreement regarding the care and possession of companion animals, and the court shall consider all relevant factors. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.


### *Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse*

 **Maryland HB 33** and **SB 153** would add “the destruction of or harm to an animal” belonging to a vulnerable adult to the definition of severe emotional distress and abuse of a vulnerable adult. **HB 33** passed both houses and was sent to the Governor.

 **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 passed the Senate and is in the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee.

### *Animal Hoarding*

 **New York A 261**, creating the crime of companion animal hoarding, and **A4569**, creating a crime of aggravated neglect of a companion animal, are in the Agriculture Committee.



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.

## *Animal Sexual Abuse*



**Hawai'i HB 1618/SB 2718** would prohibit subjecting an animal to sexual contact, permitting such activity to occur, or obtaining or organizing an event with the intent of subjecting an animal to sexual contact. Offenses would be a Class C felony or a Class B felony if a minor were exposed to the crime. Convicted offenders would be required to: surrender all animals in their custody; reimburse animal services agencies for the costs of the animals' care; undergo psychological or psychiatric treatment; make restitution to the animals' owners; and be barred from being around animals for at least five years. **HB 1618 died for lack of a hearing; SB 2718** passed the Senate unanimously and was sent to the House Judiciary and Agriculture Committees when the Legislature recessed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**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 where a Study Order was issued and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.



**New York A 8744** would establish the crimes of sexual conduct with an animal, a Class A misdemeanor, and sexual conduct with an animal resulting in injury or death, a Class E felony. The bill is in the Agriculture 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.



**Virginia HB 1065** would make it a Class 6 felony to create, record, distribute, sell, advertise, or appear in any video or still image of animal cruelty. Images used in evidence would be exempt. The bill *was stricken from the docket of the Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources.*



**Wisconsin SB 139** increases 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 are further enhanced if a child is involved. Offenders must register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration.



## *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.



**Maryland SB 101** and **HB 311** would establish the Court Dog and Child Witness Program in the state's circuit courts allowing "facility dogs" and "therapy dogs" to accompany child witnesses. The bills passed both houses and were sent to the Governor.



**Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 to be prosecuted if the criminal offense involved the infliction or threat of serious bodily harm to a person or an animal. The Judiciary Committee issued a Study Order for the Senate Rules Committee to review the bill.



**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. **A 1211** is in the Children and Families Committee. **S 3415** passed the Senate but died in the Assembly and was returned back to the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.



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



**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.



**Rhode Island H 7030** would allow parents, guardians and DCYF requesting a protective order for a child who is suffering from domestic abuse or sexual exploitation to award the plaintiff custody of the household pets. The bill is being held for further study by the Judiciary Committee.



**Rhode Island H 7130** would authorize courts to award sole possession of a domestic companion animal in a divorce or separation proceeding by considering the best interests of the animal, including: how, when and by whom the animal was acquired; who has assumed most of the animal's care; who spends the most time with the animal; which living arrangement would be best; and whether it would be in the best interests of the children to keep the animal in their domicile for care and affection. Joint custody decisions would include: length of the animal's stay with each party; costs of veterinary visits, daycare and the pet's other needs; and additional criteria the court deems important. The bill is being held for further study by the House Judiciary Committee.



**South Carolina S 908** would allow individuals to remove a minor or an animal from a motor vehicle if either is experiencing a life- or extreme health-threatening situation and provide that individual with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

### *“CASA for Animals”*



**California AB 2645** would allow courts to appoint an attorney or law student advocate to represent the interests of an animal that is the subject of criminal abuse or neglect proceedings.



**Florida SB 1048** would have provided for the appointing of an advocate for the interests of an animal in certain court proceedings, at the court’s discretion, and require the Florida Bar Association’s Animal Law section to maintain a list of attorneys and certified legal interns who meet specified requirements to be appointed as advocates. *The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.*



**Illinois HB 3995** and **HB 5530** would permit courts to appoint a legal aid to represent the interests of a cat or dog when a person is facing charges of animal neglect or abuse. The Department of Natural Resources would have to create a database of legal professionals and paraprofessionals willing to provide such representation. **HB 3995** is in the House Rules Committee and **HB 5530** is in the House Judiciary - Criminal Committee.



**Maine LD 1442** allows 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 will be able to 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 became law** on Jan. 12 without the signature of the Governor.



**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 Hampshire HB 1164** would create a special advocate for cats and dogs that are neglected or otherwise treated cruelly. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**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.



**Rhode Island S 2698** would authorize courts to appoint pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to serve as animal advocates in animal cruelty and abuse cases, to serve the interests of justice. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

### *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**Guam Bill No. 185-35** would ban bestiality, enact pet protection orders, mandate reporting of animal abuse, impose post-conviction mental health evaluation and treatment, and increase penalties for offenses committed in the presence of a child or by persons with histories of family or sexual violence. The bill was in the Committee on Health, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Land, and Justice when the Legislature recessed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**Mississippi HB 272** would have required law enforcement agencies investigating crimes against animals to use forms consistent with the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System and to label such crimes as animal abuse. *The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.*



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



**New York A 2509** and **S 609** would add animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption. **A 2509** is in the Assembly Codes Committee; **S 609** passed the Senate but died in the Assembly and was referred back to the Senate Codes Committee.



**Pennsylvania HB 1071** would allow the state’s sentencing guidelines to provide an enhancement in cases where a domestic animal is harmed or killed during the course of a criminal trespass or burglary. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

### *Cross-Reporting*



**Alabama SB 196** would make it a Class C misdemeanor for someone to submit a “frivolous” complaint alleging that an “animal enterprise” has engaged in animal cruelty. Persons found guilty of making a frivolous complaint would be required to pay the county or municipality the costs of conducting the investigation and any animal boarding fees that ensued. The bill was approved by the Senate Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committee.



**Florida S 7000** would have declared that “early identification of animal abuse is another important tool in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, providing needed support to families, and protecting animals.” It would have required child protective investigators to report suspected animal abuse to a supervisor within 72 hours for submission to a local animal control agency. Reporters would have been presumed to have acted in good faith and be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative penalties. Animal control officers would have had to report suspect child abuse to the central child abuse hotline. Failure to cross-report would have been a second-degree misdemeanor for child protective workers and a third-degree felony for animal control officers. The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Florida Animal Control Association, would have had to develop a one-hour training curriculum for all child protective investigators and animal control officers on the identification of and accurate and timely cross-reporting of abuse. *The bill was approved by the Senate 38-0 but died in the House.*



**Florida HB 621/SB 1044** (“Allie’s Law”) would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to a dog or cat with immunity from civil and criminal liability; prohibit the alteration or destruction of certain records; and specify that failure to report is grounds for disciplinary action. *The bills died the House Business & Professions Subcommittee and the Senate Rules Committee.*





**Hawai'i SB 2985/HB 2528, HB 2130 and HB 2453** would require veterinarians who have reasonable cause to suspect that an animal has been killed or injured through participation in a staged animal fight or has been a victim of animal abuse or cruelty to promptly report the case to an appropriate law enforcement authority, with immunity from civil liability. **SB 2985** passed the Senate and the House Agriculture Committee and was sent to the House Judiciary Committee. **HB 2528** was approved by the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees and was sent to the Finance Committee; **HB 2130** and **HB 2453** were referred to the Agriculture, Judiciary and Finance Committees. The bills were in committee when the Legislature recessed indefinitely due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**Iowa SF 2029 and HF 2374** would grant veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil and criminal liability for assisting in the investigation or prosecution of animal abuse, neglect, torture, fighting, or bestiality. **HF 2374** passed the House 97-0. **SF 3** would require veterinarians who conclude that an animal is being subjected to cruelty to report the incident to the local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability and administrative disciplinary action for reporting in good faith; the law enforcement agency would have to report to the Department of Human Services if the investigation of suspected animal abuse indicated a minor child witnessed the incident. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee. *SF 3 also affects psychological evaluation of offenders.*



**Kentucky SB 21**, which would have required veterinarians to report suspected abuse and provide immunity for a good-faith report, was amended to merely permit veterinarians to report and to delete the provision granting immunity from liability. The amended bill passed the Senate 35-0 and was sent to the House, where it was approved 78-7, and **was signed into law on April 24.**



**Kentucky HB 60** would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to an animal control officer. **HB 108** would have provided civil and criminal immunity to veterinarians who, in good faith, report suspected animal abuse to animal control or peace officers, provide records relating to such reports, and testify in any judicial proceedings relating from such reports. *The bills were in committees when the General Assembly adjourned.*



**Michigan SB 352** would require Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with confidentiality and 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 passed the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee and is in the full Senate.



**Michigan SB 429** would permit veterinarians to report suspected abuse or neglect of a companion animal to an animal control shelter or law enforcement agency. The bill is in the was approved by the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety and is in the full Senate.



**Michigan SB 780** would require animal control officers to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The bill is in the Committee on Families, Seniors & Veterans.



**Minnesota HF 1530 and SF 1517** would grant veterinarians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting suspected animal cruelty in good faith and in the normal course of business. **HF 1530** is in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division; **SF 1517** is in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee.



**Missouri HB 1320** would grant immunity from civil liability to veterinarians, teachers, school personnel, and others who report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement agencies. *The bill also addresses psychological evaluation and treatment.* The measure is in the Judiciary Committee.



**New York A 1170** and **S 7815** 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 bills are in their respective Committees on Higher Education.



**Ohio HB 33** would require veterinarians, social services professionals, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected abuse of companion animals. Dog wardens and deputy dog wardens would be required to report violations concerning companion animals to appropriate social services professionals in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator and where the animal abuse has an impact on the child or older adult. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The measure is in the House Criminal Justice 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.



**Iowa SF 3** and **SF 369** would permit courts to order psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment for adult when convicted of any of a variety of animal maltreatment offenses. Such evaluation and treatment would be mandatory of the offender is a juvenile or if the offense is an aggravated felony or misdemeanor. The bills are in the Senate Judiciary Committee. *SF 3 also addresses Cross-Reporting.*



**Missouri HB 1320** would allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment upon animal cruelty offenders as a condition of probation; evaluation or treatment would be mandatory upon second or subsequent offenses or if the crime involved animal torture or mutilation. *The bill also addresses cross-reporting.* The measure is in the Judiciary Committee.



**New Hampshire HB 1449** would allow courts to order an animal hoarder to undergo a psychological or psychiatric evaluation and to undergo appropriate treatment. If the person were found to be not competent to stand trial, the court may order custody of the seized animals to be given to another person, shelter or rescue organization. The bill was approved by the Environment & Agriculture Committee and was sent to the full House.



**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.

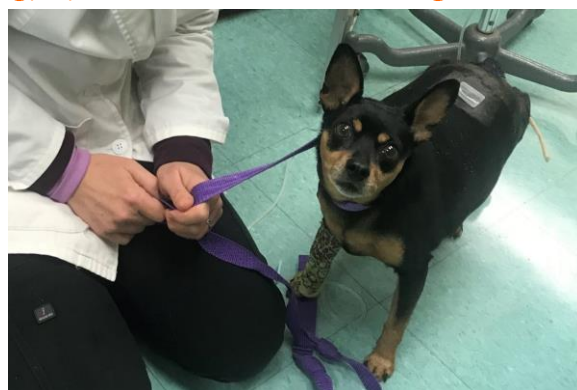


**New York A 987** and **S 2007** would prohibit a person convicted of “Buster’s Law” from having a companion animal unless authorized by court order after they complete appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing. **A 987** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **S 2007** is in the Senate Domestic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

## ***THE LINK... IN THE NEWS***

### **Nova Scotia Mass Shootings Rooted in Misogyny, Also Wound Two Dogs**

The gunman who went on a shooting rampage across Nova Scotia that left 22 people dead also shot and wounded two family pets belonging to the human victims. [The CBC](#) reported that “Zoey,” a 9-year-old miniature pinscher, had suffered a gunshot wound to her hind end. Truro veterinarian Dr. Jennifer McKay got a call from the RCMP asking for help in treating a dog who belonged to three boys who had just lost their parents; in treating Zoey, McKay realized that she had belonged to her friend, Jamie Blair, who died along with her husband Greg. McKay and the Blairs would sit together at the rink and watch their sons play ice hockey.



**“Zoey” was expected to make a full recovery**

Zoey was in shock and suffered extensive damage but was reportedly recovering. Realizing the victims were friends “just brought so much more to the whole entire situation for all of us,” McKay said. “It’s pretty tough. But then you have to put yourself in a place where you know that you can do this one good thing for this family.”

Meanwhile, two dogs belonging to victim Gina Goulet, of Shubenacadie, also survived. “Ginger,” a German shepherd, was shot in her face and back but the RCMP took her to a veterinary clinic in Dartmouth where she was expected to make a full recovery. A second dog belonging to Goulet, a 10-year-old Chihuahua named “Ellie,” was unharmed in the massacre.

The director of a Halifax women’s shelter told [news media](#) that the rampage was rooted in a pattern of misogyny. The RCMP reported that the gunman had assaulted his girlfriend shortly before he went on his shooting spree; the woman escaped into the woods and alerted authorities that he was going to be disguised in a police officer’s uniform. “The hatred of women has been linked to our nation’s most horrific mass murders,” said Sheri Lecker, Executive Director of Adsum, citing other Canadian massacres such as the 1989 killing of 14 women at a Montreal school and the murder of 10 women and two men in Toronto in 2018. “Domestic or intimate partner violence typically precedes mass tragedy, and further investigation of these perpetrators often reveals long histories of misogynistic behaviors and attitudes.”



## Sanctuary Rescuing Big Cats from Murder-for-Hire Plot Facing COVID-19 Financial Shortfalls

In our [February 2020 LINK-Letter](#), we reported on the conviction of Joseph Maldonado-Passage, the so-called “Joe Exotic” who is now serving a 22-year term in federal prison for wildlife violations, killing five tigers and a bizarre murder-for-hire scheme to kill an animal rights activist. The [Washington Post](#) is now reporting that 39 of the big cats seized from his exotic animal park in Oklahoma are now facing a new danger as their new home in a Colorado wild animal sanctuary struggles with the financial fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Income from visitors and donations of money and \$700,000 worth of meat, fruit and vegetables from stores, which the [Wild Animal Sanctuary](#) relies upon each month to feed its 550 animals, have dropped by 85% as a result of panic buying, soaring unemployment and stay-at-home orders. The animals consume as much as a small city – some 80,000 pounds of food each week.

## LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**NOTE:** In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic restrictions, many of these scheduled meetings may have been canceled, rescheduled or converted into virtual formats. Click on the underlined hyperlinks to go to the conference information pages for more detailed information.

**May 20 (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct two webinars on the Impact of Animal Abuse in Domestic Violence in Civilian and Military Families for the [National Organization for Victim Assistance](#).

**May 20 (online):** Carolyn Carter and Olivia Justason of the New Brunswick SPCA will lead a webinar on “Helping Pets & Their People: The Future of Animal Protection,” about how animal protection agencies are increasingly reaching out to human services partners to ensure the well-being of all family members, at the [Humane Canada National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

**May 21 (online):** Andrew Campbell will discuss the impact on child development and toxic stress of witnessing threats or violence against animals in a webinar on “More than Words: The Emotional Maltreatment of Children” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**May 21 – Philadelphia, Pa.:** Phil Arkow will conduct a virtual training on “Connecting the Dots in Criminal Justice: Preventing Crimes Against People by Focusing on Animal Abuse,” for the [Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Animal Law Committee](#).

**June 3 – Providence, R.I.:** Shelley Prebenda of the Animal Law Committee will present a webinar on “The Correlation between Animal Abuse and Human/Child Abuse” for the [Rhode Island Bar Association](#).

**June 16 (online):** Phil Arkow will present a webinar on “Improving Public Safety by Stopping Animal Cruelty: The Link” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**June 16 (online):** Allie Phillips will present on “The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Child Abuse: Investigation and Prosecution Strategies” at the [Wyoming Joint Symposium on Children and Youth](#).

**July 9 (online):** Martha Smith-Blackmore and Jessica Rock will present a [webinar](#) on “Processing Evidence in Animal Crime Cases” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

**July 16 (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “The Link and Healthy Relationships” for [TeamMates](#)’ school-based mentoring program.

**July 30 (online):** Jake Kamins, Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney for Oregon, will present a [webinar](#) on “Working and Managing Inter-Agency Relationships: Investigating and Prosecuting Animal Abuse Cases” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

**August 28 (rescheduled from March 13) – Columbus, Ohio:** Vicki Deisner and Janey Hoy will speak about The Link at the [Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services](#)’ 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

**Sept. 3 (online):** Katie Campbell will present a webinar on “Supporting Domestic Violence Survivors and their Pets through Collaboration” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**Sept. 9 (online):** Allie Phillips will present a webinar on “Animal Abuse + Family Violence: Investigation & Prosecution Strategies to Keep Families Safe” for the [Conference on Crimes Against Women](#).

**Sept. 15 (online):** Andrew Campbell will discuss extending domestic violence family services to include pets, gaps in domestic violence research and literature, and improving access to children in homes where domestic violence is present, in a webinar on “Domestic Violence: The Forgotten Frontier” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**Sept. 25-26 – Alpharetta, Ga.:** Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual [Animal Protection Conference and Expo](#).

**Oct. 8-10 – Knoxville, Tenn.:** The [6<sup>th</sup> International Veterinary Social Work Summit](#) will focus on Animals and Poverty: How Poverty Impacts the Human-Animal Relationship.

**Oct. 13 – Tifton, Ga.:** The Animal Protection Society/Animal Law Source will present a [day-long training](#) for law enforcement officers about animal cruelty, animal fighting, dangerous dogs, and The Link.

**Oct. 16 – Quincy, Ill.:** Phil Arkow will headline the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council’s Domestic Violence Summit at the [Quincy Humane Society](#).

**Oct. 16 (rescheduled from April 3) – Cleveland, Ohio:** Six speakers will address “Animal Abuse and Family Violence: Understanding The Link and Local Resources” for social workers at the [Greater Cleveland Elder Abuse/Domestic Violence Roundtable](#).

**Nov. 6 – Toledo, Ohio:** Vicki Deisner, Janet Hoy-Gerlach, and Steven Heaven will present on The Link and how to form local collaboratives at the [Toledo Community Partnership Against Child Abuse](#).

**Feb. 11-12, 2021 – Columbus, Ohio:** Phil Arkow will present on “Responding to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” at the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).





## 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

Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,  
The Latham Foundation  
Etowah, N. Car.

#### Lesley Ashworth

Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,  
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division  
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

#### Diane Balkin, J.D.

Past President, Int'l. Veterinary Forensic Sciences Assn.  
Denver, Colo.

#### Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Univ. of Cincinnati College of Medicine  
Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital  
Cincinnati, Ohio

#### Steve Dale

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author  
Chicago, Ill.

#### Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Research,  
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research  
Woodstock, Ga.

#### Helen Holmquist-Johnson, MSW, Ph.D.

Director, Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC)  
Colorado State University School of Social Work  
Ft. Collins, Colo.

#### Kendall Houlihan

Assistant Director for Animal Welfare, AVMA  
Schaumburg, Ill.

#### Jane A. Hunt

Community Volunteer  
Loveland, Colo.

#### Mark Kumpf, CAWA

Director, Detroit Animal Care & Control  
Detroit, Mich.

#### Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Consultant, ASPCA  
Falls Church, Va.

#### Paul Needham

Chair, Education Committee,  
National Adult Protective Services Association  
Shawnee, Okla.

#### Maria Luisa O'Neill

Account Representative,  
Internal Revenue Service  
Denver, Col

#### Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.

Director, Research  
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research  
Chicago, Ill.

#### Allie Phillips, J.D.

Director, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)  
Lansing, Mich.

#### Gale Rasin, J.D.

Retired Associate Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court,  
Chestertown, Md.

#### Chelsea Rider, J.D.

Director,  
National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse  
Dallas, Texas

#### Chris Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor *Emerita*,  
Arizona State University School of Social Work  
Gaston, S. Car.

#### Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

President, Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC  
Boston, Mass.

#### Hugh Tebault III

President, The Latham Foundation  
Alameda, Calif.

#### John Thompson

Executive Director, National Animal Care & Control Assn.  
Alexandria, Va.

#### Kathleen Wood

Staff Attorney, Criminal Justice Program  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Portland, Ore.