



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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**OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS MONTH**

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New Australian Group Addressing Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Links

A new organization has been formed in New South Wales, Australia, to recognize and raise awareness of the animal victims of domestic violence. [Lucy's Project](#) was formed in June, 2013, by Anna Ludvik whose child, Lucy, had died in utero. Refusing to have let her child die in vain and seeking something to give her strength to confront the tragedy, she organized Lucy's Project to protect animals while offering hope for the children and adult victims of domestic violence.



Working with psychologists, lawyers, community interest groups, domestic violence services, and the wider community, Lucy's Project aims to raise awareness of animals in violent homes. The group hopes to fund studies to provide Australian data regarding the domestic violence/animal abuse Link; support shelters and services that offer assistance to animal victims; support early intervention programs and research; and create a network of Australian organizations and individuals working in this area. The Lucy's Project website includes a collection of Australian media and journal articles

Current projects include conducting a baseline study of animal abuse incidents in the Northern Rivers area; and bringing the Northern Rivers human services and animal welfare sectors together to develop cross-sector working relationships and pathways and protocols for referrals. An Animals and Domestic Violence Perspectives conference on Nov. 6-8 in Byron Bay will bring together nine Australian Link experts.

Pennsylvania Newspaper Calls for Domestic Violence Pet Protections

A Pennsylvania newspaper has lent its support to two state legislators who are promoting a bill aimed at preventing animal abuse in domestic violence situations. Sens. Andy Dinniman, a Democrat, and Rich Alloway, a Republican, plus eight others, introduced [SB 594](#). The measure would allow prosecutors to file a first-degree misdemeanor charge if a suspect kills, maims, disfigures, tortures or poisons any dog, cat or service animal being cared for by a person who directly benefits from a protection-from-abuse order. SB 594 is in the House Judiciary Committee.



State Sens. Andy Dinniman & Rich Alloway

“This is such an obvious and heart-wrenching issue, we almost cannot believe that no state lawmakers have successfully made this happen,” the West Chester *Daily Local News* wrote in a [May 13 editorial](#), chiding the Keystone State for not having enacted provisions that have already passed in 28 other states. “It’s not much of a stretch to say that a victim of domestic violence can be made to suffer greatly, if not physically, when something bad happens to his or her beloved pet. Anything that stands a chance of making an abuser think twice before going after Fluffy is worthy of consideration.”

The editorial also encouraged state lawmakers to consider enacting provisions that would provide special, limited assistance to local animal shelters to provide temporary care for pets of domestic violence survivors to make it easier for all “to escape a poisonous household.”

Mobile Pet-Friendly Shelter Houses Families in Hotels

Of the more than 103 [SAF-T™ \(Sheltering Animals and Families Together\)](#) domestic violence shelters in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Australia that are pet-friendly, only one is believed to be portable. [The Hunker Down INNitiative](#), based in Coral Springs, Fla., does not operate a shelter but rather provides emergency hotel stays for survivors of domestic violence, their children and pets. The program currently offers stays of up to 48 hours (with plans to expand that to one week) while participants choose more long-term assistance with a physical shelter or non-abusive family.



The INNitiative was founded to help participants feel safe and secure as they decide how to plan their exit strategy. The team provides cab fare, food, hotel fees, education, and step-by-step leadership and literature to help women, children and pets begin their leap toward freedom. Such support makes it possible for survivors to check into a hotel without using a credit card whose location can be tracked or which could be suspended by the abuser.

URIPALS URIPALS Program Featured in Video

URIPALS People and Animals Living Safely New York City’s new pet-friendly domestic violence shelter and dog park, URIPALS (Urban Resource Institute People and Animals Living Safely) (see [LINK-Letter April 2014](#)) has been featured in a [brief video produced by Purina](#). The pet food company is donating welcome kits and educational materials for families and working to raise awareness about the impact of abuse and reduce barriers to escape and recovery. Other sponsors of the URIPALS program include the ASPCA.

Therapy Animals Aid Abused Women on Virginia Tech Campus



Dr. Delaware and Dr. Ellie

home-like environment of the campus [Women's Center](#) where counseling, support, crisis intervention, and advocacy services are offered.

Growing awareness of sexual assault as a problem on college campuses has prompted numerous responses. An unusual four-legged response is in place on the campus of Virginia Tech University, where the Helping PAWS animal-assisted therapy program is serving students, faculty and staff who are affected by gender-based sexual violence. Two therapy dogs named "Dr. Delaware" and "Dr. Ellie" serve as greeters in the

"A woman who is experiencing trauma may be reluctant to talk to an investigator or police officer. Having a therapy dog present makes it easier for them to open up and be interviewed," Christine Dennis Smith, Director of the Women's Center's Counseling and Advocacy Program, told the [Human-Animal Bond Symposium](#) held Sept. 26 at the college's CENTAUR (Center for Animal Human Relationships).

The investigators like it as well when the animals are present, because they help calm the students down and make it easier to complete a thorough investigation, she said.

"Dr. Delaware" is an eight-year-old female black lab who retired in 2011 from her service duties as a guide dog for the seeing-impaired. "Dr. Ellie" is a four-year-old miniature Australian shepherd. Both are certified through Virginia Tech's Helping PAWS (Pet Assisted Wellness Service) at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

Pet Silhouettes Added to Silent Witness Memorial Project



Mary Pettrow, Providence House Assistant Director, displays the pet silhouette at the Silent Witness Project Memorial.

Burlington County, N.J. honored Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Oct. 2 with its 9th annual Silent Witness Project Memorial, a tribute to the human and pet fatalities that often ensue from intimate partner violence. The project, organized by [Providence House](#) Domestic Violence Services of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Trenton, uses life-size silhouette cutouts to represent those killed through domestic violence. This year a silhouette of a cat and dog were added for awareness purposes to represent the risk to animals and the impact on other family members.

Seven Burlington County residents lost their lives to domestic violence in 2014; so far this year, there have been four deaths. The pet silhouette featured a shield with information from the National Link Coalition.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Scottish Veterinarians Enlisted to Stop Domestic Violence

The government of Scotland is putting £1,071,000 (approximately \$1,664,000) into a campaign to enlist 100,000 professionals on the front line of defense against domestic violence. The campaign will train veterinarians as well as hairdressers and dentists to recognize and respond to suspected intimate partner violence.



Announcing the funding at a veterinary clinic in Glasgow on Sept. 15, Justice Secretary Michael Matheson said, “Domestic violence is a scourge on Scottish society and this government is determined to do all it can to eradicate it.” Domestic violence is estimated to have cost Scotland £2.3 billion in 2013, and several distressing incidents of animal cruelty linked to the problem have been reported.

The campaign is being set up by Medics Against Violence ([see LINK-Letter May 2012](#)), the Violence Reduction Unit, and the Ask, Validate Document and Refer (AVDR) program. It has already trained 2,000 beauticians, firefighters and other non-emergency workers who are often the first to spot the signs of domestic violence. The training also teaches them how to help victims access support, the [National News](#) reported.

Studies by University College Dublin on women using refuge services in Ireland found 57% had witnessed abuse or threats of abuse against their pets, with some incidents ending in the death of the animals. Another study in the U.K. showed 66% of women suffering domestic violence had threats of violence or abuse of their pets from their abuser. Anecdotal reports in the U.K. include animals stabbed, hanged, kicked, frozen, burned and microwaved to death.

The AVDR project was developed by oral surgery consultant Dr. Christine Goodall, founder of Medics Against Violence, after years of studying the link between facial and dental injuries and violence. The work has now expanded to include veterinarians after researchers established a clear link between animal cruelty and domestic abuse.

“Our wish is that supporting victims of domestic abuse becomes an expectation and that victims know if they approach a doctor, dentist, nurse, social worker, vet, fire officer or hairdresser for help they will get it,” said Goodall.

Dr. Marsha Scott, chief executive of Scottish Women’s Aid, welcomed the roll-out. “We welcome anything that spreads accountability and that improves the likelihood that women and children will be encouraged to disclose domestic abuse, and helps ensure that they get the help they need when they need it.”

The AVDR training is “about knowing how to safely intervene without putting either the client or yourself at risk, because we all have a duty to help if we suspect someone is being abused,” said veterinarian Karen Campbell.

“Three-Dimensional” New Zealand Veterinarians Respond to Domestic Violence

The New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA) has written a [submission](#) to the Ministry of Justice in response to the Ministry’s call for comments to its discussion document, *Strengthening New Zealand’s Legislative Response to Family Violence*. The NZVA submission is based on the veterinary profession’s expertise on the close relationships among animals, humans and the environment and its consultation on family violence due to the correlation between animal abuse and human violence.



The submission notes NZVA’s long support of legislation which would amend the legal definition of domestic violence to include “coercive control,” which would cover emotional and psychological abuse to family members through threats to harm pets or farm animals. (Seven U.S. states currently have similar provisions.)

NZVA has also called for protection orders to explicitly include animals to protect them from abuse, similar to 28 U.S. states’ pet protection orders. However, NZVA does not support animals being subject to “no contact” orders, as there may still be a need to have access to the animals, such as to milk a herd of cows, in which case preventing access might lead to animal welfare issues. NZVA is collaborating with the National Council of Women’s Refuges, Rural Women New Zealand and the RNZSPCA on this issue.

With over 2,000 members, NZVA describes veterinary medicine as a “three-dimensional profession” – the only profession with a voice in issues that transcend animal life, human life and the environment. “Human health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of animals and the environment we all share are inextricably linked and interdependent. This impacts many issues, including that of family violence, where there is a strong correlation between animal abuse and family violence,” NZVA wrote in its submission.

“Increasingly we believe that the profession should, and must, speak more broadly to issues that lie at this intersection and where our expertise as a profession can provide leadership and add value to conversations,” Callum Irvine, head of NZVA Veterinary Services, tells *The LINK-Letter*.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Illinois Law Stiffens Penalties for Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child

Illinois has joined the community of states with increased penalties for acts of animal cruelty perpetrated in the presence of a child. [HB 3231](#) was signed into law on Aug. 13 and takes effect on Jan. 1, 2016. The measure, Public Act 099-0367, provides for additional penalties when animal cruelty is committed in front of a child. The law is similar to existing Illinois law providing for increased penalties for domestic violence in the presence of a child: both provisions recognize that such trauma can have long-term negative psychological and health consequences for children, and lead them to becoming abusers themselves.

THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Link Training Advances in Michigan

Law enforcement officials in Michigan are getting training in The Link, thanks to a class on the animal cruelty/human violence connection that has been approved through the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards. [Matt Pepper](#), President and CEO of the Michigan Humane Society, tells *The LINK-Letter* that the first session was held recently at the Macomb County Community College Police Academy. A second class will be held at the Oakland County Community College Police Academy.



Matt Pepper

Woman is First Convicted for Animal Pornography under “Crush Video” Law

A 24-year-old woman from Houston was convicted on Sept. 8 on five counts of creating and distributing pornographic animal movies called “crush videos” that involved the torture and killing of puppies, chickens and kittens. The case is the first to be successfully prosecuted under the federal Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act since it was amended in 2010.



Kenneth Magidson, U.S. [Attorney for the Southern District of Texas](#), announced that Ashley Nicole Richards pled guilty after the U.S. Supreme Court denied her appeal. She had been arrested on state charges and a federal [U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson](#) indictment in 2012, but the charges were later dismissed on constitutionality grounds. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned the lower court’s ruling and the U.S. Supreme Court remanded the case back to District Court for prosecution.

The videos were determined to be obscene in nature and representative of a cruel and illegal genre of pornography in which women mutilate small animals for the sexual gratification of viewers. Federal law prohibits depicting images in which animals are crushed, burned, drowned, suffocated or seriously injured in an obscene manner.

The videos included a scantily-clad Richards wearing a Mardi Gras-type mask torturing animals and engaging in sexually-charged dialogue intended to arouse viewers.

Sentencing is set for Dec. 10, at which time she faces up to seven years in federal prison on each count plus a possible \$250,000 fine. She also pled guilty to three state charges and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Also arrested in the case on state and federal charges was Brent Justice who remains in jail.

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Canadian Bestiality Law to be Tested

Canadian Link officials are carefully watching a case scheduled to be heard on Nov. 9 by the Supreme Court of Canada to consider whether penetration is a necessary element to prove a case of bestiality.



[Case No. 36450](#), HM the Queen v. D.L.W., will review whether the offense of bestiality under s. 160(1) of the Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46, is a general intent offense which encompasses sexual activity of any kind between a person and an animal or whether penetration must be an essential element of the offense.

The respondent was convicted of several offenses in British Columbia, including bestiality. He appealed, arguing that because no penetration occurred he should have been acquitted. The Crown argued that the meaning of bestiality is unambiguous and refers to any sexual activity between persons and animals. A majority of the Court of Appeal allowed the appeal and acquitted the respondent of the charge.

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Forensic Mental Health Issues and Evaluations in Animal Cruelty

Many states have statutory provisions mandating or allowing courts to order forensic mental health assessments of individuals convicted of animal maltreatment offenses. This book is the newest resource for mental health, legal, veterinary, forensic, advocacy, and humane law enforcement professionals. It provides an overview of the legal and social contexts of animal abuse and research-based and clinical knowledge with a special focus on forensic mental health assessments in such cases. The book describes characteristics of animal abusers, factors associated with animal maltreatment behaviors, the impact on the animals themselves, and evaluations of offenders to assist courts in decisions.

-- Levitt, L., Patronek, G., & Grisso, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Animal Maltreatment: Forensic Mental Health Issues and Evaluations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

California Health Report Spotlights The Link

The National Link Coalition was featured prominently in an [extensive article](#) published on Sept. 27 in the *California Health Report*. Writer Lily Dayton's article, "A perilous link: pet abuse and domestic violence," included a lengthy interview with Phil Arkow, as well as interviews with RedRover's Danielle Gates, a Santa Cruz veterinarian who has handled Link cases, and staff and residents at Lake County's pet-friendly Freedom House domestic violence shelter.

"Having the presence of animals at our shelter makes it seem more warm and like normal life," said Sheri Young, domestic violence and rape crisis center program manager at the Lake County shelter which

previously had to turn 10 people away in six months because they had no place to put their pets. "There is also a natural therapeutic process to petting your dog or having your cat curl up on your lap."

CaliforniaHealth
REPORT

The *California Health Report* is an independent, nonprofit journalism project covering health and health policy throughout the state. The publication specializes in in-depth stories about health care, health disparities, children's health, and justice and violence.



Bringing The Link to Indian Country

Individuals and organizations trying to raise awareness of The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence frequently hit roadblocks when approaching Native American communities. High rates of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse and other social issues, ongoing jurisdictional complexities, combined with mostly rural environments and limited law enforcement capabilities, tend to make animal welfare and animal control minor priorities in Indian Country. Meanwhile, Link advocates rarely have personal contacts with tribal leaders to gain entrance to their constituencies.

The [Native America Humane Society](#), formed in 2014, is actively working to change this. President and CEO [Diana Webster](#) tells *The LINK-Letter* that the organization is trying to raise awareness of The Link and is conducting a survey about the status of animals within each tribal community.

The survey is being conducted by Sarah Deer, professor of law at William Mitchell College in St. Paul, Minn., and a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and her research assistant, Elizabeth Murphy, a member of the Choctaw Nation. The survey is being supported by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center and the Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence. Survey results will provide resources on The Link for tribal communities to use.

Some 102 of America's 567 federally-recognized tribes have already reported data, Murphy told the New Mexico Conference on The Link. She noted that Native Americans are not monolithic, but each tribe has a unique culture. Though perceptions of animals vary, Native Americans are spiritually connected to the land and the animals that become vehicles for stories and powerful oral traditions. "Animals are what teach us our morals," she said.

More than one-third of native women will be raped over their lifetime. Native women are two to three times more likely to be stalked.

Meanwhile, over 80% of offenders are non-Native, Murphy reported. This interracial and gender violence occurs in tribal communities that are economically depressed, highly polluted, and marked by high rates of animal abuse, gang and organized crime activity.



Liz Murphy

"When family pets are targeted as part of family violence or when community animals are abused, this can de-stabilize homes in tribal communities, lead to children perpetrating violence, and continue the cycle of violence," says Webster, a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. "In view of the unique relationships that many tribes have with animals, the commonly accepted practice of free-roaming pets, and the public safety gap that often allows offenders to escape punishment for serious crimes in Indian Country, this publication will offer recommendations consistent with tribal ways and culture to recognize, prevent and report animal abuse. Recognition and prevention is the beginning to safer tribal families and communities."

Individuals interested in taking the survey are encouraged to click on this link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NAHS-DV-ANIMALS>

NEWS from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

New Mexico Link Coalition Celebrates 11th Conference

A record turnout of over 200 participants attended the New Mexico Forming Positive Links Committee's [11th conference](#) on Sept. 14 in Albuquerque. A world-class roster of 17 national and statewide presenters – including Phil Arkow and Chris Risley-Curtiss from the National Link Coalition – offered 15 workshops and plenaries addressing the Link between animal abuse and human violence.

Conference organizer Tammy Fiebelkorn reviewed some of the many accomplishments the group has achieved. The State of New Mexico has set aside funds for the Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) to provide short-term housing for companion animals in domestic violence situations. Over the past year, 129 animals have received assistance through the collaboration between the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Animal Protection of New Mexico.



Tammy Fiebelkorn displays the Link Awareness Month Proclamations

State legislation recognizes The Link in New Mexico and declared Feb. 10 to be Link Awareness Day. The City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County each declared September 2015 to be Link Awareness Month.

Campaigns in progress include finishing a full-length documentary on The Link, and establishing an Animal Court in Albuquerque that would include therapy as a sentencing requirement for all animal cruelty convictions.

Tamara Ward, who pioneered the Project Second Chance animal-therapy rehabilitation program for juvenile offenders, was honored with an MVP Award for her lifelong contributions to the field.



Tamara Ward

Link Training Returns to Waterloo Coalition

The [HAV \(Human-Animal Vulnerability\) Coalition of Waterloo Region](#) sponsored an all-day training on Sept. 24. Maya Gupta, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Animals and Society Institute and a member of the National Link Coalition's Steering Committee, conducted a workshop on "Examining the Cruelty Link Between Humans and Animals and Finding Solutions for Effective Interventions." This is the HAV Coalition's second Link conference.



Founded in 2012, the HAV Coalition is a community coordinating committee that facilitates and advocates seamless and effective approaches to respond to human and animal vulnerability and violence. Members include: Victim Services of Waterloo Region; the Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society; the Waterloo Regional Police Service; Region of Waterloo Social Services; Women's Crisis Services; Supportive Housing of Waterloo; Wilfrid Laurier University; Family & Children's Services of the Waterloo Region; and Community Veterinary Outreach.

San Bernardino Offers Tips to Organize a Coalition



The [Animal Cruelty Task Force](#) of San Bernardino County, Calif. – the nation’s largest county geographically – has been taking a multi-disciplinary stand against animal abuse since the Fall of 2011, when the District Attorney’s office decided to put together a group to look into animal cruelty cases. Today, over 300 members from five Southern California counties, representing 40 different agencies, participate in monthly meetings, an annual conference, and community outreach.

Claudia Swing, Debbie Ploghaus, and Dr. Amy Raines described the Task Force’s successes and hurdles that were overcome “It’s all about education and cooperation. The reason we’re so successful is because of cooperation. It works when people want to help the animals,” animal cruelty prosecutor Debbie Ploghaus told the New Mexico Conference on The Link.

The Link training at the annual conference – scheduled for Nov. 2-4 in Ontario – has been approved for POST credit. The WeTip campaign distributed 500 posters offering \$1,000 rewards for anonymous tips to an 800-number: this has resulted in an 80% increase in animal cruelty reports. The Task Force has also created a Model Protocol for Interagency Investigations of Animal Abuse and Neglect Cases.

Obituary: Colorado Link Pioneer Kay Dahlinger

The Link community was saddened to learn of the [death](#) of Kay Dahlinger, a pioneer in Colorado Link activities, who passed away on Sept. 9 at the age of 73 after a long bout with cancer.

A native of Denver and a graduate of the University of Denver, Kay was an Arapahoe County Juvenile Probation Officer from 1964-1970, Code of Colorado, which is still in work for Aurora’s public schools, impairments and disabilities. In system as a probation officer for many years until her retirement.



where she co-wrote the Juvenile place today. In 1972 she went to working with children with speech 1985 she returned to the judicial Aurora, where she remained for

Over the years, she served as Arapahoe County Legal Services historian for the state chapter, and She founded the Municipal and the Aurora Link, which eventually grew into statewide Link collaborations still active today. She showed and bred Norwegian lundehund dogs.

President and historian of the Association as parliamentarian and as chair of the national organization. Association of Probation Officers

She is survived by two children, Dr. Heather Dahlinger Potter and Sean Garrett Dahlinger; two grandchildren, Garrett and Carson Potter; and her dog, Elle. Memorial donations may be sent to the American Cancer Society or the American Kennel Club of Colorado.

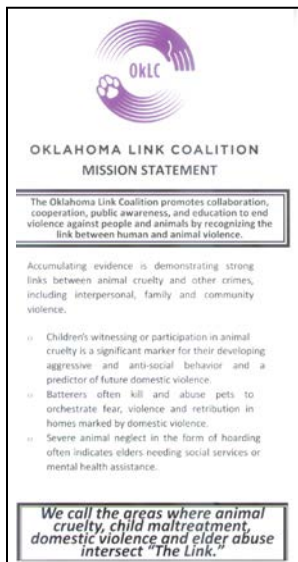
Fort Wayne Conference Aims to Build Sustainable Infrastructure for Communication



Belinda Lewis (left), Director of Fort Wayne, Ind. Animal Care & Control, greets some of the 88 participants who attended a National Link Coalition training on Sept. 22. The goal of the program was to build a sustainable infrastructure for ongoing, advanced collaboration and communications among the many community agencies represented. Participants came from such diverse governmental and nonprofit groups as the prosecutor's office, child abuse prevention, animal care & control, SPCA, human and veterinary medicine, Adult Protection

Services, domestic violence, the Board of Animal Health, Lutheran Social Services, code enforcement, and the health department.

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow facilitated an interactive discussion asking participants what they can do to increase inter-agency communications, what changes they would like to see in Fort Wayne and Allen County, and how they can change policies to achieve those goals. APS investigators have already begun using information they gleaned from the training, and Animal Care & Control has begun circulating a list of community resources and services available for victims of violence. "Understanding and group collaboration is what brings it all together," said Lewis, noting that preventing animal abuse can stop "murderers in the making." Said Prosecuting Attorney Karen Richards: "I really do think we're making a difference in this county. There's still work to do and a lot of alliances to still build, but we're on the right track."



Oklahoma Link Coalition Creates Brochure

The Oklahoma Link Coalition modified the National Link Coalition's [three-panel educational brochure](#) – which describes key findings linking animal abuse with child maltreatment, domestic violence and elder abuse – and used it as a template to create their own brochure. The Oklahoma brochure includes the national statistics and adds local information about their coalition.

The mission of the Oklahoma Link Coalition is to promote collaboration, cooperation, public awareness, and education to end violence against people and animals by recognizing the link between human and animal violence.

Other local Link coalitions are free to use any of our materials to help advance awareness and community collaboration. Just let us know first how you plan to use our resources and how we can assist you!

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching... and Celebrating:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and 140 bi-partisan co-sponsors. The bill would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter. The bill has been assigned to the Judiciary and Agriculture Committees. A companion measure in the Senate – **S. 1559** – has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Alaska HB 147 would allow victims to petition the court for a protective order that the abuser may not remove, harm or dispose of any animals in the household, and to grant her exclusive care and custody of them. Peace officers investigating domestic violence cases must inform victims of this provision. The bill would also declare pets to be marital property and give courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. The bill was held over in the House Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned and will be revisited in January 2016.



California AB 494 was signed into law on Oct. 1. It amends Sec. 527.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure and Secs. 213.5 and 15657.03 of the Welfare and Institutions Code to allow courts to issue restraining orders of protective orders to enjoin a person from harming, threatening or disposing of an animal and to grant a petitioner’s request for the exclusive care, possession or control of an animal. Similar provisions currently exist in Sec. 6320 of the California Family Code.



Michigan SB 28 would make it a crime to knowingly kill, torture, mutilate, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal, or threaten to do so, with the intent of causing mental suffering or distress to a person or to exert control over a person. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole.



Michigan HB 4478 would allow courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders preventing respondents from injuring, torturing, neglecting, threatening, or removing the petitioner’s animals. It would apply to current or former spouses; individuals with whom the petitioner has a child in common or where there has been a dating relationship; or an individual presently or formerly residing in the same household. The bill had been scheduled for a vote by the full House during the week of Sept. 21.



New Jersey A 494 would provide specific statutory authority to allow courts to include animals in domestic violence restraining orders. The bill affects animals belonging to either party or a minor child in the household. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.





New Mexico S 178 was approved. It will appropriate \$50,000 per year over six years) to provide temporary safe havens for the animals of domestic violence survivors.



Oregon HB 3468 was signed into law on July 21 and will take effect next Jan. 1. The new law makes it a Felony C crime of coercion to compel or induce another person to engage in certain


conduct by instilling in that person the fear of physical injury being done to an animal.


 **Pennsylvania SB 594** would increase penalties for killing, torturing, maiming or poisoning an animal belonging to someone who is protected by a protection-from-abuse order to a \$2,000 - \$15,000 fine and/or two years' imprisonment. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Wisconsin** companion bills **AB 141** and **SB 97** would add household pets under the provisions of temporary restraining orders or longer-lasting injunctions that can be issued by courts to protect victims of abuse, harassment or threats. The bills would also allow the petitioner or a designee to retrieve household pets. **SB 97** passed the Senate on May 6. **AB 141** was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee on Aug. 20 and was sent to the Rules Committee on Sept. 10.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims





 **Connecticut HB6725** will cause the Dept. of Children & Families to develop and implement training for employees and mental health care providers on animal-assisted therapy and develop a protocol to use such programs to aid children and youth living with trauma and loss. **The bill passed the House and Senate and signed by Gov. Dannel Malloy on July 6.**


 **New Jersey A2155** would establish a three-year pilot program within DCF to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence, trauma, or children with behavioral healthcare needs. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.


Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child




 **Illinois HB 3231 was signed into law on Aug. 13** and takes effect on Jan. 1, 2016. The measure, Public Act 099-0367, provides for additional penalties when animal cruelty is committed in front of a child. The law is similar to existing Illinois law providing for increased penalties for domestic violence in the presence of a child: both provisions recognize that such trauma can have long-term negative psychological and health consequences for children, and lead them to becoming abusers themselves.

 **Massachusetts H3446** would criminalize animal abuse in the presence of a child under age 14 and would increase penalties for such cruelty to up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **New York A534** defines "aggravated" animal cruelty as causing extreme physical pain or done in an especially depraved or sadistic manner, a Class E felony. It would make the commission of aggravated cruelty in the presence of a child a Class D felony. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

 **New York A944** and **S1795** would criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. The bills are in the Codes Committee.

"CASA for Animals"

 **Connecticut HB 6187** would establish a process for appointing an advocate to investigate and

advocate for the welfare or custody of animals that are subjects of civil or criminal court proceedings. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and had a public hearing on April 1.



Massachusetts SB 851 would authorize actions to recover non-economic damages for the injury or death of companion animals and authorize a guardian ad litem to recover damages. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



New York AB 3443 would authorize a guardian ad litem to be appointed by a court in tort causes of action for wrongful injury or death of a companion animal. It would also allow restraining orders and other injunctive relief for the wrongful injury or killing of a companion animal. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



Rhode Island H 5414 would require a court of competent jurisdiction to order the appointment of an animal advocate where the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders



New York A1445 and **S1174** would increase penalties for animal fighting and aggravated cruelty to animals and would require a psychiatric evaluation for defendants convicted of aggravated cruelty. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.



New York A1673 and **S814** would require unsealing of court records that juvenile offenders convicted of animal cruelty offenses and require them to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Michigan HB 4353 would allow animal shelters to consider an individual's criminal history when determining whether or not to allow that individual to adopt an animal. Convicted animal abusers could not adopt for at least 5 years following conviction. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee. **Senate Bill 219** would prohibit offenders convicted of animal fighting or bestiality from owning animals other than livestock for 5 years. The bill was referred to the Committee of the Whole.



After languishing for over a year, **New Jersey SB 736 was signed into law on Aug. 10**. The measure creates a new crime of "leader of a dog fighting network" added to the list of offenses considered "racketeering activities" under New Jersey's anti-racketeering (RICO) law, cleared the Senate on May 18 by a 35-0 vote and the Assembly on June 25 by a 75-0 vote after a series of high-profile dogfighting raids brought the issue's urgency to lawmakers.



New York A346 would create a statewide task force to study how to improve investigations of animal abuse and enforcement of anti-cruelty laws. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



New York A1596 and **S2936** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.



Ohio SB 195 was introduced on July 16. It would prohibit a person from engaging in sexual conduct with an animal and related acts, provide for the seizure and impoundment of animals, and authorize psychological counseling or evaluation for convicted offenders. The bill is in the Criminal Justice Committee.



The **Oregon** Veterinary Medical Examination Board has proposed Rule No. [875-030-1101](#) which would provide for a screening of applicants and licensees to determine if they have a history of criminal behavior that would preclude their fitness to practice as a veterinarian or certified veterinary technician.



Vermont S102 was signed into law on June 5 and became effective on July 1. The measure creates an interdisciplinary task force to evaluate the status of animal cruelty investigation and response in Vermont.

Cross Reporting



Massachusetts S863 and **H132** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. **H132** was referred to the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and **S863** is in the Judiciary Committee



New York A5082 would require anyone mandated to report suspected child abuse who also encounters suspected animal abuse in the course of their duties to make an immediate report to local police or SPCA agencies. Failure to report would be a Class A misdemeanor and civilly liable. An extensive list of medical, social work, therapy, education, camp, day care, counseling and law enforcement professionals are mandated reporters of child abuse. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.



Oregon HB 2694 was signed into law on May 28. It allows Department of Human Services regulated social workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect, with immunity for good-faith reporting. The bill is in the Human Services & Housing Committee.



Rhode Island HR 5194 would initiate a mandatory child abuse/domestic violence and animal abuse cross-reporting system. The bill has been held for further study in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Hoarding



New York A1265 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Animal Sexual Assault



Oregon HB 2693 was signed into law on June 10. It creates a new misdemeanor crime of encouraging sexual assault of an animal, defined as possessing or controlling a visual recording of a person engaged in sexual conduct with an animal. The crime is punishable by one year's imprisonment and/or \$6,250 in fines. The new law also increases the penalties for sexual assault of an animal, up to five years' imprisonment and/or \$125,000 fine.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

A "Tail" of Two Lizards...

Reptile Store Owner Charged with Cruelty and Assault for Allegedly Beating Employees with a Lizard

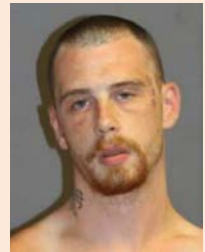
The owner of a reptile store in Deerfield Beach, Fla., was charged with assault and animal cruelty for allegedly beating his employees with a large lizard known as a bearded dragon. Broward County sheriff's deputies arrested Benjamin Siegel, 40 and accused him of placing the lizard in his mouth, throwing it, swinging it in the air and using it to strike the victims, according to the Florida [Sun-Sentinel](#). Siegel twice previously came to the attention of authorities. He had been arrested in 2014 on a cocaine charge. In October, 2012, he held a cockroach-eating contest in his store: the winner died after choking to death on bug parts and his own vomit.



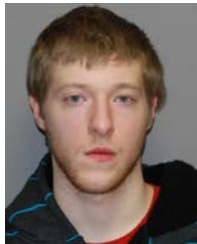
Benjamin Siegel

Man Charged with Drowning His Ex-Girlfriend's Lizards

An angry New Hampshire man was charged with felony animal cruelty, criminal threatening, criminal mischief and theft for allegedly destroying his ex-girlfriend's property and drowning her pet bearded dragons. Police arrested Richard Waite, 26, of Nashua, following a domestic disturbance. He was also charged with releasing her pet parakeet, breaking a fish tank, and smashing a TV set and bathroom door, the [Nashua Telegraph](#) reported. Waite has a history of arrests for domestic violence, theft, threatening to burn down a house, and failure to appear in court.



Richard Waite



Scott Cusson

Judge Addresses Link in Sentencing Man Who Set Dog on Fire

Saratoga County, N.Y. Judge Jim Murphy invoked the Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence in handing down an 18-month sentence on Scott Cusson, 19, of Halfmoon, N.Y. on Sept. 25. Cusson had been charged with felony animal cruelty for intentionally spraying "Roxy," a nine-month-old pit bull belonging to his friend Edward M. Turner, with alcohol and they setting her on fire. Roxy survived and is reportedly recovering with a new family. Turner was charged with a misdemeanor failure to seek veterinary care for the dog after the incident. Murphy chastised Cusson in court, telling him that defendants who abuse animals are often inclined to hurt people, [WNYT-TV](#) reported.

Sexual Assault History Earns Dog Beater Maximum 5-Year Sentence

Todd Alexander's history of sexual battery and drug use helped compel Monroe County, Fla. Judge Regan Ptomey to impose a maximum five-year prison sentence on him for beating a dog, taping its mouth shut, and leaving it in a plastic bag on a roadside in the Florida Keys. Alexander, 36, had a previous conviction for sexual battery and was on probation for marijuana possession at the time of his arrest, the [Keys News](#) reported. Witnesses said that Alexander was going to get rid of "Diamond," a 10-year-old pit bull mix, because he was tired of its snoring. He used duct tape to tape the dog's mouth shut and left it that way for two days before fracturing its skull with a metal pipe and dumping the dog along a road in Key Largo. Sheriff Rick Ramsay called Alexander "the worst of the worst."

Drug Addict Gets Jail Time, Probation, Community Service in Kitten Abuse Case



James P. Myers and cat

A man who was high on heroin who kicked and choked a kitten that he thought was attacking him was sentenced to jail time, probation and community service on Sept. 15 for animal cruelty and drug charges. Chester County, Penna. Common Pleas Judge Phyllis Streitel sentenced James P. Myers, of West Chester, to 16 days time served, plus up to 47 months probation and 150 hours of community service. The judge cited the “sick and disturbing scene” discovered by police on Aug. 3, 2014, when an officer found the kitten unresponsive with head trauma and a rope around its neck. Myers’ car contained dozens of needles, hundreds of empty heroin baggies, and a box of cat feces. Myers was also ordered to undergo drug and alcohol evaluations. The cat, now a year old, is living with the veterinarian who cared for him, according to [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#).

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Domestic Violence Victim Charged with Animal Cruelty

A woman who was apparently involved in a domestic abuse case was charged with animal cruelty for allegedly siccing her pit bull on the investigating police officer, who wound up shooting the dog in self-defense. [WNYT-TV reported](#) that police answered a domestic disturbance call in Hudson, N.Y. from a woman who said her boyfriend was beating her up and neighbors who had heard fighting coming from the apartment. Sgt. Randy Clarke advised the residents to open the door or he would force his way in. When no one responded, he kicked the door. Police said Crystal Riegal, 31, opened the door, released the dog, and shut and locked the door behind it.



Crystal Riegal and Aaron Terry

Following the shooting, which left the dog dead, Riegal and Aaron Terry, 27, were taken into custody and charged with obstructing governmental administration. Riegal was also charged with torturing animals for causing unjustifiable injury to a dog despite the irony of the police officer coming to her rescue. Riegal declined to press charges against Terry.

Link advocates have noted that the police officer’s response may have been appropriate given the precedent of attacking dogs being treated as assault with a deadly weapon cases in several cities, including Indianapolis, Barcelona, Denver, and Thornton, Colo. Tracey Cusick, Assistant District Attorney in Norfolk County, Mass., shared the following jury instructions with *The LINK-Letter*:

“A dog can be a dangerous weapon. A particular dog can be found to be a dangerous weapon if it reasonably appeared capable of inflicting bodily harm. The Commonwealth need not prove that the dog was actually dangerous or was in fact used in a harm-inflicting manner, the proper inquiry is whether the dog presented an objective threat of danger to a person of average sensibility. It is a well-known fact that dogs may be trained to attack people.”

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Oct. 12 – (online): [Allie Phillips](#) will present a webinar for Illinois CASA on “When the Abuse of Animals Harms Children.”

Oct. 13 – Millersville, Pa.: Barbara Boat will conduct a training and participate in a [panel discussion](#) on “The Link Between Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty,” organized by the Millersville University Psychology Department and the Psi Chi Honor Society in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Oct. 14 – New York City, N.Y.: The [Urban Resource Institute](#) will convene a roundtable discussion on the intersection of domestic violence and animal welfare. Panelists will include Allie Phillips discussing Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T).

Oct. 14 – Pittsfield, Mass.: The [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) Coalition will hold a meeting at 1 p.m. at the Berkshire Humane Society.

Oct. 15 – Charlottesville, Va.: Randy Lockwood and Sharon Miller will present on building community responses to animal cruelty at the [Virginia Animal Control Association](#) annual conference.

Oct. 15 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular meeting.

Oct. 16-18 – Los Alcazares, Murcia, Spain: Núria Querol will present a workshop on The Link at the PAES (Protección Animales España) [National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Oct. 26-28 – Honolulu, Hawai’i: Phil Arkow will conduct Link trainings for board and staff members of the [Hawaiian Humane Society](#), prosecutors, the [Domestic Violence Action Center](#), and community leaders.

Oct. 30 – Phoenix, Ariz.: [Allie Phillips](#) will give a presentation on Therapy Animals Supporting Kids in courtrooms and children’s advocacy centers to a meeting of Arizona Superior Court Judges.

Nov. 2 – (Online): Lora Dunn from the Animal Legal Defense Fund will discuss using pre-conviction forfeiture to save seized animals from re-victimization in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Nov. 3-6 – The Hague, The Netherlands: Yvonne Matser van-’t Oever will present on “Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse as Emotional Blackmail” at the [World Conference of Women’s Shelters](#).

Nov. 3-5 – Knoxville, Tenn.: The [Veterinary Social Work](#)/Veterinary Health and Wellness Summits at the University of Tennessee and a special post-conference workshop will address The Link between Human and Animal Violence. Speakers will include: Maya Gupta discussing “Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adults Who Have Engaged In or Witnessed Animal Abuse”; Jenny Edwards speaking on “Bestiality: The Best Kept Secret in America”; and Phil Arkow discussing “Practical Guidance for the Effective Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect.”

Nov. 4-6 – Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Animal Legal Defense Fund will present the [5th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#) to bring multidisciplinary professionals together to enhance their efforts in combating animal cruelty and related violent crimes.

Nov. 4-6 – Barcelona, Spain: The First International Congress of Profiling and Criminal Behavior Analysis in Violent Crimes will be held at the University of Barcelona. Núria Querol will present a plenary session on “CSI Techniques in Crimes against Animals.”

Nov. 6 – Phoenix, Md.: The Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office Animal Abuse Unit will hold an [Animal Abuse Leadership Summit](#).

Nov. 6-8 – Byron Bay, N.S.W., Australia: Catherine Tiplady, Lydia Tong, and seven other speakers will present at the Lucy’s Project: Animals and Domestic Violence Perspectives [conference](#).

Nov. 11 – (online): Phil Arkow will present a webinar on Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

Nov. 12 – South Padre Is., Texas: Phil Arkow will train on “Animal Abuse, Elder Abuse, and Hoarding: Challenges and Strategies for Adult Protective Services” at the [32nd Annual APS Conference](#).

Nov. 17– Somerville, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

Nov. 18 – Grand Rapids, Mich.: Allie Phillips will give a presentation on “Handling the Stress of Animal Abuse Cases” for staff and volunteers of the [Humane Society of West Michigan](#).

Nov. 23-24 – Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol and Sònia Pujol will present a workshop on “The Link and Policing” at the ii Interuniversity Seminar of Criminology, organized by the [Spanish Society of Criminology](#).

Nov. 30 – Dec. 1 – Avon, Ind.: Allie Phillips will give a presentation and work with [Susie’s Place](#) Children’s Advocacy Center on incorporating therapy dogs into their program and talking to children about their experiences with animals.

Dec. 1 – Port St. Lucie, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the Violence Connection conference sponsored by the Pegasus Foundation and the [Spay/Neuter Alliance of the Treasure Coast](#).

Dec. 4 – San Bernardino, Calif.: Phil Arkow will speak to the [San Bernardino Animal Cruelty Task Force](#).

Dec. 11 – Brunswick, Ga.: [Allie Phillips](#) will present on “The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” at the Naval Criminal Investigative Services school of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

Dec. 14 – San Antonio, Texas: [Allie Phillips](#) will present on handling the stress of special victim cases for the Army Special Victim Prosecutors conference.

Feb. 21, 2016 – Davis, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present a lunchtime plenary session on The Link at the UC-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine’s annual [Winter Conference](#).

May 9, 2016 – Manahawkin, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

July 11-13, 2016 – Paris, France: Phil Arkow will participate in a global exchange examining research and practice aspects of animal abuse and domestic violence at the [International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations’](#) Triennial conference.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and tell us what organization(s) you’re with and where you’re located.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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

Lesley Ashworth

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Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
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