



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

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



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**Nikolas Cruz in a social media post**

## ***ANIMAL ABUSE AND MASS MURDERS***

### **Reading the Signs: When Will We Ever Learn?**

Philosophers and researchers have long argued that acts of cruelty to animals committed in childhood and adolescence are often dangerous warning signs, predictors of potential future interpersonal violence. Occasionally a spectacular case crystallizes this concept – which we at the National Link Coalition call The Link between animal abuse and human violence – and brings it to the forefront of public as well as professional attention.

Such a case emerged in Parkland, Fla., where the 19-year-old expelled student who has admitted to gunning down 17 people on Valentine’s Day at his former high school reportedly had a history of bragging about killing animals, and of being abusive to his girlfriend.

Law enforcement officials said that Nikolas Cruz posted highly disturbing material on social media before the shooting rampage. Multiple news media reported that an Instagram account that appeared to belong to Cruz included a disturbing bloodied corpse of a dead frog as well as photos of guns and rounds considered to be his arsenal. Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said Cruz had posted troubling photos and videos on social media. “We saw a pic where he took a chameleon and he splattered the chameleon,” Israel said. “Things like this, that’s not normal behavior.”

The etiology of interpersonal violence is always complex, and this case is no exception. Reports also indicated that Cruz had a history of being bullied, had experienced the deaths of both parents, was aggressive, and had undergone mental health treatment. It is far too simplistic to say that “animal abuse always leads to human violence,” but the evidence is quite clear that animal cruelty – especially repeated, remorseless, boastful incidents -- must be recognized as a significant warning sign to be taken seriously.

While the immediate media attention focused on what the FBI knew and failed to act upon his alleged desire to be a “professional school shooter,” what school authorities knew and did about disturbing reports that they perceived as threats, and how a youth with a history of such alarming behavior over



Nikolas Cruz's mug shot

the years was able to legally purchase an AR-15 assault rifle, the allegations of animal abuse were also beginning to emerge.

As of this writing, what we believe is known is as follows: After the adoptive parents of Cruz and his brother died, another family took the two boys in. That family has said they saw signs of depression after the mother died in November, 2017 but nothing indicating this potential level of violence. The family said they were aware that he had had disciplinary problems at his former school and that there were some indications that he had been bullied. He apparently tried to cut himself and commit suicide. He was said to have anger issues, ADHD and OCD.

Numerous alarms to law enforcement, including the FBI, and a YouTube posting that said, "I'm going to be a professional school shooter," were ignored.

Concerned school officials also emailed faculty to be on the alert for his behavior and to not allow him on campus with a backpack. He was expelled in his junior year for disciplinary reasons including outbursts in the classroom and having ammunition in his backpack, according to school authorities. One student said that Cruz had been expelled after a fight with his ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend, and that Cruz had been abusive to his girlfriend. Students said he had an obsession with weapons, always had guns and knives with him and predicted that if anyone would ever shoot up the school, it would be him.

Another student said Cruz had said he had been kicked out of two private schools, had been held back twice, and wanted to join the military. After being expelled from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School he was reportedly re-enrolled at a school for at-risk youths where he was said to be working on his GED.

The [New York Times](#) reported that Cruz had been obsessed with a girl at the school to the point of stalking her. "In the hours after the shooting, people who knew Mr. Cruz described him as a 'troubled kid' who enjoyed showing off his firearms, bragging about killing animals, and whose mother would resort to calling the police to have them come to their home to try to talk some sense into him," the [Times](#) reported. Cruz reportedly stayed to himself and had few friends "but struck fear in some students with erratic behavior and an affinity for violence."

The mother of a student told the *Times* that she learned from her daughter's friends that Cruz "was known as always be mentally ill and would kill animals."

The [South Florida Sun Sentinel](#) reported that another student said Cruz had talked about shooting lizards, squirrels and frogs. Former neighbors said they had seen him shooting at a neighbor's chickens, poking at a rabbit hole with a stick and setting his family's dog on another neighbor's piglets.

"Like we did not expect this!" said John Thompson, Deputy Executive Director/COO of the National Sheriffs' Association and a member of the National Link Coalition's Steering Committee. "It is my understanding he was also on a watch list but I guess no one was watching! Law enforcement better wake up and realize this LINK is real and a VERY powerful tool for them!"

"We missed the signs," Broward Mayor Beam Furr, a former teacher himself, told the [Miami Herald](#). "We should have seen some of the signs."

## The View from Law Enforcement

In the wake of the massacre, the [Florida Sun-Sentinel](#) published an op-ed about why police agencies miss the Link between animal abuse and mass shootings. Two members of the National Link Coalition's steering committee were interviewed by Wendy Rhodes. Excerpts follow:



John Thompson

On the day of the murders, John Thompson wondered how soon reports of animal abuse would emerge. "It didn't even take us one day," said Thompson, deputy executive director of the National Sheriff's Association and the nation's highest-ranking law-enforcement official fighting animal abuse. Within hours, reports of animal abuse by Cruz began to pour in – chickens, frogs, pot-bellied pigs – even his own dog. Cruz delighted in torturing animals, bragging and posting gruesome pictures on social media.

Thompson and others insist that law enforcement could have identified Cruz as a serious risk if they had paid attention to his history of animal abuse. One way to limit mass killings would be to identify those at greatest risk of committing these crimes.

"These are children that show early psychopathic tendencies," said psychologist Dr. Randall Lockwood, senior vice-president at the ASPCA and an expert in the Link. "It is the absence of empathy and the inability to be sensitive to the suffering of others, whether it's animals or people. And that's one of the reasons why these two forms of abuse are often connected."



Randall Lockwood

Las Vegas gunman Stephen Paddock posted pictures on social media of bloody animals he had killed. Devin Patrick Kelly brutally beat a husky with his fists before killing 26 at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold talked about abusing animals before killing 12 classmates at Columbine High School. One study shows that 43% of mass shooters have histories of animal abuse.

Thompson said that tracking animal abusers is vital, because animal abuse does not occur in a vacuum. "Anyone that can harm an animal is an evil person, and in my opinion, they have the potential to do anything."

Thompson worries that people like Cruz will continue to slip through the cracks until police, prosecutors and judges seek out and prosecute animal abusers as violent offenders. He admits that he missed the Link for most of his career, ignoring animal advocates who would visit his police station and warn officers about the connection between animal abuse and other forms of violence.

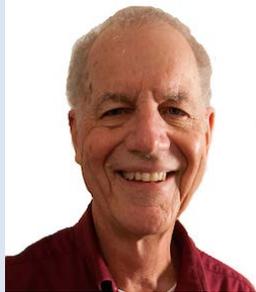
"We would just say, 'Hey, go out and hug a tree, eat your vegetables,'" he said. "Unfortunately, we were missing the boat the whole time. We didn't even realize what was going on underneath our noses."

In 2014, Thompson founded the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse (NLECAA) to educate law enforcement officials about the Link between animal abuse and other violent crimes and empower officials to help reduce senseless animal cruelty and possibly prevent further tragedies.

"We never did consider animal crimes," Thompson said about his first 30 years in law enforcement. "We always thought it should be left up to animal control. We never made a connection."

# POINT/COUNTERPOINT

## Animal Abuse Does Not Always Lead to Human Violence



Hal Herzog

The unspeakable Stoneman Douglas school massacre caused many people to oversimplify The Link and claim that “all school shooters started out killing animals.” Such exaggerations give a misleading impression of the implications of The

Link. A noted psychologist with extensive background in human-animal interactions has reiterated this call for a reality check.

Hal Herzog wrote a blog in the Feb. 21 [Psychology Today](#) explaining why animal cruelty doesn’t always accurately predict who will be a school shooter. He offered three reasons why even extreme animal abuse by itself is not a reliable predictor:

1. The majority of people who commit crimes against humans do not have histories of violence against animals.
2. While many school shooters have histories of animal cruelty, the majority do not, and a few have even been cited for their empathy toward animals. Animal cruelty in these individuals is invariably part of a broader range of issues including depression, bullying, social isolation, preoccupation with violent media or music, and a fascination with guns.
3. Just because many mass murderers started out hurting animals does not mean than all animal abusers will become mass murderers.

## Acting Upon Heinous Animal Cruelty Would Prevent Some Shootings



Arnold Arluke

Meanwhile, a co-author of the most reliable study on the subject found that 43% of school shooters had histories of animal cruelty and torture. In an op-ed in the Feb. 21 [Washington Post](#), sociologist Arnold

Arluke reiterated his findings that a more significant risk factor is the circumstances by which the animals were harmed.

What is most troubling about the histories of school shooters and serial killers is that these individuals committed the animal abuse repeatedly and “up close and personal.” 90% of the school shooters with histories of cruelty had strangled, bludgeoned, burned, drowned, kicked, smashed, or mutilated the animals. 10% used more remote methods to kill the animals, such as shooting them, which did not require hands-on proximity.

This more specific pattern of abuse “probably” would have identified Nikolas Cruz as a high risk for a massacre, he wrote; it was flagrant and involved multiple episodes.

There is no accurate profile yet of students who engage in targeted school violence, and it would be impossible to red-flag every incident of animal abuse. But recognizing the warning signs offered by repeated, up-close-and-personal animal cruelty and torture might prevent some school shootings. Such information should be routinely screened for in risk assessments by mental health and law enforcement investigators.

## THE LINK AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### Dutch “Animal Cops” Combine Animal Protection with Social Services



Erik Smit, left, and a firefighter rescued a dog from a balcony where it had been left alone in snowy conditions in The Hague.

The recently-created national “animal cops” unit in the Netherlands was described by the [New York Times](#) as a hybrid animal protection/social services agency in an extensive Jan. 29 article that detailed the group’s work in animal and human welfare.

“Obviously, the first thing I do is to look after the animals, but often when you look further, you see the things aren’t going so well for the owner of the animals,” said Sergeant Erik Smit. The unit (“Dierenpolitie”) ([See the May 2012 LINK-Letter](#)) receives Sgt. some 3,000 calls a year. There are about 250 full-time members of the animal police force; many more are trained but do not carry out the function exclusively.

The newspaper described the personnel as acting like a humane society with guns, handcuffs and badges. Members of the animal police force are regular officers with extra training and special equipment. A 911-type emergency number for animals — citizens can dial 144 from any phone in the Netherlands — dispatches the officers and supplies the vast majority of their leads.

The animal police force was created when a government coalition demanded formation of an 800-person animal police force. The national police argued for keeping a smaller version of it. When the Animals Act became law in 2013, the unit came into being, based, in part, on The Link.

“Animals — and our entire society — need the animal police. There is a direct link between violence against animals and violence against humans,” said Marianne Thieme, head of the progressive Party for the Animals, which holds five of Parliament’s 150 seats.

The Link connection was echoed by Tamara Verdoorn, the prosecutor in charge of animal cases in The Hague district court. She sees a lot of people whose run-ins with animal law-enforcement reflects larger problems. “Most people who neglect animals are also neglecting themselves,” she said.

### Kentucky Bill Would Toughen Sentences for Coercive Animal Cruelty

In an unusual twist on legislation addressing animal abuse as coercive control, four state representatives in Kentucky introduced a bill that would strengthen punishment for these offenders. **HB 447** would bar courts from offering probation, early release or suspended sentences to offenders convicted of torturing a dog or cat with the intent of threatening, intimidating, coercing, harassing, or terrorizing a family member or person in a dating relationship.



Reps. Thomas, Dossett, Herald, & Mayfield

Kentucky law defines “family members” as current and former spouses, child or stepchild, grandchild, parent, or grandparent. This measure would thus address domestic, child and elder abuse simultaneously. The bill was introduced on Feb. 22 by Reps. Walker Thomas, Myron Dossett, Toby Herald, and Donna Mayfield.

## Police Chiefs' Magazine Spotlights The Link and Veterinary Forensics



**Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM**

The nation's law enforcement officers were given additional information about animal maltreatment's co-occurrence with interpersonal violence in an extensive article on how veterinary forensics can aid animal cruelty investigations. Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, who serves on the National Link Coalition's steering committee, wrote the [article](#) in the February, 2018 issue of *The Police Chief*, the magazine of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

"Animal welfare overlaps with both family welfare and public safety," she writes. "Veterinarians with training in veterinary forensics can be especially valuable to animal cruelty investigations."

Smith-Blackmore describes how animal cruelty, killing and torture are predictors of domestic violence, adolescents' developing aggressive behaviors, and extreme violence such as school shootings. "Abusers exercising power and control over any vulnerable being through violence and intimidation flag themselves as violent threats," she writes. "Laws against animal cruelty are important to enforce because of the crime's relationship to interpersonal violence and because violence toward animals is a criminal act on its own merit. Therefore, effective policing includes aggressively pursuing crimes against animals."

Surveys reporting that significant numbers of district attorneys have prosecuted animal cruelty cases, and the addition of four types of animal cruelty into the FBI's NIBRS national data-collection system, are propelling the need for veterinary forensics to help substantiate cruelty cases. Trained practitioners can distinguish between accidental and non-accidental injuries.

But many animal cruelty cases are not yet subjected to the exhaustive CSI techniques used in crimes against human victims. "Animals that are found dead are discarded more often than they are examined, which means that potentially important cases go uninvestigated," she writes. "When one considers that harmed animals are the canary in the coal mine for violent behavior, this failure means that a perpetrator of crimes of general deviance may go undetected."

-- Smith-Blackmore, M. (2018, February). *The role of veterinary forensics in animal cruelty investigations. The Police Chief, 26-31.*

## California Measure Would Toughen Animal Sex Abuse Penalties

A bill in the California Assembly would strengthen laws against animal sexual abuse. Currently it is a misdemeanor to sexually assault certain animals to gratify a person's sexual desires. **AB 3040** would be more comprehensive and prohibit sexual contact with any animal, or trafficking, observing, participating, or possessing videos of animal sexual abuse. Offenses would be misdemeanors or felonies. Victimized animals could be seized.



**Rep. Adrin Nazarian**

The bill would also add animal sexual abuse to the list of animal abuse offenses in current law for which offenders could be barred from owning or volunteering with animals for specified time periods. The measure was introduced by Rep. Adrin Nazarian. It may be scheduled for a committee hearing on March 19.

## Community Crime-Stopping Partnership Streamlines Cruelty Reporting in Nation's 4<sup>th</sup>-Largest City



Citing evidence of the Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, Crime Stoppers of Houston, Texas has created a collaborative, regional Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce that will streamline and improve the process of reporting animal cruelty in the sprawling metropolitan area that is home to the nation's 4<sup>th</sup>-largest city.

At a Feb. 20 press conference, leaders of numerous organizations including the District Attorney, Harris County Sheriff, Houston Police Department, four animal shelters, and others unveiled the plan. For nearly 40 years, many members of the public, in confusion, have called Crime Stoppers trying to report animal abuse.

In response, Crime Stoppers formed an Anti-Animal Cruelty Partner Council in April 2017 to bring key stakeholders together. After Hurricane Harvey devastated the region, the Council formed the Taskforce.

“With over 50 law enforcement agencies in Harris County, citizens often do not know where this type of abuse can be reported,” said County Constable Ted Heap. “The Council’s goal was to make it easier for citizens to report animal cruelty and neglect to the correct agency, thereby helping animals in need as quickly as possible. This would also free up resources that were incorrectly getting the calls.”

Several factors impacted the council’s decision:

- Harris County and the City of Houston have over 50 law enforcement and animal care and control agencies, making the process of reporting animal abuse confusing to the public
- More needed to be done to help the number of voiceless animals being abused and neglected
- Supporting evidence has shown that there is a link between childhood animal cruelty and aggression toward humans as adults.

Under the new system, residents can either call a hotline, **832-927-PAWS**, or file a report online at [www.927PAWS.org](http://www.927PAWS.org). The two options will minimize duplication of efforts and streamline the process for reporting neglect, abuse, hoarding, torture, and animal fighting.

As part of this new emphasis, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office has added an additional deputy tasked to animal cruelty investigations. The Harris County Animal Shelter has dedicated animal control resources to assist in investigations and will handle transport and medical evaluations of animal cruelty cases. The BARC Animal Shelter has committed two trained animal cruelty officers to aid in investigations.

The consolidation is a solution to the confusion in many communities where the public is unsure who investigates animal abuse in their jurisdiction. To make this process easier the National Link Coalition has published the [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#) which lists agencies and phone numbers in over 6,500 counties and cities.

The Taskforce “is dedicated to not only protecting the animals, but also making our city a safer environment for all,” said Crime Stoppers in a statement.

## Link Cited in Arizona Call for Harsher Animal Cruelty Penalties

Citing Link statistics linking animal abuse to domestic and other violence, an Arizona Senate panel approved a bill that would create harsher penalties for animal abuse and expand state laws on what constitutes animal abuse.

Existing law already makes it a Class 6 felony to intentionally or knowingly inflict unnecessary physical injury to an animal. The same penalty – a year in state prison – applies to those who subject any animal to cruel mistreatment. **SB1295** would create a special Class 5 felony for subjecting pets to cruel mistreatment. And the same penalty would apply for killing a pet without the owner’s consent.

Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery told lawmakers the measure is about more than animals, according to the [Arizona Capitol Times](#). “Animal abusers are five times more likely to commit violent crimes against people than non-abusers,” he said. “And 70 percent of those charged with cruelty to animals were known to police for other violent behavior, including homicide.

“While not every abuser becomes a serial killer, almost every serial killer has in their history some history of animal abuse,” he said. Montgomery said that’s why prosecutors want to find these people before their violence accelerates.



Bill Montgomery

Carrie Borgen, executive director of the Sojourner Center, which helps victims of domestic violence, cited a study saying a person’s history of pet abuse “is one of the foremost indicators of who is greatest at risk of becoming a batterer.”

The 6-1 vote sent the measure to the full Senate.

## “CASA for Animals” Proposed for New York State



Linda Rosenthal

New York has joined the list of states considering provisions to allow victims of animal abuse to have representation in courts, similar to Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children. **New York A9701** would allow a court to order a separate advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice in animal welfare proceedings. Connecticut and Rhode Island have enacted similar provisions. ([See the July 2017 LINK-Letter](#))

In introducing the bill to give animals a voice in the courtroom, Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal’s justification was the lenient punishment often meted out in cruelty cases; the tendency of animal abusers to go on to harm humans; and the FBI’s inclusion of animal cruelty in the NIBRS data system due to the demonstrated link between animal abuse and human violence.

The advocate would be able to monitor the case, consult any individual whose information could aid the judge or jury, and review relevant veterinary, police and animal control records. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

## *ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

### **Oklahoma City YWCA Opens Pet Kennels**

The Oklahoma City YWCA got some nice publicity on Feb. 4 when [The Oklahoman](#) newspaper featured their new program to provide co-sheltering kennels for the animal survivors of domestic violence.

“She saved my life in more ways than one and I wasn't going anywhere without her,” said one woman. Even as she lie in a hospital bed covered in bruises and healing her broken bones, fear for what might happen to her dog kept her from seeking shelter from her abusive ex-boyfriend.



**YWCA Facilities Director Philip Cross, left, works with a volunteer to build a dog kennel at the facility.**

Citing National Link Coalition statistics, the article reported that the YWCA opened eight kennels on Jan. 25 for dogs that will be approved through a system and that have updated shots and vet checks. The kennels were paid for by the Wilshire Charitable Foundation and installed by OKC's Pet Food Pantry.

“This doesn't have to be a barrier for shelters,” said Kim Pempin, Pantry President and Founder. Last year, the Pantry installed eight kennels at the Homeless Alliance in Oklahoma City and two at the Women's Resource Center in Norman. Pempin said shelters in Durant and Stillwater also are considering plans to build kennels on-site this year. “This is a very workable plan.”

Prior to opening pet kennels last November, the Norman shelter had to turn away 43 people because they were not able to bring their pets with them and they were not willing to come without them.

Domestic Violence Intervention Services of Tulsa County also has pet facilities and can accommodate up to four cats and eight dogs. The shelter has a “bark park” where clients can spend time with their pets.

“Clients that come here are in high trauma and they're making major changes in their life already, so having something that's comfortable and common can help,” OKC YWCA CFO Gwen Lang said.

The article shared the story of the survivor whose ex-boyfriend nearly beat her to death in her home. The dog provided a distraction, allowing her to escape to a neighbor, where she called for help.

“[The dog] was lunging and snapping at him and barking and he punched her and then threw her against a wall,” she said. “It was terrible, but it was enough that he had to take hands off me to focus on her and that gave me time to get up onto my feet.”

The YWCA made an exception for the dog, allowing the woman to keep the dog in her room at the shelter and keeping the traumatized pair together while they recovered. With her abuser in jail and assistance from the shelter, the two settled into a new apartment where they continue the recovery process and encourage others to seek help.

“There are no excuses anymore,” she said. “You can save your and your animals' life. What are you waiting for?”

## Missouri Bills Would Allow Pet Protective Orders, Psychological Counseling, and Veterinary Immunity

Two bills introduced in the Missouri legislature would allow domestic violence survivors to include their threatened animals in protective orders, provide for psychological or psychiatric treatment for offenders convicted of animal cruelty, and grant immunity for persons reporting suspected animal abuse.

**HB 2374**, introduced by Rep. David Gregory, would amend Sec. 455.010 of the Missouri Revised Statutes to include “Intimidation,” the occurrence of which would be grounds for a court to issue an order of protection restraining or enjoining the respondent from committing or threatening to commit domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, molesting, or disturbing the peace of the petitioner. “Intimidation” would be defined as “injuring, killing, or threatening to injure or kill an animal if such act is done to coerce, control, punish, or as an act of revenge against a household member.”



Rep. David Gregory



Rep. Chrissy Sommer

**HB 2359**, sponsored by Rep. Chrissy Sommer, would allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment at the offender’s expense upon a first conviction for animal cruelty. However, such evaluation and treatment would be mandatory if the offense involved animal torture or mutilation or upon a second or subsequent conviction. Juveniles convicted of animal cruelty would be required to receive appropriate individual or family counseling.

Two other provisions of the bill are notable. It would grant immunity from civil liability to veterinarians, teachers and school personnel who report suspected animal cruelty in good faith to a law enforcement agency. It would also give courts the discretion to allow victims of juvenile animal cruelty offenders to be returned to the home if the court determines that the animal is not at risk for future abuse or neglect.

## W. Va., R.I. Consider Pets’ Best Interests in Divorce Settlements



Rep. Jill Upson

**West Virginia** would join the list of states considering laws to award custody of pets in divorce cases in what the court feels would be the animals’ best interests. **HB 2855**, introduced by Delegate Jill Upson, would allow courts to make provisions within a divorce order for the temporary custody and care of pets, including joint custody, allocation of costs and visitation rights for the noncustodial party, taking into consideration the well-being of the animal.

The **Rhode Island** General Assembly is again considering a measure that would create a custody procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. **HB 7585** would allow courts to award sole custody of pets based on a number of factors including: which party first acquired the pet; who assumed most of the responsibility for caring for it and spent more time with it; which party’s living arrangement is best suitable for the animal; attachments to the pet by any children; who wants custody; and their proximity to enable shared custody.

Similar provisions have been enacted in Alaska and Illinois. Similar bills have been introduced in Hawai’i, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania. A similar bill introduced in Rhode Island in 2017 was defeated.

## Link Included in Campaign to End Relationship Violence



A new campaign in Colorado is including threats to pets as one of the warning signs for relationship violence. [StandUp Colorado](#) is a statewide collaborative outreach initiated by

the Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Colorado Attorney General's Office, and the Denver City Attorney's Office.

A promotional poster includes threats to pets along with such other warning signs of relationship violence as controlling money, humiliation, sexual coercion, invading privacy, and "breaking stuff" as situations that should cause a survivor to ask for help. A statewide hotline, 655-9StandUp, has been created to receive calls. A media fact sheet includes statistics about animals being targeted as coercive control in domestic violence. An extensive list of local domestic violence agencies are partners in the campaign.

## Colorado Bill Would Clarify Pet Protection Orders

A bill in the Colorado legislature would enhance existing provisions to protect animals in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. **SB 18-060** would specifically allow courts to issue an order prohibiting the taking, transferring, concealing, harming, disposing of, or threatening to harm an animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by the alleged victim or witness.

Colorado law currently includes animals among the various types of property that can be included in a protection order; the new law would expand that provision to allow courts to issue a specific protection order for animals against a defendant.



Sen. Don Coram & Rep. Millie Hamner

Colorado's criminal code definition of domestic violence also currently includes "any other crime against a person, or against property, including an animal, or any municipal ordinance violation against a person, or against property, including an animal, when used as a method of coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge directed against a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship."

**SB 18-060** is sponsored by Sen. Don Coram and Rep. Millie Hamner and is in the Senate and House Judiciary Committees.

### *Permission to Reprint*

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## Websites Identify Pet-Friendly Transitional Housing Opportunities



In addition to the need to provide co-sheltering facilities for pets in domestic violence shelters, there is also a need to find pet-friendly transitional housing for domestic violence survivors and their pets once they leave the shelter. Given that the transition process can take many months, finding suitable housing that accepts pets can be an insurmountable challenge, forcing many families to surrender their beloved pets.

We have recently learned of a website that offers a national directory of pet-friendly apartments. [PeopleWithPets.com](http://PeopleWithPets.com) allows the public to search by state and city. While the directory does not list every city in the U.S., many major metro areas are represented and if the family is willing to relocate to a nearby city pet-friendly housing may be available.

The website also includes listings of pet-friendly hotels and motels plus other pet-friendly accommodations, shopping, attractions and services. Another directory of pet-friendly hotels is available from [PetsWelcome.com](http://PetsWelcome.com). A directory of domestic violence shelters that provide either co-sheltering or off-site foster care for the animal survivors of domestic violence is available at [SafePlaceForPets.org](http://SafePlaceForPets.org).

## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... ADULT PROTECTION



### Kansas, W. Va., Ind. Kill Cross-Reporting Expansions

A provision in a bill in the Kansas State Legislature that would have added animal control officers to the list of professions mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults was deleted by the House. Rep. Debbie Deere had added the amendment to **HB 2530**. The Committee on Children and Seniors approved the amendment and the measure was sent to the full House, where it was removed.

**Rep. Debbie Deere** Meanwhile, **West Virginia HB 4014** would have required adult protective services workers to report reasonable suspicions of animal abuse or cruelty to the county humane officer within 24 hours, and humane officers to immediately report suspected abuse, neglect or emergencies affecting an incapacitated adult or facility resident. The provisions were included within a much larger reorganization of the Department of Health & Human Resources, but they appear to have been deleted during the committee amendment process.

**Indiana SB 332** and companion bill **HB 1261** ("Protecting pets in distressed homes") would have required Adult Protective Services employees conducting assessments or investigations who have reason to believe an animal is a victim of cruelty, abandonment or neglect to make a report to a law enforcement or animal control agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bills died in their respective committees.

## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD PROTECTION



**Melissa Bright**

### Juvenile Animal Abuse Correlated with ACEs

Youths who commit animal cruelty are known to be at increased risk of perpetrating violence on other people including peers, loved ones, and elder family members. These youths have often been exposed to family violence, including animal cruelty perpetrated on their beloved pets by violent adults. A new study reports on distinctive traits of juvenile animal abusers that link to their Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (See the [January 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) and that should be red flags for risk assessment and early intervention.

The study of 81,000 juvenile offenders whose ACEs are known included 466 youth who self-reported engaging in animal cruelty. Compared to the larger group of juvenile offenders, the children admitting to committing animal cruelty were younger at time of first arrest, more likely to be male, and more likely to be white.

They were more likely than other juvenile offenders to have an array of ACEs beyond family violence and to have four or more ACEs. "Although the youth who are cruel to animals are already troubled, the fact that they present to law enforcement at early ages provides early opportunities for intervention," the authors wrote. Teachers, physicians, veterinarians and animal control officers may be able to identify these vulnerable youth and refer them to needed services before violence is visited on other humans.

-- Bright, M.A., Huq, M.S., Spencer, T., Applebaum, J.W., & Hardt, N. (2018). Animal cruelty as an indicator of family trauma: Using adverse childhood experiences to look beyond child abuse and domestic violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 76, 287-296.

### Child Endangerment and Veterinary Cross-Reporting Law Proposed



**Sen. Bisignano & Rep. Wolfe**

The Iowa Legislature is considering two unusual bills which combine provisions for veterinarians to report animal abuse and for law enforcement officers to report child endangerment if they believe that a child witnessed animal torture. **Iowa HF 2065** is sponsored by Sen. Tony Bisignano and **SF 129** was introduced by Rep. Mary Lynn Wolfe.

The companion bills would require veterinarians to report any *conclusion* of animal cruelty to the local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. However, unlike most other states with veterinary reporting provisions which merely require practitioners to report *suspicions* of abuse for humane and law enforcement to investigate further, the Iowa bills would appear to rely more heavily on the veterinarian's expertise to make a conclusion that a situation constitutes animal abuse.

The companion bills would also require law enforcement agencies investigating animal cruelty complaints to file a child endangerment report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnessed the abuse. The bill also increases penalties for various animal abuse offenses including committing animal torture in the presence of a child, and would allow courts to ban offenders' ownership of animals. The measure would also allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment upon convicted offenders; such orders would be mandatory for juvenile offenders. The bills are in their respective Agriculture Committees.

## *THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE*

### **What is the DVM's Role When Domestic Violence is Suspected?**

A provocative article in the Nov. 22, 2017 issue of [dvm360 Magazine](#) raises the problematic question of how a veterinarian should respond when a long-term client starts demonstrating behavioral changes. She confides in the veterinarian that her husband has been abusing her and her dog, although the veterinarian can find no physical indications that the animal has been mistreated. She claims neither the police nor the humane society have been able to help her. After staff spend considerable amounts of time trying to deal with the client's irrational and unstable behavior, the practice owner decides that "Enough is enough" and that since they are not mental health professionals they can do nothing more for her.

The author of the case study, Dr. Marc Rosenberg, wrote that veterinarians are caregivers who must temper their desire to help pets and their owners with compassion and reality, but who must also not add to the emotional stress they encounter every day.

The case study, however, illustrates growing awareness that practitioners will encounter clients who may be victims of domestic violence and should be prepared for this eventuality. Although veterinarians may feel they lack training in such issues and have legitimate concerns about the economic, privacy and liability implications of getting involved, other conditions indicate that a response or a referral to a more appropriate agency may be indicated:



**Marc A. Rosenberg, VMD**

The veterinarian's oath includes the protection of public as well as animal health. There is growing recognition of veterinary medicine within the One Health movement. Abundant empirical and anecdotal evidence exists that animal abuse often co-occurs with domestic violence as a coercive control, further placing the patient – and other animals in the household – at risk.

Meanwhile, many people are unfamiliar with the legal systems involved in domestic violence and may see their veterinarian as a trusted friend who should be able to help. However, unlike child, adult and animal protection – where an investigation can be triggered by an outside observer – domestic violence must be reported by the victim, who is often reluctant to do so. If domestic violence is occurring, the veterinarian can lend support by encouraging the victim to report it to the police. But as with any other crime, in order for any such complaint to be substantiated, physical or other evidence with specific dates, times and facts must be presented. Saying "he's always hitting my dog" will do nothing; if she can document and/or photograph a specific incident the police have something to work with.

The veterinarian can also make the client aware of provisions in their state to include pets in protection-from-abuse orders. Thirty-two states now have these provisions: the list is on the National Link Coalition's [website](#). The veterinarian can have a protocol in place to refer clients to local domestic violence agencies where legal aid and sheltering services may be available.

We are starting to see a trend where veterinarians are becoming more responsive to domestic violence issues. The New Zealand Veterinary Association has endorsed a national campaign to stop domestic violence, calling veterinary medicine a "three-dimensional profession" unique in having a voice that transcends people, animals and the environment; NZVA, in accepting the research linking physical maltreatment of animals and violence against humans, advises veterinarians to consider whether people

within the home might also be at risk and that they have a responsibility to act when violence against the vulnerable is recognized or suspected.

The government in Scotland launched a £1,000,000 campaign to train 100,000 professionals in the three fields identified as being the most likely to encounter battered women: dentists, hairdressers, and veterinarians. The UK RCVS' Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons cites the links between animal and child abuse and domestic violence as the rationale for considering reporting suspected domestic violence to local authorities when an issue raises the veterinarian's concern.

Closer to home, a commentary by Molly Allison and public health colleagues in the Jan. 1, 2017 issue of *JAVMA* called for greater veterinary involvement in preventing domestic violence. Action steps include: establishing partnerships and referrals with local domestic violence agencies; displaying educational information about domestic violence in clinic lobbies; and creating a relationship-centered care model.

And finally, a situation like this is a classic justification for having a Veterinary Social Worker available.

## Article Explores Veterinarians' Abuse Reporting and Immunity



**Mark Cushing**

The inconsistent patchwork of provisions among 50 states regarding veterinarians' requirement or permission to report suspected animal abuse, and the degree of immunity from civil and criminal liability to which they may be exposed, often seem like it would take a lawyer to figure it out. And that's what an attorney, Mark Cushing, does in a recent article categorizing states by the ease or difficulty by which a practitioner could report suspected animal maltreatment.

Only 28 states offer veterinarians immunity: there is no excuse for the other 22 states to not recognize the inherent fairness and strong public policy argument for granting immunity, he says.

"A pet owner unhappy with your voluntary report can sue for breach of confidentiality, gross negligence, breach of contract, negligence and more," Cushing writes. "Veterinarians and the public may cringe at this, but that's the law. If you don't like it, take it to the legislature or ask your VMA to do so," he writes. "If you disagree, then follow Shakespeare's advice and blame the lawyers."

Cushing groups the states ranging from easiest to most difficult from the practitioner's perspective. However, he neglects to dive even deeper into the fray by distinguishing those states which offer limited immunity (if the report is made in good faith) or absolute immunity (irrespective of the practitioner's intent in making the report). While supporting the need for immunity, he neglects to note that mandated reporting removes many of the contentious decision-making moral issues, makes it easier to explain the need for the report to the client, and places veterinary medicine on par with physicians who are universally mandated to report child abuse with immunity.

Cushing argues that the recent trend of legislatures' offering immunity should be encouraged further. He also writes that the British model – regulations providing a voluntary duty to report, with immunity, domestic abuse and child abuse – bears watching and may be replicated on this side of the Atlantic.

-- Cushing, M. (2017/2018). *Great expectations: Only a lawyer could figure out a veterinarian's reporting duties when animal abuse is suspected. Today's Veterinary Business, 1(3), 30-31.*

## Necropsy Results That Raise Index of Suspicion for Animal Abuse

Determining whether a certain situation is considered animal abuse under state statutes can be complicated and may often necessitate necropsy findings to verify visual and clinical observations. The objective of this study was to identify historical and necropsy findings suggestive of abuse or neglect of dogs and cats by retrospective analysis of necropsy reports from the diagnostic laboratory of a veterinary teaching hospital. The authors searched 8,417 necropsy reports accumulated over a 12-year period to identify cases which might be considered animal abuse or neglect, including blunt- or sharp-force trauma, gunshot, drowning, asphyxiation, burns, suspicious intoxication, and animal sexual abuse. Approximately 1% of the dogs and cats necropsied in the study period had signs suggestive of abuse. Such signs alone are not necessarily indicative of abuse but can increase the index of suspicion.

-- Almeida, D., Torres, S.M.F., & Wuenschmann, A. (2018). Retrospective analysis of necropsy reports suggestive of abuse in dogs and cats. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 252(4), 433-439.

## AVMA Considers Expanding Abuse Reporting to Include Neglect

The American Veterinary Medical Association is proposing a minor expansion of provisions in its Model Veterinary Practice Act that would give veterinarians and veterinary technicians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting, in good faith, suspected animal neglect. The existing Act offers these provisions for reporting suspected animal cruelty but makes no mention of neglect, which is a far more current occurrence.



The section in the Act was originally inserted to encourage veterinarians to report abuse to appropriate authorities by providing them with immunity. The section was expanded in 2012 to include veterinary technicians as well.

The Act serves as a template which state boards of veterinary medicine can use to craft their own veterinary practice regulations. AVMA has [published the draft](#) and is seeking comments from its members by March 25.



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.

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

### **Reframing Animal Abuse as Family Violence on Native American Lands**

The relationship between Native American people and animals over the millennia has had a rich and complex history across many tribal cultures. This relationship, however, began to deteriorate following contact with Europeans whose worldview was fundamentally different. Today the relationship has been put to the test with the introduction of such European practices as weaponized dogs, sport hunting, over-hunting, and animal cruelty. Similarly, domestic violence and child abuse were introduced and have become commonplace in many tribal communities. As many reservations struggle with animal control and protection problems, they are also seeing animal cruelty linked with domestic violence and a lack of resources to deal with these issues, a particular consideration given that Native Americans are said to have the highest rates of interpersonal violence of any American ethnic group.



**Sarah Deer (left), and Liz Murphy presented on animal abuse and domestic violence in Indian Country**

The authors propose a series of steps that combine traditional tribal cultural reverence for animals with contemporary regulations and policies that would enable tribal leaders to more effectively address animal abuse and domestic violence problems. “Reframing the ‘dog problem’ as a human problem and not an animal problem – a complete paradigm shift – may yield solutions that are more effective than the status quo,” they conclude.

-- Deer, S., & Murphy, L. (2017). “Animals may take pity on us”: Using traditional tribal beliefs to address animal abuse and family violence within tribal nations. *Mitchell Hamline Law Review*, 43(4), 703-742.

### **Animal Abuse Linked with Interpersonal Violence, Culture and Geography in Brazil**

Animal abuse adversely affects animal health and welfare and has been associated with interpersonal violence. However, if that association also depends on sociocultural contexts and can be detected on a geographic scale, a wider source of data can identify risk areas to support the surveillance of both types of violence. This study evaluated links between cases of interpersonal violence and animal abuse and an index of social vulnerability in São Paulo, Brazil, on a geographic scale, using Bayesian spatial models. Social vulnerability was a risk factor for interpersonal violence and the number of animal abuse cases was a risk factor for interpersonal violence. Geographical data on animal abuse or interpersonal violence should be considered as risk factors in investigations and interventions of both types of violence. Greater understanding is needed of the species and type of abuse involved, the animal health consequences, and the context in which the abuse occurred.

-- Baquero, O.S., Ferreira, F., Robis, M., Neto, J.S.F., & Onell, J.A. (2018). Bayesian spatial models of the association between interpersonal violence, animal abuse and social vulnerability in São Paulo, Brazil. *Preventive Veterinary Medicine*, 152, 48-55.

## NEWS FROM OTHER LINK COALITIONS

### European Link Coalition Summarizes Member Nations' Link Programs

Our European counterpart, the [European Link Coalition](#), is updating its website to offer pages profiling activities in its member constituents and offering a broad look at how animal welfare groups, in particular, are attempting to spread the Link concept around the world.



In France, One Voice reports that France is very late on the question of the Link. The inclusion of pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders has yet to catch on, nor has cross-reporting of animal abuse by social workers been implemented due to fears of violating confidentiality restrictions. However, individual initiatives are encouraging national government officials to consider animal abuse's Links to interpersonal violence as a rationale for enacting better legislation, and Link conferences are being held.

In the United Kingdom, Making the Link is promoting cross-reporting animal and child abuse between the RSPCA and NSPCC and creating risk assessment protocols. The initiative has attracted the attention of the College of Policing, whose DASH Risk Assessment is available to all front line police officers. The UK is also home of The Links Group UK which has been actively working on Link activities for many years.

Sweden is represented by VOOV ([See the June 2012 LINK-Letter](#)) and Se Sambandet ([See the December 2017 LINK-Letter](#)). They are educating and motivating hesitant veterinarians to identify and intervene in cases of animal abuse to better help animals and people. Police officers and animal welfare controllers in Sweden's 21 County Administrative Boards are also being trained to recognize non-accidental injury and to use risk-assessment tools.

Italy's Link Italia ([See the June 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) has published extensively on The Link and what the organization calls the zooanthropology of deviance.



Ukraine's Hidden-in-Sight is showing how animal cruelty and exploitation connects to other criminality in order to prevent abuse, bridging the law enforcement and animal charity sectors. The organization is training Patrol Police and animal NGOs to carry out early intervention in animal abuse cases and recognize that other crimes may be "hidden in sight". The goal is to have police departments formed since independence to take responsibility for developing continuing practices that support The Link.

Other Link approaches are being tried in Romania, where the Asociatia Pentru Protectia Animalelor a Doua Sansa focuses its work on the deleterious effects upon children who have been exposed to widespread animal cruelty in the streets; and Bosnia & Herzegovina, where Suffering Strays Sarajevo represents another European country where extremes of abuse still occur and enactment of the Link concept requires cultural change.



Other members of the European Link Coalition include Greece's Pan-Hellenic Animal Welfare Federation, Norway's NOAH, and Spain's Observatorio de Violencia Hacia los Animales ([See the June 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) and Sociedad Espanola Contra Violencia ([See the January 2016 LINK-Letter](#)).

## Link Toronto Making Headway with Police Agencies

The Link coalition in Toronto, Ontario, is making progress in introducing Link programs within the law enforcement community. Yvonne Tang, Chair of the Board for [Link Toronto](#), tells The LINK-Letter that a meeting with the Toronto Police Service's Domestic Violence Advisory Committee went well.



"They seemed excited that we were offering the SafePet program and acknowledged the need for it in our city. They were also happy to know that we were an additional resource for the community," she says.

The results of the meeting include:

- The detective who originally invited Link Toronto to the meeting and chairs the Advisory committee has agreed to be a continued resource for the organization.
- The Toronto Police College sergeant wants asked the group to review their syllabus and how the link can be better coordinated into their training.
- Link Toronto has been invited to present at the Ministry of the Attorney General Toronto Regional Domestic Violence Committee Meeting in April.

"The crown attorney who invited us acknowledged that while they were late in the process, she felt it was important for them to learn about the connections," she adds. "All in all, we are very excited with the outcomes. It is just a start but we are thrilled that we have some interest from workers in the industry and we will continue to push through"

## *BUILDING LINK AWARENESS*

### **WANTED: A Few Humane Educator Reviewers**

The National Link Coalition gets requests from teachers for a classroom curriculum that explains The Link between animal abuse and human violence to student audiences. Over the years, we have developed many such training modules for adults and a wide range of professional groups but haven't come up with something suitable for student audiences.

We're trying to change that and are asking your help. We have a beta version of a short PowerPoint that could be made available for free to educators who could then customize it with localized information about their organization, programs and statutes. We'd like to have a few humane educators give it an honest critique and, even better, field-test it in a classroom or two to see whether it works and what needs changing.

If you're willing to help, please let National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow know at [arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net) and he'll send it to you for review. Many thanks!

## Lucy's Project Founder Named Citizen of the Year



Anna Ludvik displays her award

The founder of an Australian organization dedicated to the protection of women, children and companion animals at risk of domestic violence has been named the 2018 Citizen of the Year during annual Australia Day Awards in Lismore, New South Wales.

Anna Ludvik was recognized for her pioneering work in establishing [Lucy's Project](#) in 2013 (*See the [October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) after the stillbirth of her daughter Lucy. She saw the need to connect the many organizations across Australia working in isolation on the issue of companion animals and domestic violence, and created the country's first Link organization. Lucy's Project has now staged three

international conferences and has established chapters in most states of Australia.

Lucy's Project gives animal shelters, police, women's refuges, government agencies, domestic violence services, and others a space to discuss issues, tackle problems and work collaboratively.

"Anna is a very deserving recipient of the Lismore Citizen of the Year award – her compassion for people and animals affected by domestic violence is evident in the personal sacrifices she has made to make Lucy's Project a reality," Lismore Mayor Isaac Smith said.

Smith further commended Ludvik for the time and energy she has given to the cause despite being a single working mother, for her deep compassion for animals and people, and for causing significant change in the domestic violence sector.

Ludvik was previously commended in the NSW Parliament in 2016 for the international conference she organized, bringing world leaders in the field to Australia to educate others and advance the movement. As a consequence of the conference, many co-housing shelters are being built across the country.

## Illinois Link Awareness Legislation Tabled

An innocuous resolution which would have used The Link as a rationale for encouraging Illinois citizens to educate themselves on the types and signs of companion animal cruelty so they would be more prepared to report it, and to treat all companion animals with "the utmost respect," was inexplicably tabled in the Illinois House of Representatives.

**HR 364**, introduced in April, 2017 by Rep. Lindsay Parkhurst (R-Kankakee), cited studies in psychology, sociology and criminology demonstrating that violent offenders [Rep. Lindsay Parkhurst](#) frequently have childhood and adolescent histories of serious and repeated cruelty to animals. The non-binding resolution noted that mental health and law enforcement professionals consider animal cruelty as "an unquestionable warning sign of future violent behavior," a sign of psychological distress, and a diagnostic criterion for conduct disorder.



## *THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES*

### **Victories We're Celebrating... and Bills We're Watching**

As the 2018 legislative season opens, we are finding that more and more state legislators are recognizing that animal abuse and interpersonal violence are LINKed. We are encouraged by this progress and hope to see even more LINK legislation passed this year!

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



**H.R. 909 and S.322 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act** – was re-introduced and now has 246 bi-partisan co-sponsors in the House and 37 in the Senate. The PAWS Act would prohibit threats or acts of violence against a victim's pet in interstate stalking and interstate violation of protection orders. It would allocate \$3 million annually through 2021 in grants for shelter and housing assistance for victims with pets, support services to help victims secure safe housing that allows pets, and for pet-related services. Grants could also be used for training on The Link and for identifying best practices. Abusers would be required to make restitution to the victim for costs incurred for veterinary services. **H.R. 909** is in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. **S.322** is in the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



**California AB 1939** would declare it the intention of the state Legislature to enact laws that promote the safety of domestic violence victims and prevent animal abuse, and create a framework for public domestic violence shelters to provide temporary housing solutions at local animal shelters for the pets of domestic violence survivors.



**Colorado SB 18-060** would specifically allow courts to specifically issue a protective order prohibiting the taking, transferring, concealing, harming, disposing of, or threatening to harm an animal owned, possessed, leased, kept, or held by the alleged victim or witness. Colorado law currently includes animals among the various types of property that can be included in a protective order. The bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate.



**Kentucky HB 447** would prohibit courts from offering probation, early release or a suspended sentence to offenders convicted of torturing a dog or cat with the intent of threatening, intimidating, coercing, harassing, or terrorizing a family member or person in a dating relationship. Kentucky law defines "family members" as current and former spouses, child or stepchild, grandchild, parent or grandparent. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**Michigan HB 4026** would define "causing or attempting to cause physical harm" to a family member's animal as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain. It would allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and to include veterinary care among the emergency health care services that they provide among the criteria for needing funding. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**Michigan HB 4332** would make it a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree offense, depending on severity, to knowingly torture or kill an animal with the intent to cause mental distress or exert control over a person. The bill was passed the House 90-15, approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and sent to the Senate.



**Mississippi SB 2232** would have authorized courts to include the protection of pets in the order and require that the respondent not remove, damage, hide, harm or dispose of any companion animal owned by the person protected by the order. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**



**Missouri HB 2374** would add “intimidation,” the coercive, vengeful or punitive injuring, killing or threatening of an animal, as grounds for which a court could issue an order of protection.



**New Mexico HJM 3** would request that the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Public Safety consider providing training on the Link between animal abuse and family violence in training delivered to appropriate personnel. The measure was approved by the House and two Senate committees.



**New York A8663** would amend §23 of the state’s Domestic Relations Law to require the court to consider the best interest of a companion animal when awarding possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



**Ohio HB1** would expand the ability of courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include the animals of domestic violence survivors to individuals seeking protection orders in cases of dating violence. It would allow a court order of protection to require that a respondent not remove, damage, hide, harm, or dispose of any companion animal owned or possessed by the petitioner alleging dating violence. It also would allow a court order to authorize the petitioner, alleging dating violence, to remove a companion animal owned by that petitioner from the possession of the respondent. The bill has passed the House and Senate.



**Pennsylvania HB1652** would allow divorcing parties to enter into a custody agreement for the possession and/or care of a companion animal. Such agreements may specify the time during which each party will possess the pet and each party’s financial responsibility regarding its care. The bill defines relevant factors which the court may consider. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



**Rhode Island H7032** would permit the family court to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint. The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.



**Rhode Island HB 7167** would expand family court jurisdiction to enter protective orders to provide for the safety and welfare of household pets in domestic abuse situations. The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.



**Rhode Island HB 7585** would create a custody procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



**West Virginia HB 2855** would allow courts to make provisions within a divorce order for the temporary custody and care of pets, including joint custody, allocation of costs and visitation rights for the noncustodial party, taking into consideration the well-being of the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

### *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*



**Michigan HB 4025** would increase the penalties for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child to a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year's imprisonment, \$2,000 fine, and 300 hours of community service. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**New York S1432/A5048** criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend an exhibition of animal fighting. **S1432** passed the Senate; both bills are now in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



**New York S2470** and companion bill **A2140**, and **S728** and companion bill **A3845**, would increase penalties for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child. **S2470** is in the Senate Agriculture Committee; **A2140** is in the Assembly Codes Committee. **S728** passed the Senate and joined **A3845** in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

### *Animal Sexual Abuse*



**H.R. 1494/S.654 -- the PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act** – would amend and update 18 U.S. Code § 48 to expand the definition of “animal crushing,” as pertains to “crush videos,” to include any act in which animals are subjected to serious bodily injury or conduct that, if committed against a person, would be defined as sexual abuse or aggravated sexual abuse. The Senate version passed unanimously on Dec. 14 and heads to the Judiciary Committee in the House, where it has 275 co-sponsors.



Existing **Alabama** law prohibits the dissemination, display and possession of obscene material including child pornography and bestiality. **SB 35** would clarify the definition of dissemination by removing the requirement of monetary consideration and would add sharing or trading such visual depictions. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



**California AB 3040** would strengthen the state's bestiality law. Existing law makes it a misdemeanor to sexually assault certain animals to gratify a person's sexual desires. The bill would instead prohibit sexual contact with any animal and trafficking, observing, participating, or possessing videos of animal sexual abuse, punishable as a misdemeanor or felony; such animals could be seized. The bill would also add animal sexual abuse to the list of animal abuse offenses in current law for which offenders would be barred from owning or volunteering with animals following conviction.



**Hawai'i SB 2289** would have created a new crime of sexual assault of an animal as a Class C felony, or a Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor, and order forfeiture of all animals; prohibit living, working or volunteering with animals for five years; and require psychological or psychiatric counseling or treatment. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**



**Kentucky SB 239** would establish the crime of sexual activity with animals as a Class A misdemeanor. It is in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



**Maryland HB 1134** and **SB 800** would replace the more archaic terms “sodomy,” “bestiality” and “unnatural or perverted sexual practices” with the more contemporary “sexual activity with an animal” and prohibit a wide range of activities designed to promote, coerce, observe, or abet such practices. Convicted offenders would be barred from owning, residing with, or coming into contact with an animal for 30 years. The law would take effect Oct. 1, 2018. The bills are in the respective Judiciary committees.

 **Massachusetts S.805** would amend Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. Ch. 272, § 34, which currently uses the archaic language prohibiting “the abominable and detestable crime against nature either with mankind or with any animal,” to prohibit “a sexual act on an animal, uses an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permits a sexual act with an animal on any premises under such person’s control.” The bill was included in a Study Order by the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Washington SB 6076** would change the definition of illegal animal sexual contact to include sexual penetration or touching of the sexual or other intimate parts of an animal by force, intimidation, coercion, or where motivated by sexual arousal, sexual gratification or financial gain. The bill is in the Law & Justice Committee.

 West Virginia **HB 4455** passed the House on Feb. 28 by a vote of 96-0 and was sent to the Senate. The bill would prohibit sexual abuse of an animal, either by engaging in, aiding or abetting, organizing or promoting, making animals available, or permitting it to be conducted on one’s premises. Violations would be misdemeanors; however, committing animal sexual abuse in the presence of a child, having prior convictions for sex crimes, or causing serious bodily injury or death to the animal would make offenses a felony. Courts would order offenders to surrender all animals and pay for their care and maintenance and would prohibit ownership or residence with animals for either 5 or 15 years. Offenders would be required to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation to be eligible for probation.

 **Wisconsin AB 666** and companion measure **SB 802** would update the state’s archaic bestiality law and make it a felony to have sexual contact with an animal, to coerce another to have sexual contact with an animal, or to promote, advertise, harbor, transport, or obtain an animal for the purpose of sexual contact. Current law only makes sexual gratification with an animal a misdemeanor and does not include the other provisions. The bill would also create escalating degrees of felony if the other person is a child. **AB 666** was approved by full Assembly; **SB 802** is in the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.

### *Animal Hoarding*

 **Florida SB 86** would define animal hoarding as keeping a large number of companion animals in overcrowded conditions; failing to provide them with minimal standards of nutrition, sanitation, shelter and medical care; and failure to acknowledge these conditions and the impact on the well-being of the animals or persons.

 **New York A44** would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as ownership, possession or custody of more than 25 companion animals living in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of the animals and/or people. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may be required to undergo counseling and be prohibited from owning animals. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

### *“CASA for Animals”*

 **New York A9701** would allow a court to order a separate advocate be appointed to represent the interests of justice in animal welfare proceedings. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

## *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*



**California SB 1024** would amend existing requirements mandating animal cruelty offenders who are granted probation to receive counseling, to requiring offenders to undergo mental health evaluation and subsequent counseling if the mental health professional deems it necessary. Diversion, probation or similar programs would be terminated for failing to complete the requirements. Offenders would also have to complete and pass a 5-hour course on responsible animal owner education. Fines for animal cruelty offenses would be increased.



**Iowa SF 2181** would allow courts to require adult animal cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation and treatment, and would mandate such provisions for juveniles and individuals convicted of animal torture, abandonment, endangerment, or aggravated cruelty. The bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.



**Maryland HB 1629** would allow a court to order psychological counseling for a defendant convicted of an animal abuse crime. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**Mississippi SB 2172** would have allowed courts to order persons convicted of aggravated cruelty to receive a psychiatric or psychological examination and counseling or treatment. **The bill died in the Senate Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.**



**Missouri HB 2359** would allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment upon convicted animal cruelty offenders. The bill would also affect *Cross-Reporting*.



**New Jersey A3049** and **S 1636** would require a mental health evaluation for juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders, to be followed by mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Health, Human Services & Senior Citizens Committee.



Existing **Virginia** law permits courts to impose anger management or other appropriate treatment programs, or obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling, upon animal cruelty offenders. **HB 425** would make such provisions mandatory unless the court finds that the person presents no current or future likelihood of repeating the violation or causing harm to himself or others. **The bill was tabled indefinitely in the Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake & Natural Resources.**

## *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**California AB 197** would have added animal abuse, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, and other crimes as “violent” felonies that could be prosecuted as a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike with additional years of imprisonment under the Three Strikes Law. **The bill died in the Committee on Public Safety.**



**Hawai'i SB 2014** would create a registry of convicted animal cruelty offenders based upon the premise that “acts of cruelty to one animal has been linked to cruelty to other animals and violence against humans, it is necessary to ensure that persons convicted of cruelty to animals are restricted from interacting with animals.” The bill is in the Senate Judiciary and Ways & Means Committees.

 **Massachusetts S.1159** would add animal cruelty and fighting as specifically enumerated offenses which would allow the prosecution to ask for pre-trial detention on the grounds of the defendant's dangerousness. The bill would also mandate *Cross-Training*. The bill was approved by the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government and sent to the Senate Rules Committee.

 **New York S1680** and companion bill **A3038** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **S1680** passed the Senate on Jan. 30 and was referred to the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **A3038** is in the Codes Committee.

 **New York S251** would expand animal fighting prohibitions to criminalize promoting, attending, facilitating, training, breeding or selling fighting animals, or selling, manufacturing or owning animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

### *Cross-Reporting*

 **Indiana SB 332** and **HB 1261** ("Protecting pets in distressed homes") would have required Adult Protective Services employees conducting assessments or investigations who believe an animal is a victim of cruelty, abandonment or neglect to report it to law enforcement or animal control, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. **The bills died in their respective committees.**

 **Indiana SB 431** would grant APS and CPS workers who observe suspected animal cruelty, abandonment or abuse while conducting an assessment or investigation immunity from civil and criminal liability if they report the situation to law enforcement or animal control. The bill passed the Senate and House and has been sent to the Governor.

 **Iowa HF 2065** and **SF 129** would require veterinarians to report any conclusion of animal cruelty to the local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. It would also require law enforcement agencies investigating animal cruelty complaints to file a child endangerment report with the Department of Human Services if a child witnessed the abuse. It also increases penalties for various animal abuse offenses including committing animal torture in the presence of a child, and would allow courts to ban offenders' ownership of animals. The measure would also allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment upon convicted offenders; such orders would be mandatory for juvenile offenders. The bills are in their respective Agriculture Committees.

 **Kansas HB2530** would have added animal control officers to professionals who are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. The bill was approved by the Committee on Children and Seniors and **the provision was deleted by the House.**

 **Massachusetts S.295** would mandate domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers to report child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee.

 **Massachusetts S.1159** would require employees or contractors of the Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs investigators, and Disabled Persons Protection Commission investigators to report suspected animal abuse. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. The bill would also affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill was approved by the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government and sent to the Senate Rules Committee.



**Michigan HB 4441** would amend the Child Protection Law to add animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or child neglect. **HB 4442** would amend the Michigan Penal Code to require Child Protective Services employees to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with anonymity, the presumption of having acted in good faith, and immunity from civil or criminal liability. Failure to report, or making a false report, would be punishable offenses. **HB 4443** would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to make intentional false reporting of animal abuse a felony. The bills are in the Judiciary Committee.



**Minnesota** veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect to peace officers, humane agents or animal control officers. **HF 787** and **SF1167** would give them immunity from civil liability. **HF 787** is in the Agriculture Policy Committee and **SF1167** is in the Agriculture, Rural Development & Housing Policy Committee.



**Mississippi SB 2172** would have require law enforcement officers investigating animal abuse cases to utilize a uniform form to conform with the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. The bill would also have enhanced penalties for animal cruelty and require youths convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation. **The bill died in committee.**



**Missouri HB 2359** would grant veterinarians, teachers and school personnel immunity from civil liability for reporting suspected animal abuse in good faith to law enforcement agencies. The bill also imposes *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*.



**New York S621** and **A4904** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to police, SPCAs, peace officers, district attorney's offices, animal control officers, the department of agriculture and markets, or other appropriate agencies and to turn over necessary records. New York veterinarians are currently permitted but are not required to report. The bills, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, are in the respective Higher Education Committees.



**Ohio HB147** would add agents of the Ohio Humane Society to professionals mandated to report child abuse. It also would repeal a provision of the Humane Society Law that specifically requires humane society agents to remove a child from his or her parents when the agent deems it to be in the child's best interest. Current law designates agents of county humane societies as mandated reporters, but not agents of the Ohio Humane Society. Current law also requires public children's services agencies to prepare a memorandum of understanding to be signed by specified law enforcement and judicial officers in their jurisdiction, including the county humane society; the bill would allow the Ohio Humane Society to be a signatory as well. The bill is in the Civil Justice Committee.



**Ohio HB 523** would mandate: veterinarians and technicians, child protective services, and counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists to report suspected animal abuse with immunity from liability; dog wardens to report suspected family violence; and military family advocacy programs be notified when military personnel are investigated for child maltreatment or domestic violence. The bill is in the Community & Family Advancement Committee.



**Pennsylvania SB 176** would add animal control and humane society police officers as mandated reporters of child abuse, and social services employees to report animal cruelty. The bill was laid on the table in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



**West Virginia HB 4014** would have required adult protective services workers to report reasonable suspicions of animal abuse or cruelty to the county humane officer within 24 hours, and humane officers to immediately report suspected abuse, neglect or emergencies affecting an incapacitated adult or facility resident. The provisions were part of a larger reorganization of the Department of Health & Human Resources and **did not survive the committee amendment process.**

## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

### Cruelty Charges Dropped, Weapons and Narcotics Charges Kept for Suspected Dogfighter



**Daniel Dawarren Pride**

A suspected dogfighter had 31 counts of animal cruelty dropped by a Catawba County, N. Car. magistrate after agreeing with the defendant’s attorney that the dogs’ wounds, which appeared to have been inflicted with scissors in efforts to dock their ears for fighting purposes, did not meet the state statute’s requirement for felony animal cruelty that such mutilation be “malicious.” Daniel Dawarren Pride, 37, of Hickory, remained in custody on several narcotics and weapons charges and the dogs were under the care of the county animal shelter, according to the Hickory Record. Police officers found several deceased dogs and blood all over the floor in an unheated building. Fighting dogs often have their ears amputated to give attacking dogs fewer body parts to grab on to.

### Alleged Beater of Pregnant Girlfriend Charged Again with Animal Cruelty



**Christopher Simpson and Alyssa Croom**

A Wilmington, N. Car. man with previous charges of animal cruelty and beating his pregnant girlfriend was charged again with animal abuse for allegedly killing a yellow Labrador puppy belonging to his girlfriend’s family. Christopher Anthony Simpson, 21, appeared in New Hanover District Court with his girlfriend, Alyssa Croom, to answer charges in the Christmas Day killing of the puppy, whose injuries were so severe that the examining veterinarian compared the dog’s battered liver to “ground hamburger.” The [Port City Daily](#) reported that Simpson had been charged with injuring a 3-month-old kitten in 2015 but that case was dropped when Croom, the prosecution’s witness, refused to testify. Croom also refused to cooperate with the district attorney’s office in the charges that Simpson had beaten her. Citing his prior history, prosecutors asked that Simpson’s bail be set at \$50,000, but District Judge Lindsey McKee increased the bond to \$100,000 – at which time Croom stormed out of the courtroom. McKee had her returned to the courtroom, told her she was disrespectful, then ordered her to leave.

### Dog Stabbed Saving Pregnant Woman from Attacker

A Perth, Western Australia man was charged with animal cruelty and weapons offenses for allegedly stabbing a dog that was preventing him from attacking a pregnant woman. [The Daily Mail](#) reported that “Bullet,” a bull mastiff, was stabbed at least three times by the unnamed attacker. The attacker allegedly shoved the woman and threatened her with two knives during an altercation before the dog intervened.

## Boyfriend Charged with Cruelty, Weapons Offenses in Beating of Girl's Puppy

An Indianapolis man is behind bars for allegedly beating the 4-month-old pit bull puppy belonging to his girlfriend's daughter following an investigation where the daughter reportedly said she had shot herself in the leg. Lemontrae Bible, 24, was charged with torturing or mutilating an animal and being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm in the incident, which left the dog, "Halsey," with a cracked skull and a broken leg, jaw and ribs. Authorities said Halsey had remained untreated for four days but that some of her injuries appeared older with evidence of prior beating, the [Indianapolis Star](#) reported.



Lemontrae Bible

## Stray Dog Complaint Leads to 21 Child Neglect and Cruelty Charges

Frederick, Md. animal control officers and sheriff's deputies responding to a neighbor's report of a malnourished dog wandering loose in her yard charged the dog's owner with 18 counts of animal cruelty and three counts of child neglect after they also found three children living in a feces-covered home they called "deplorable." Animal control officers and firefighters, who had to don haz-mat suits to enter the home of Natalie A. Carmichael, 33, also removed four adult dogs, three puppies, a cat, a domesticated rat, a snake, a parakeet, and the decapitated head of a puppy, the [Frederick News-Post](#) reported. The three children, aged 4 to 6, were relinquished to the custody of their grandmother. The animals were reported to be doing well at the animal shelter.

## Teen Girls Charged with Cruelty and Multiple Crimes in Break-In that Killed Two Parakeets

Two North Carolina teenage girls were charged with felony animal cruelty and multiple other crimes after they allegedly broke into a home, killed two parakeets, stole items from the home including a vehicle, and then set the vehicle on fire. The Lenoir County Sheriff's Office announced that Hallie Lauren Pate, 17, of Kinston, and Jordan Alexis Ruiz, 18, of Albertson, had been arrested. The other charges included larceny, breaking and entering, and burning personal property. "It would be bad enough if they just broke in and attempt to take something but when you break in to a home, kill an animal and then attempt to burn the place, that's very disturbing," Sheriff Ronnie Ingram told [WCTI-TV](#).



Dexter

## Man Charged with Assault for Stabbing a Police Dog During Arrest

A San Diego, Calif. man was charged with assaulting a police dog and resisting arrest, and his mother was obtaining a protective order against him, following an arrest in which "Dexter," a 4-year-old police K-9, was stabbed with a 7-inch kitchen knife. The unidentified man, aged 22, stabbed the dog after police responded to a 911 call from the mother who said she was having trouble controlling her son. When he came to the door brandishing the knife and refusing to drop it, police shot him with bean bags and released Dexter, who suffered a broken rib and ruptured spleen in the fracas. K-9 Officer Larry Adair told the [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) that Dexter underwent emergency surgery and is expected to recover and return to duty. "I can't tell you how hard it is to see your partner, your pal, your best friend, stabbed – wounded," said Adair, whose own police dog has been hurt in the line of duty.



Diane Gay

### Mother Charged with Stabbing Her Son’s Dog

A mother has been charged with animal cruelty for allegedly stabbing her son’s dog. Diane Gay, of Standish, Mich., was arrested by Arenac County sheriff’s deputies. Investigators reportedly found a trail of blood leading to the dead dog, and an 8” fillet knife under a sofa. [WNEM-TV](#) reported.

### Five Charged with Cruelty, Narcotics and Weapons Offenses in Dogfighting Ring Crackdown

A federal grand jury has handed down indictments on animal cruelty, narcotics and weapons offenses against two brothers nabbed in a sprawling investigation into an alleged international dogfighting ring operating near Lansing, Mich. Investigators from the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Explosives & Firearms said Charles and Kian Miller were part of an expansive operation with criminal activities spanning several counties, the [Lansing State Journal](#) reported.



Charles & Kian Miller

Each brother faces three counts of animal fighting and conspiracy; Charles Miller faces additional charges for firearms and manufacturing crack cocaine. The indictment said Charles Miller paid someone \$1,650 to transport a pitbull from Ecuador to Michigan. Two other Lansing men – Clement Waddy and Corey Henry – are awaiting trial on 23 felony and misdemeanor charges, while Henry’s daughter Synquiss Tairee-Devon Antes has pled guilty to animal cruelty. More than 50 pitbulls, incriminating photos and videos, strength- and stamina-training equipment, and pedigree records for animals well-known in the dogfighting world were seized by animal control officers as part of the investigation.



Waddy, Henry & Antes

### Children Lived in a Box for Four Years with 30 – 40 Cats



Deputies found these living conditions

Daniel Panico, 73, and Mona Kirk, 51, were arrested by San Bernardino County, Calif. sheriff’s deputies and charged with cruelty to children after they found three malnourished children who had allegedly been living in a box for the past four years. *The Desert Sun* reported that the deputies also found 30 to 40 cats, human feces and mounds of trash at the property, which has no electricity or running water, just outside Joshua Tree National Park. Children & Family Services took custody of the children, aged 11, 13 and 14, but there was no report on the welfare of the cats. The box was said to be 20 feet by 10 feet and 4 feet high.

## Child Protection Called After Police Find Starving, Bloody Dog and Pig



Jacqueline Youman

Police officers in Dallas, Texas called child protective services to check on the welfare of a child found in a home where a dog and a pig were found severely emaciated, covered in blood, and living without shelter in a 22-degree wind chill. The animals' owner, Jacqueline Youman, 29, was charged with cruelty to livestock and non-livestock animals. The [Dallas Morning News](#) reported that Youman reportedly told officers that she was busy and sometimes forgot to feed the animals. Two other dogs found in the home were found to be in good shape; all four were surrendered to animal control officers.

## LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**March 13 – London, U.K.:** [The Links Group UK](#) will meet at Dogs Trust.

**March 13-17 – Knoxville, Tenn.:** Maya Gupta and Jenny Edwards will be among the presenters discussing The Link between Violence to Humans and Animals at the [Veterinary Social Work Intensive](#).

**March 15 – (Online):** Phil Tedeschi will lead a [webinar](#) for the Institute for Human-Animal Connection on “Forensic Animal Maltreatment Evaluations and Animal Abuse Risk Assessment Tools.” LINK-Letter readers can use the code CHANGE for one-time free access.

**March 19 – Bedford, Mass.:** The Bedford Police Dept. and Humane Society of the US will host a [workshop](#) on animal abuse investigations and The Link training for law enforcement, prosecutors, veterinarians, and animal control.

**March 20 (online):** Melinda Merck will conduct a [webinar](#) on using Veterinary Forensics to Support Investigation and Prosecution efforts for the Justice Clearinghouse.

**March 7 – Pittsfield, Mass.:** [HAVEN](#) will meet at the Berkshire Humane Society.

**March 23 – Cranford, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will train staff of the [N.J. Division of Child Protection & Permanency](#) on “Animal Abuse and Dangerous Animals as Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Other Family Violence.”

**April 4 – Philadelphia, Pa.:** Phil Arkow will speak to the Animals and Social Work class at the University of Pennsylvania [School of Social Policy & Practice](#).

**April 4 – Oklahoma City, Okla.:** [The Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at DVIS.

**April 5 – Tulsa, Okla.:** Mary Jo Kinzie, Kathleen Romero and Kristy Wicker will present on The Link at the [National Association of Social Workers – Oklahoma](#) conference.

**April 13 – Dallas, Texas:** The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will meet.

**April 18 (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “Domestic Violence and the Human-Animal Bond” for [Pet Partners](#).

**April 23 – Charlotte, N. Car.:** Phil Arkow will present a Link training to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department [Animal Care & Control](#) Division.

**April 24 – Oklahoma City, Okla.:** [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at the OSBI Forensic Science Center.

**April 27 – Austin, Texas:** “The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse,” “Understanding Animal Hoarding,” “Blood Sports,” “Preparing and Prosecuting Animal cruelty Cases,” and “Texas Animal Cruelty Laws 101 will be among the presentations at the [Texas Animal Law Institute](#) being held in conjunction with Texas Unites for Animals.

**April 28 – Austin, Texas:** Phil Arkow will present “Who ‘Ya Gonna Call? Abuse Busters!” at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

**May 9 (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence” for the [National Organization for Victim Assistance Academy](#).

**May 11 – Richmond, Va.:** Phil Arkow will present on “Species-Spanning Medicine: The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence” at the Virginia Commonwealth University [Department of Psychiatry](#)’s Grand Rounds.

**May 30 – (online):** Allie Phillips will present a webinar on Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T) for the [National Network to End Domestic Violence](#).

**June 5 – Bloomington, Ill.:** Phil Arkow will present at the [Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference](#).

**July 6 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada:** Phil Arkow will present on The Link, Clinical and Diagnostic Indicators of Animal Abuse, and Addressing Practice Management Concerns in Responding to Suspected Abuse at the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#) Convention.

**Aug. 9 – Aurora, Colo.:** Phil Arkow will speak to the [Metro Denver Animal Welfare Alliance](#).

**Aug. 15 – Philadelphia, Pa.:** Phil Arkow will train at the [Penna. Bar Institute](#) Animal Law Conference.

**Sept. 6 – Buffalo, N.Y.:** Phil Arkow will lecture at the [Buffalo Academy of Veterinary Medicine](#).

**Oct. 18 – Cambridge/Guelph, Ont., Canada:** Phil Arkow will present on “Making the Cruelty Connection: A Species-Spanning Approach to Safer Families and Communities” to the [Association of Animal Shelter Administrators of Ontario](#).

**Oct. 22-23 – Oklahoma City, Okla.:** The Kirkpatrick Foundation will sponsor the [Oklahoma Animal Conference](#) as part of its Safe & Humane initiative.

**Nov. 23 – Calgary, Alberta, Canada:** Phil Arkow will speak at the [Alberta Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Veterinary Forensics Workshop.



## 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,  
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