



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Massachusetts Bill Would Make Sweeping Link Advances

A bill in the Massachusetts Legislature has the potential of being one of the nation’s most comprehensive strategies addressing universal cross-reporting, animal sexual abuse, and the connections between animal abuse and other crimes. **S.2347** would:



- Require Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs and Disabled Persons Protection Commission personnel to report suspected animal abuse to police officers. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability; confidentiality restrictions would not prohibit an individual from making a report. **Sen. Bruce E. Tarr**
- Mandate animal control officers to report child, elder and disabled persons abuse.
- Add animal cruelty and animal fighting as offenses which would allow prosecutors to ask for pre-trial detention on the premise that the defendant poses a greater danger to the community.
- Prohibit “sexual contact with animals” and related activities, including advertising, obtaining animals, organizing, promoting, observing, and disseminating photographs and videos. Convicted offenders would face heavy fines and imprisonment, seizure of the animals, bans from owning or working with animals for five years, and mandatory psychological assessment and counseling. Existing Massachusetts statutes prohibit animal sexual abuse but use the more archaic terminology of the “abominable and detestable crime against nature.”

The bill, designed “to protect animal welfare and safety in cities and towns,” replaced and consolidated several similar bills. It was originally introduced by Sen. Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr, a long-time animal welfare advocate .It passed the Senate 36-0 and is in the House Ways & Means Committee.

Another provision would prohibit companies offering homeowners’ or renters’ insurance coverage for personal injury or property damage from canceling, refusing to renew, or charging additional premiums based upon the harboring of a specific breed of dog, unless the dog has previously been designated by law as dangerous. The bill also would require landlords to look for abandoned animals when a tenant vacates a property.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ohio Extends Pet Protection Orders to Include Dating Violence

Ohio Gov. John Kasich signed into law on April 5 **HB1**, extending provisions for domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders to cover dating violence. Those provisions include protections for the petitioner's animals, first implemented in Ohio in 2015 (*See the [January 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*).

The new law expands courts' ability 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 allows 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.



Gov. John Kasich

The measure also allows victims of dating violence to have access to domestic violence shelters, and requires the Attorney General's bill of rights pamphlet to include a notice that persons alleging dating violence have access to domestic violence civil protection orders.

Podcast, Conference Spotlight The Link in Australia



Anna, Olivia Neutered Dog & Billie Howliday

are Linked. It includes material from the [My Saving Grace](#), Link campaign in Australia. Lucy's Project will hold its national conference addressing practical perspectives of the domestic violence/animal abuse Link on Nov. 17-18 in Melbourne.

Anna Ludvik, who founded [Lucy's Project](#) after the stillbirth of her daughter Lucy to connect Australian organizations working in isolation on the animal/domestic violence Link (*see the [October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*), has recorded a [podcast](#). It aired on the Freedom of Species program on Melbourne's community radio station 3CR 855AM. She describes how she launched Lucy's Project, the impact of domestic violence and animal abuse on children, the status of animal protection and domestic violence programs in Australia, and how these two forms of family violence are Linked. It includes material from the [My Saving Grace](#), Link campaign in Australia. Lucy's Project will hold its national conference addressing practical perspectives of the domestic violence/animal abuse Link on Nov. 17-18 in Melbourne.

Themes Affecting Domestic Violence Clients with Pets Identified

Research has documented a relationship between intimate partner violence and animal abuse, with survivors often delaying seeking safety because of their concern for the safety of their pets and because many shelters do not provide services for their pets. There continues to be a need for evidence-based guidelines to address the needs of survivors and their pets. This exploratory study documented the experiences of intimate partner violence practitioners from community service agencies. Focus groups identified four overarching themes: (1) pets as members of the family; (2) inconsistencies regarding screening practices; (3) a need for comprehensive safety planning; and (4) safe housing for both survivors and their pets. Implications for research, practice, and policy are discussed.

--Hageman, T.O. Langenderfer-Magruder, L., Greene, T., Williams, J.H., & St. Mary, J., et al. (2018). Intimate partner violence survivors and pets: Exploring practitioners' experiences in addressing client needs. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services* [published online <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389418767836>]

Orlando Shelter Describes Pet Program, Plans Kennel Renovations

In 2012, the [Harbor House](#) domestic violence shelter in Orlando, Fla., opened one of the earliest pet-friendly facilities to accommodate the animal survivors of family violence (*See the [August 2012 LINK-Letter](#)*). The Paws for Peace kennel on the campus of the emergency shelter was designed to accommodate up to 40 pets in state-of-the-art housing with a grooming room, outdoor play area, screened sun porch, and donation center. Today, Harbor House has announced plans to renovate the facility, which houses not only dogs and cats but also birds, fish, iguanas, and hamsters.



The 8th Annual Paws for Peace Walk raised \$50,000 to keep pets and people safe from abuse

In a recent newsletter, Harbor House CEO Michelle Sperzel described the process by which animals are accepted into Paws for Peace and the renovation plans. The names of the client and her dog were changed to protect their identities:

“When a pet first moves into our kennel, they are kept in a quarantined area for 24-48 hours until their person can locate their vaccination records. During this time, we also look for signs of any communicable illnesses like kennel cough. If the animal is not vaccinated or records cannot be accessed, Harbor House staff works with local veterinary offices to get the pet up to date.

“While service animals are the only non-humans allowed in the emergency shelter, residents have full access to visit their pets in the kennel. There is space where they can take the pet out and sit or lay with them or take them outside to play and get some fresh air.

“When Kim arrived at our emergency shelter, she was very worried about her dog, Mocha, a chocolate pit bull that she had to leave behind with her abusive husband when she fled. He had hurt the dog before, and she feared what might happen to Mocha without her there. Once she realized Harbor House has a kennel where Mocha could be near her and safe, she wanted to go get her immediately. Our Kennel Director got in touch with a Harbor House advocate who works closely with the Orlando Police Department to arrange for an officer to escort Kim and the Director to her house to retrieve Mocha. An officer met the two women at Kim’s former house the next day. Luckily, her husband was not there at the time. They believed he had hurt Mocha after Kim left. The dog had no visible wounds, but she yelped when they tried to lift her into the truck and was especially sensitive when her back was gently touched.

“The Kennel Director took Mocha to be checked out at the vet’s office. X-rays revealed no serious injuries, but Mocha was given pain medication and updated vaccinations. After about a month in shelter, Kim had found work and a place where she and Mocha could live. She was able to get her car back when her abuser was arrested. Kim and Mocha are now happy and safe together.

“Harbor House has plans to make improvements to the kennel for the safety and comfort of the animals and their people, just like Mocha and Kim. Some of the simple enhancements include adding indoor/outdoor carpets and pet friendly furniture to the indoor spaces. Outside we want to create more shade and play space by adding a canopy and comfortable seating. We want to make the dog runs safer by adding shade, shelter, gravel, and kennel flooring. Having comfortable space where they can heal and bond is healthy for the pets and the people at Harbor House.”



Manuals in 10 States Help Attorneys and Advocates Assist Clients with Pets

The Animal Welfare Institute has now published [11 manuals](#) to assist attorneys and domestic violence advocates in 10 states plus the District of Columbia in including their clients' pets in protection orders. Compiled by attorneys working with the AWI staff, the manuals summarize legal issues surrounding the inclusion of pets in civil protection orders, provide details about that state's laws, and provide links to relevant forms and outside resources.

The manuals were first published in 2015 for Colorado, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia (*See the [February 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*). In the ensuing years, manuals have been completed for Florida, Maine, Michigan, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin. AWI hopes to eventually produce a manual for each state.

The manuals include: an overview of the national legal landscape; the state's specific domestic violence laws regarding restraining and protective orders; the steps for including pets in orders; identifying resources who can care for the animals; fact-finding questions to ask clients when gathering evidence for hearings; evidentiary issues; identifying what type of relief the client wants; and applicable forms used in that state.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS



Members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N. C., Police Department's Animal Care & Control Division meet with representatives from area domestic violence and victim services agencies to share contact information. The networking followed a day-long training on "The Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence." National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow was the keynote speaker for the event, whose theme was "Creating Public Safety through Community Partnerships."

The Animal Care & Control Division operates a Safe Haven foster care program for the animal survivors of domestic violence in North Carolina's largest city.

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

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

DVM Encourages National Hospital Chain to Report Suspected Abuse



Mike Lent, DVM

A veterinarian in Tucson, Ariz., has written an impassioned letter to the national chain of veterinary hospitals under the aegis of the Lakefield Veterinary Group encouraging practitioners to recognize the significance of The Link and to not fear reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities. [Mike Lent, DVM](#), extensively cited National Link Coalition materials in his letter, entitled “Animal abuse and the Link to human violence: Why it is important and what veterinarians should know.”

“I have been a member of the [Animal Cruelty Task Force of Southern Arizona](#) since its inception in 1998 and served as its co-chair twice,” he explained. “This was formed in response to animal cruelty becoming a felony in Arizona by then-Detective Mike Duffey of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. Mike realized he would need a coalition of agencies and veterinary professionals to help him report and investigate these crimes, as well as raise public awareness of the issue. Mike was awarded the AVMA’s Humane Award in 2003 and, after retiring from law enforcement, is currently an animal cruelty investigator with the [Humane Society of Southern Arizona](#).

“The task force has been a huge help to me and other veterinarians through the training it has provided in identifying, documenting and reporting animal abuse, but even more so through the personal contacts I now have in law enforcement and social service agencies, to speak to people I know directly and avoid a runaround. Also, sometimes education or a welfare check is called for rather than prosecution, so having those relationships helps facilitate those options.

“I think the toughest thing to veterinarians to come to terms with is that you’re reporting when you have a reasonable suspicion—you don’t have to be judge and jury. The human medical profession went through these same dilemmas when initially starting to recognize and report domestic violence and child abuse.”

Lent directed veterinarians to the National Link Coalition’s website and, in particular, our [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#) as a great resource for how to report suspected abuse in their state. Arizona veterinarians have been mandated reporters since 2001 and have immunity from civil liability when reporting in good faith. Lent offered his assistance to practitioners in other states who have questions about documenting abuse and developing relationships with law enforcement and animal control.



Lent is the Medical Director at Pantano Animal Clinic in Tucson. A 1991 Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine graduate, he practiced in Indianapolis before moving to Tucson in 1996. He has served on the Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board, took the first veterinary forensics class in 2008 and was a charter member of the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association.

The Lakefield Veterinary Group operates 28 veterinary facilities in Arizona, Indiana, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas, and Washington, plus 35 pet hotel centers nationally.

Article Reviews Veterinarians' Ethical Responsibilities to Speak Up for Animal Welfare

Veterinarians have an ethical obligation to provide good care for the animals that they see in practice. However, there may be conflicts between the interests of animal caregivers or owners, the interests of veterinarians and the interests of animals. This article provides an overview of why and how veterinary ethics is taught to veterinary students; applicable legislation, guidelines and codes of professional conduct that inform responses to animal welfare issues; and a context for thinking about veterinary ethical challenges vis-à-vis animal welfare issues. The authors argue that veterinarians are ethically obliged to speak up and ask questions when animal welfare problems are encountered. A lack of veterinary ethical sensitivity can lead to an inability or difficulty in speaking up about concerns with clients and ultimately, failure in their duty of care to animals, leading to poor animal welfare outcomes.

-- Hernandez, E., Fawcett, A., Brouwer, E., Rau, J., & Turner, P.V. (2018). Speaking up: Veterinary ethical responsibilities and animal welfare issues in everyday practice. *Animals*, 8(1), 15.

INTERVENTIONS FOR AT-RISK AND OFFENDERS

Educational Outreach Aimed at Scottish At-Risk and Abusing Youth



A new, free educational intervention for primary school-aged children who have been flagged with the potential to commit animal cruelty -- or who have already been involved in an animal cruelty -- is being piloted by the Scottish SPCA. [Animal Guardians](#) is currently being offered to children in the Edinburgh region, but the SSPCA hopes to expand the service across Scotland to break the cycle between animal cruelty and violent crime by promoting positive child-animal interactions.

“Research has highlighted that adverse childhood experiences (ACES) such as abuse, victimization and bullying can play a pivotal role in the likelihood that a child will engage in animal cruelty,” notes Gilly Ferreira, SSPCA Head of Education & Policy. Animal Guardians will run alongside the existing Prevention Through Education program, which reaches more than 270,000 children across Scotland every year. Research, in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, has shown that this

program effectively increases knowledge, positive attitudes and children’s beliefs in animal emotions and welfare, thereby decreasing their tolerance of animal cruelty. Future research will assess the effectiveness of the new Animal Guardians outreach.

Animal Guardians will be delivered on a one-on-one basis by an experienced youth engagement officer and will include an initial referral, four or more individualized sessions, a visit to the Animal Rescue and Rehoming Centre, and follow-up reviews and feedback. The program aims to help children get in touch with their emotions, and learn about animals’ needs and feelings, how animals can be our best friends, and what children can do to help animals by being responsible pet owners.

Referring partners include the City of Edinburgh Council, Woman’s Aid, Police Scotland, the Scottish Rescue & Fire Service, Links Group, Paws for Progress, the Centre for Applied Developmental Psychology, the University of Edinburgh, CAAR, and Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration.

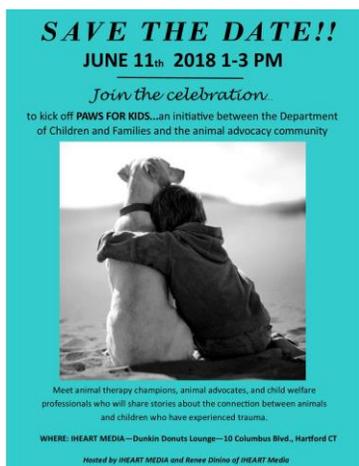
Animal Abuser Intervention Program Renamed



In response to growing recognition of the importance of taking animal abuse seriously and with law enforcement recognizing it as a crime against society based on the relationship between animal abuse and other violence, the Animals & Society Institute (ASI) for many years has offered various [levels of interventions](#) designed to hold perpetrators accountable and reduce their likelihood of recidivism. One such level, previously called the Diversion Program, has been renamed BARK – Behavior, Accountability, Responsibility, and Knowledge.

The terminology used when referring to these programs is important, explained ASI in a recent newsletter. “Diversion” programs can be misunderstood to mean that perpetrators are diverted away from the justice system, while “Intervention” suggests treatment for perpetrators (some of whom may also be incarcerated). “Maltreatment” is comprehensive, as it includes animal neglect, abuse, and cruelty, similar to terminology in the child protection field.

ASI noted that the reasons that people harm animals are complicated, and must be considered in a treatment program to effect change. To expect people to show compassion to animals, they must be treated with compassion and an understanding of the factors that contributed to their behavior. The BARK Program is designed to help these individuals learn how to do better, as well as how to take responsibility for their own behavior. Meanwhile, others associated with these programs learn about how systemic societal issues must be changed to create more compassionate communities.



Paws for Kids to Connect Child Protection and Animal-Assisted Therapy Advocates

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families is kicking off a new initiative, Paws for Kids, in Hartford on June 11, to expand animal assisted activities and therapy to traumatized children within the DCF system.

DCF currently works with a few animal assisted activities/therapy agencies in the state and is seeking to broaden these connections, in partnership with the animal advocacy community, explains Diane Rosell, Program Manager in the DCF's Office of the Chief of Staff. The event seeks to:

- provide more awareness and education to DCF staff around these activities;
- increase DCF's use of animal assisted activities/therapy as an alternative or in conjunction with traditional therapies;
- expand awareness, education and connectivity around DCF's cross-reporting work with animal control officers under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture; and
- design a program that allows for registered pet/handler teams to connect with DCF children shortly after placement in foster care.

Participants will meet animal therapy champions, animal advocates, and child welfare professionals who will share stories about the connection between animals and children who have experienced trauma and the positive benefits animals can provide to children. [Registration](#) is free but seating is limited.

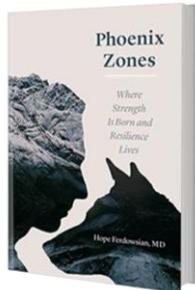
THE LINK ... IN THE LITERATURE

A Physician Looks at The Link

“Vulnerability is our most common denominator. And, like us, animals are categorically vulnerable beings,” writes Hope Ferdowsian, MD, MPH in a new book exploring the origins of violence, empathy, social justice, and resilience affecting people and animals. Ferdowsian describes what she calls “[Phoenix Zones](#)” – sanctuaries around the world created by extraordinary people to allow human and animal victims to reclaim their lives, places where strength is born and resilience lives.



Ferdowsian traces the origins of the humane movement in the 19th Century [Hope Ferdowsian and friend](#) as a religious, moral cause to protect children and animals, focusing on compassion for animals as a first step toward civilization, aligning feminists, educators and other reformers with animal protectionists. With increased secularization in society, the emphasis shifted to the importance of justice and respect for the rights and dignity of all vulnerable people and animals, exemplified by Henry Bergh’s realization that cruelty against children and animals shared common origins.



This has evolved today into increased recognition, as she writes, that “although the relative absence of laws to protect animals has obvious implications for animals, it also has consequences for people.” She cites extensive research about The Link, noting that “battered women and children could be particularly empathic to animals because they know what it feels like to be disrespected, demeaned, and degraded. They recognize their own vulnerability in animals.”

Ferdowsian, an internist and preventive medicine physician, assigns much the interspecies nature of abuse to “the ‘cycle of violence,’ much like a heritable disease, or the ‘contagion of violence,’ similar to a communicable disease,” embedded within what she calls “structural violence” – an unjust and exploitive political and economic organization of society. “A culture of disrespect lies beneath infectious constructs like misogyny, racism, child abuse, and animal abuse,” she writes. “If we neglect any branch of violence, it can take root like a metastatic form of cancer, spreading across the invisible lines we’ve created and placing us all at risk.”

-- Ferdowsian, H. (2018). *Phoenix Zones: Where Strength is Born and Resilience Lives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



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Link Examined Among LGBT Victims

While a growing body of research has focused on animal abuse and domestic violence, and on experiences of domestic violence among people of diverse genders and/or sexualities, relatively little is known about The Link with regard to people of diverse genders and/or sexualities. This article reports on a study of 503 people living in Australia and the United Kingdom who reported on both their intimate human relationships and their relationships with animals, including relationships that were abusive. One-fifth of respondents who had experienced violence or abuse also reported that animal cruelty had been perpetuated by the violent or abusive partner.

Statistical interactions were found between having witnessed animal cruelty perpetrated by a partner, gender and sexuality, and both psychological distress and social connectedness. Female participants who had witnessed animal cruelty reported greater psychological distress and lower levels of social support; lesbian and bisexual participants who had witnessed animal cruelty reported lower levels of social support. The article concludes by considering the implications of these findings for future research and service provision.

-- Riggs, D.W., Taylor, N., Fraser, H., Donovan, C., & Signal, T. (2018). The link between domestic violence and abuse and animal cruelty in the intimate relationships of people of diverse genders and/or sexualities: A binational study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* [published online <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518771681>]

MacDonald Triad May Not Predict Future Antisocial Behavior

The “MacDonald triad,” identified in 1963, posits that childhood animal cruelty, fire setting and bed wetting are indicative of later aggressive and violent behavior in adults. Researchers since then have often referred to this phenomenon as a precursor to later antisocial behaviors including serial and sexual murder; practitioners cite the triad in clinical formulations and risk assessments. This article notes that there has yet to be a critical review and consolidation of the literature establishing whether there is empirical support for the validity of the triad. The authors conducted a narrative review of relevant studies and found evidence that any one of the triad behaviors could predict future violent offending, but that it is very rare to find all three behaviors together as predictors. They state that the empirical research on the MacDonald triad does not fully substantiate its premise but rather, the triad, or its individual constituents, is better used as an indicator of dysfunctional home environment or poor coping skills in children. They suggest that further consideration is needed as to whether the triad behaviors are more indicative of other problematic outcomes, such as maladaptive coping to life stressors.

-- Parfitt, C.H., & Alleyne, E. (2018), Not the sum of its parts: A critical review of the MacDonald Triad.” *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* [published online <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018764164>]

NEWS FROM OTHER LINK COALITIONS

HAVEN Offers Training to DVMs and Child Welfare Professionals

Our Link coalition in western Massachusetts, [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) has had a busy Spring and is actively conducting Link training. HAVEN Founder Lorna Grande, DVM, was one of three prominent Link authorities who presented at a Continuing Education track on “Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse in Massachusetts: Demystifying the Process” at the Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association’s Spring conference on May 9.

Grande spoke on “A Call to Action for Veterinarians: Why Mandatory Reporting?” She described why veterinarians should consider the big picture and their role as community members and family practitioners.



Lorna Grande



Melinda Merck

Melinda Merck, DVM, presented on “A Roadmap for Recognizing and Reporting,” discussing how to recognize and document suspected abuse and develop a hospital protocol.

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, took a closer look at Massachusetts laws and how to work with animal control, police, prosecutors, and courts in her program on “What to Do in Massachusetts Using Case Examples Including the ‘Puppy Doe’ Case.”



Martha Smith-Blackmore



Martha Grace

Grande also conducted a workshop on April 26 at the Together for Children Conference, sponsored by Berkshire AHEC and Berkshire County Kids’ Place & Violence Prevention Center. The conference featured local and Massachusetts experts addressing topics of child abuse prevention, vicarious trauma, assessment and treatment. Grande partnered with retired judge Martha Grace to discuss “The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Violence/Animal Abuse and Neglect: Should You Be Paying Attention?”

Two British Link Officers Honored for Healthcare Work



Two steering committee members of our British affiliate, [The Links Group UK](#), were awarded the prestigious Ray Butcher Memorial Award at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association congress for their Link efforts. Wendy Sneddon and Vicki Betton developed “Animal Welfare in Violent Homes,” a free online continuing professional development [course](#) to help human health professionals understand animal abuse and its Links to other types of family violence.



Keeping people and pets together.

Domestic Violence Pet Foster Care Program Started in South Australia and Tasmania

A new all-volunteer service to provide foster pet care for families experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, and other unforeseen circumstances has been started in the Australian states of South Australia and Tasmania. [Safe Pets Safe Families](#) was founded by Jennifer Howard to enable people in crisis to feel more confident in leaving a dangerous situation knowing that they do not have to leave their animals behind or in already crowded animal shelters.

The program offers foster care for up to 12 weeks, asking only a nominal weekly charitable contribution based on the type and size of the animal. Services are available 24/7 and on short notice through a network of volunteers and foster carers.

“Pets can also be victims in domestic violence situations and if they are left behind they are at risk of being harmed, abandoned or surrendered. Pets can be a barrier to a person leaving a dangerous situation and can also be a barrier to entering shelters and finding new accommodation quickly,” says Howard.

“The Safe Pets Safe Families foster service places these pets into foster care to give their owner a chance to find new accommodation or get the assistance they need so they can eventually be reunited with the pet.”

An affiliate program, Paws and Pals, provides pet care services for homeless individuals. This outreach service in South Australia offers pop-up veterinary clinics for health checks, microchipping, vaccinations, grooming, and financial support for pets needing other medical and surgical assistance.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

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

As the 2018 legislative season concludes in many states, 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 247 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 2274 would allow courts to assign sole or joint ownership of a community property pet in divorce and separation agreements by taking into consideration the well-being of the pet. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Colorado law had included animals among the various types of property that can be included in a protective order. **Colorado SB 18-060** now will specifically allow courts to 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. **The bill was signed into law** by Gov. John Hickenlooper on March 22 and will take effect Nov. 1.



Illinois HB5668 would amend the Domestic Violence Shelters Act and require the Department of Human Services to prioritize funding to domestic violence shelters and service programs that provide shelter assistance to victims' pets. The bill has passed the House Appropriations-Human Services Committee.



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 was in the Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.**



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 1st, 2nd or 3rd-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. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New Mexico HJM 3 would have requested 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 but **further action was postponed indefinitely.**



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 expands 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 was signed into law by Gov. John Kasich on April 5.**



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 and S2459 would permit the family court to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint. The House and Senate Judiciary Committees recommended the bills 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 where it was held for further study.



West Virginia HB 2855 would have allowed 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 was in the House Judiciary Committee when the legislature adjourned.**

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 279 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 address 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 prohibit sexual contact with any animal punishable as a misdemeanor; such animals could be seized. Veterinarians would be mandated to report suspected animal sexual abuse with immunity from civil liability, as they currently are for reporting animal abuse. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



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 was in the Senate Agriculture Committee when the legislature adjourned.**



Louisiana SB 236 would amend the current statute replacing the “crime against nature” with the new crime of “sexual abuse of an animal” with enhanced penalties and provisions for removal of the animal, psychological evaluation for sex offenders, and prohibitions from living, working or volunteering with animals for five years or more. The bill was approved by the Senate on April 9 by a vote of 25-10 and was sent to the House.



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. **HB 1134** passed the House and joined **SB 800** in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where both bills received an unfavorable report.



Massachusetts S.2347 would prohibit “sexual contact with animals.” Existing statutes prohibit the more archaic terminology of the “abominable and detestable crime against nature.” The bill also would establish *Cross-Reporting* among child, elder and animal abuse personnel and affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and is in the House Ways & Means Committee.



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 Judiciary Committee, but **failed to make it out of committee when the legislature adjourned.** The bill would have prohibited 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 have been 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 have made offenses a felony. Courts would have been able to order offenders to surrender all animals and pay for their care and maintenance, prohibit ownership or residence with animals for either 5 or 15 years, and order offenders to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation to be eligible for probation.



Wisconsin AB 666 and companion measure **SB 802** would have updated the state's archaic bestiality law and made 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 have also created escalating degrees of felony if the other person is a child. **AB 666** and **SB 802** were approved by the Assembly and a Senate Committee but **were not allowed to come to a vote in the full Senate**.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



Louisiana HB 292 would require courts to allow witnesses who are either under age 17 or developmentally disabled to be accompanied by a facility dog while testifying. Courts would be permitted to allow such facility dogs for any other witnesses. The bill establishes procedures defining facility dogs and their presence in the courtroom. The bill was approved 91-0 by the House and was sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



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.



Michigan HB 5645 would allow witnesses of child abuse and child sexual abuse to be accompanied by a trained and evaluated "courtroom support dog." The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey A3729 would allow assistance dogs to be used to help facilitate the taking of testimony of victims or witnesses in open court in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



New York S1432 and **A5048** criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. **S1432** passed the Senate and 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.

"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.

Animal Hoarding



Florida SB 86 would have defined 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. **The bill died in the Criminal Justice Committee.**



New Jersey S 2242 and **A3762** would define animal hoarding as possessing too many animals with inadequate care which leads to death, bodily injury or other serious adverse health consequences, a 4th-degree crime. Courts would be required to order psychological evaluation and counseling for convicted offenders. The bills are in the Senate Economic Growth Committee and the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.



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.



Rhode Island S2778 would allow the Rhode Island state veterinarian, the R.I. SPCA, or any law enforcement officer to seize animals that are “hazardously accumulated” or otherwise abandoned or neglected. The bill is in the senate Environment & Agriculture 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. The bill was sent to the Committee on Public Safety.



Iowa SF 2181/HF 2468 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 bills are in the Senate Judiciary and House Agriculture Committees.



Maryland HB 1629 would allow a court to order psychological counseling for a defendant convicted of an animal abuse crime. The bill received an unfavorable report from the House 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 have made 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 3rd 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 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.2347** would add the crimes of 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-Reporting* among child, elder and animal abuse personnel and affect *Animal Sexual Abuse*. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and is in the House Ways & Means 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 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.**



Indiana SB 431 gives 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 was signed into law** on March 15 and becomes effective July 1, 2018.



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 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.



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 in the Education Committee would make domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers mandated reporters of child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee where it accompanied a Study Order.



Massachusetts S.2347 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 to a police officer or special state police officer. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. Individuals who report in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability; confidentiality requirements would not prohibit an individual from making a report. The bill would also affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes* and *Animal Sexual Abuse*. The bill passed the Senate 36-0 and is in the House Ways & Means 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 required 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.



Rhode Island H 7986 would grant immunity from civil and criminal liability to "any person entrusted with the care and custody of an animal," including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, animal shelter and kennel employees, who reports suspected animal abuse, neglect or abandonment to the police or humane agency in good faith. Failure to report would be punishable by a fine of up to \$500. The reporter would not be obliged to investigate the alleged abuse. The House Health, Education & Welfare Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.



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



Sergei and Yulia Skripal

Toxic Nerve Agent Attack on Russian Ex-Spy Results in Deaths of Two Guinea Pigs and a Cat

While the global political and diplomatic repercussions of the alleged nerve gas attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter in the U.K. continue to reverberate, and the news media announced that the health of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, was improving, news also came out that three of the Skripals' pets had died as a result of the attack. Ireland's National Public Service broadcaster [RTE](#) reported that two guinea pigs owned by the former double agent had died, and that his cat was found in a distressed state and had to be euthanized to alleviate its suffering. British counter-terror police have said the Skripals first came into contact with the nerve agent at their home in Salisbury, with the highest concentration being found on the front door. RTE said the question about the animals' welfare was raised only because the Russian foreign ministry had argued that the U.K. was fabricating evidence: if a toxic nerve agent had been used, they said, why had the British not reported any other "living organisms" in the house who might have suffered?

Arizona Man Gets 29 Years for Decapitating His Wife and Two Dogs



Kenneth Wakefield

A man who decapitated his wife and two dogs before chopping off his forearm and gouging out an eye in a drug-induced stupor was sentenced to 29 years in prison on April 6. Kenneth Wakefield, 46, will serve 25 years for the 2015 murder of Trina Heisch and two years for killing each of the dogs ([See the September 2015 LINK-Letter](#)). Police said at the time of the grisly killings that the couple, who had met at a mental health clinic, were having domestic violence issues and that she had previously been accused of trying to stab him; Wakefield had been charged in 2003 for attempting to kill a family member. [The Arizona Republic](#) reported that Wakefield and Heisch had each received "guilty but insane" verdicts in the earlier incidents and had avoided prison by accepting sentencing to the Arizona State Hospital.

DVM Reports Suspicious Injuries; Man Charged with Hurting Fiancée's Dogs

Charges of animal cruelty against a former elected town official in Fairfield, Conn., who allegedly burned and fractured the ribs of two of his fiancée's dogs, resulted in an online petition with some 2,000 people asking that the court impose a maximum sentence if the defendant is found guilty. Raymond Neuberger, 34, a former Representative Town Meeting Member who ran unsuccessfully for State Representative, was due to appear in Superior Court in Bridgeport. A veterinarian, who said the burns were too extensive to have been caused by Neuberger's explanation that he accidentally spilled coffee, reported the injuries to police. The two 5-year-old King Charles Cavalier Spaniels were relocated to another family member. Local resident Tina Bencze, who circulated the petition, told the [Fairfield Citizen](#), "People who hurt animals present a risk to the entire community."



Raymond Neuberger

Man Gets 33 Years for Killing His Girlfriend 2 Days After Attacking Her Kitten

Authorities in Alexandria, Va., said that two days before he killed his girlfriend, Melvin John Williams, 23, recorded himself attacking her kitten. Prosecutors said that after he fractured her kitten's leg, DaSheria Barksdale, 30, broke up with him and asked him to move out of their apartment, the [Washington Post](#) reported. Barksdale called police, who in turn called animal control, and Williams was charged with animal cruelty but not arrested.



Melvin Williams

Two days later, Williams returned to the apartment, followed her into her bedroom during a party and fatally stabbed her. A friend who tried to intervene was also stabbed repeatedly. Williams tried to commit suicide by stabbing himself when police arrived, prosecutors said.

Williams pled guilty on April 5 in Alexandria Circuit Court to murder, animal cruelty and other charges and was sentenced to 33 years in prison. "The defendant's cruel and callous infliction of injury upon a defenseless animal was the signpost of further violence to come," said Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter.

Man Charged with Killing Ex's Tiny Dog in Jealous Rage

An unidentified man in Graham, Wash. was arrested on a charge of first-degree animal cruelty after he reportedly "lost it" and killed the tiny dog belonging to his girlfriend who had broken up with him the day before. The Tacoma [News Tribune](#) reported that the man had felt threatened by "Andy," a 1¹/₂-pound toy terrier, because his girlfriend was giving the dog too much attention. The man allegedly told Pierce County sheriff's deputies, "I lost it and killed the dog." The man was released on electronic home monitoring on the condition he have no contact with animals.

Jealous Love Triangle over "Bubba" the Dog Leads to Couple Being Charged with Bestiality



Fredrick Manzanares

An Aurora, Colo. couple apparently involved in a jealous love triangle with their dog were charged with four counts of animal cruelty for allegedly having sex with it in a customized sex chamber. The [Denver Post](#) reported that Janette Eileen Solano, 48, called the Aurora Police Department to report a domestic violence incident and that she had broken up with her boyfriend, Fredrick Blue Manzanares, 50, because he had spent six months introducing her to bestiality videos and forums before pressuring her into having sex with "Bubba," a Siberian husky mix. The police affidavit said that they would have sex with the dog in a backyard motor home, where Manzanares reportedly used a hormone spray to arouse the dog and built a customized bench with red padding to facilitate the sex encounters. She reportedly told police that the couple also fought over the dog and that she was jealous of his relationship with Bubba.

Jailed Man Re-Arrested for Reportedly Dragging and Abandoning a Dog



Alex Orozco

A man who was involved in a domestic disturbance on Valentine's Day and later was in custody in the Westchester County, N.Y. jail on another criminal matter was re-arrested by Greenwich, Conn. police and charged with animal cruelty for allegedly dragging a dog on a leash from his car and abandoning it on the side of the road. Police arrested Alex Orozco, 18, of Port Chester, N.Y., on the cruelty charges, according to the [Greenwich Time](#). Orozco's criminal record includes felony charges of attempted robbery stemming from a street robbery involving a knife in 2016.

Indiana Man Charged with Brutal Dog Beating, Domestic Battery

Justin M. Sollars, 23, of Marion, Ind., was arrested on nine charges of animal abuse, torture and domestic battery for allegedly causing numerous injuries to "Shorty," a 20-week-old Welsh Corgi and violating a no-contact order. The [Marion Chronicle-Tribune](#) reported that Sollars had been arrested in December, 2017 for domestic battery which he reportedly violated when he and the woman resumed their relationship.

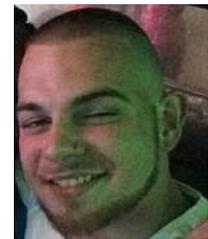


"Shorty"

When she tried to break up in March and asked for possession of Shorty, he was said to have severely injured the dog, causing brain and spinal injuries and seizures. Four of the nine charges are felonies.

Briton Gets 4-Month Sentence for Hanging Dead Cat Outside Ex's Door

A British man who brutally beat his kitten, then smothered it and hanged its body outside his ex-lover's apartment because it had scratched him was given a four-month jail sentence. The [Daily Mail](#) reported that Kieran Haynes, 20, of Birkenhead, Merseyside, was jailed for 16 weeks in the case that an RSPCA inspector said was one of the worst cases of animal cruelty he had ever seen. Haynes was further disqualified from keeping animals for life and was ordered to pay a £115 fine. The kitten, named "Niko," was identified through photos of the cat that Haynes had posted on social media prior to the incident.



Kieran Haynes

TV Producer Charged with Murder of Deaf-Blind Sister, Animal Cruelty



Jill Blackstone

A California TV producer suspected of killing her deaf and blind sister and a dog in the garage of their Studio City home in 2015 was located three years later in Baltimore and extradited back to Los Angeles to face one count of murder and three counts of animal cruelty. Jill Blackstone, a producer on *Family Court with Judge Penny* and *The Tony Danza Show*, is accused of drugging her sister, Wendy Blackstone, 49, with Xanax and then killing her and a pet dog by bringing an active BBQ grill into their enclosed garage. Two other dogs that were trapped inside the garage managed to escape, according to the [Los Angeles Daily News](#).

Couple Charged with Child Welfare, Narcotics, and Animal Cruelty Offenses



Whitley County, Ky. sheriff's deputies responding to neighbors' complaints of shots being fired arrested two Williamsburg residents when they discovered two dogs that had been shot to death and three toddlers living in a home where suspected drugs were in plain view. The [Morehead News](#) reported that Brian D. Askins, 28, and Tara Warman, 25, mother of the three children, were charged with possession of meth, marijuana and drug paraphernalia, and endangering the welfare of a minor. Askins was also charged with two counts of animal cruelty. Social

Brian Askins & Tara Warman

Services took custody of the three toddlers, two of whom were unclothed. Authorities said that Askins admitted to shooting two dogs that had been rummaging through his trash.

Catnapper Charged with Stalking and Cruelty in Deaths of Nine Cats

A Portage, Wis. man accused of trapping, killing and placing dead cats on another person's property has been charged with one count of felony mistreatment of animals and five counts of felony stalking. Authorities accuse Paul Greiner, 73, of placing nine dead cats outside the home of Liz Masterson over a period of several months, according to [WISC-TV](#). Criminal complaints say that Masterson had told authorities about a series of issues between the Greiner family, her family, and the Mastersons' next-door neighbors, the Egan household. Greiner was convicted in 2016



Paul Greiner

of shooting a firearm near the neighbors' homes. Greiner was ordered released on \$1,000 bond and ordered to not possess firearms, traps or pets and to not contact the Masterson and Egan families. Four Portage residents have identified their missing cats from photographs taken by Masterson.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

May 21-25 – Amarillo, Texas: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)'s Level III training for Expert investigators.

May 23 – Pittsfield, Mass.: [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) will meet at the Berkshire Humane Society.

May 24 – Bordentown, N.J.: Phil Arkow will provide professional development training on The Link for providers and advocates in the [New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy](#).

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](#).

May 30 – Hartford, Conn.: Several speakers will discuss The Link at the University of Connecticut Law School's [training seminar](#) for animal control officers, prosecutors, and court-appointed advocates for animals.

May 30 – West Palm Beach, Fla.: The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) will hold its quarterly meeting.

May 30 – New York City, N.Y.: The [Urban Resource Institute](#) will present “Domestic Violence and Pets: Protecting the Hidden Victim”, featuring a panel discussion with numerous international Link authorities, on the status and future of pet co-sheltering in domestic violence shelters.

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

June 17 – Edinburgh, Scotland: The Links Group UK and the BSAVA will conduct a [Veterinary Training Initiative](#) to help veterinary teams deal with cases of suspected abuse, set up a practice protocol, and identify an “abuse advisor” who can aid practice staff.

June 18 – New Orleans, La.: “The Link and School Shooters,” and “Animal Crimes: The Hidden Link for Protecting Your Community,” will be discussed at the [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#).

July 3 – 5 – Sydney, Australia: The International Society for Anthrozoology’s 27th Annual [Conference](#) will include several Link-related presentations: Cheryl Krause-Parello will present on “The effect of an animal-assisted intervention on biological stress indicators in children undergoing forensic interview for child sexual abuse allegations.” Tania Signal will present on “The potential of dogs to improve the acceptability of trauma-focused therapies for sexually-abused children.” Roxanne Hawkins will present on “Children’s attitudes towards animal cruelty.” Michal Pregowski will present on “Attitudes to animal abuse in veterinary practice in Poland.” Shelby McDonald will present on “The role of callous/unemotional traits in mediating the association between animal abuse exposure and behavior problems among children exposed to intimate partner violence.”

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.

July 23 – Oxford, U.K.: Randy Lockwood will discuss “Bringing Animal Cruelty Investigation into Mainstream Law Enforcement” at the 5th Annual [Oxford Animal Ethics Summer School](#). Kathy Hessler will discuss the new laws in Alaska and Illinois allowing courts to grant custody of pets in the animals’ best interests in divorce settlements. Hessler and David Rosengard will discuss “Desmond’s Law,” the Connecticut provision for “CASA for animals,” pro bono representation of animals in court in cruelty cases.

July 23-27 – Loudoun County, Va.: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)’s Level III training for Expert investigators.

Aug. 6 -9 – Aurora, Colo.: Phil Arkow will speak to the [Metro Denver Animal Welfare Alliance](#), [Aurora Animal Services](#), and the [Aurora City Attorney’s Office](#) about The Link.

Aug. 15 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Phil Arkow will conduct a Link training for the [Pennsylvania Bar Institute](#) Animal Law Conference.

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

Sept. 9-14 – Aurora, Ill.: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School](#)’s Level III training for Expert investigators.

Sept. 18 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Leanne Sillers will discuss “Lifting Barriers: How Animal Safekeeping Programs Can Help the Victims of Violence,” and Jessi Rassmussen will present “Supporting the Victims of Domestic Violence in the Workplace,” at the [Saskatchewan SPCA’s](#) 2018 conference.

Oct. 5 – Madison, Wis.: Phil Arkow will speak at [Sheltering Animals of Abuse Victims](#) (S.A.A.V.)’s conference on “The Link between Family Violence and Animal cruelty: A Community-Wide Approach to Breaking the Cycle of Abuse.”

Oct. 11 – Windsor, Ont., Canada: The University of Windsor Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group, the Windsor-Essex County Humane Society, and Hiatus House will hold an all-day pre-conference [Institute](#) on research, theory and practice specific to the intersection of violence against animals and women within the context of domestic violence.

Oct. 12 – Rochester, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will conduct a multi-disciplinary Link training on behalf of the [Humane Society of Greater Rochester](#).

Oct. 12 – Denver, Colo.: Chris Schindler will present “Breaking the Sickest Link: Conducting Effective Bestiality Investigations” at the National Animal Care & Control Association’s [Training Conference](#).

Oct. 17-19 – Plano, Texas: The [Collin County Council on Family Violence](#) will hold its 16th Annual North Texas Families Facing Violence conference.

Oct. 18 – 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. 14-17 – Atlanta, Ga.: Nuria Querol will present on The Link at the [American Society of Criminology](#) conference.

Nov. 15 – Anchorage, Alaska: Allie Phillips will speak at the [Alaska Children’s Alliance](#) conference on “The Co-occurrence of Animal Abuse and Violence to Humans: Investigation and Prosecution Strategies,” “Detecting and Reporting Animal Abuse for Human Welfare Professionals and Communities,” and “Incorporating Therapy Animals with Crime Victims.”

Nov. 17-18 – Melbourne, Australia: [Lucy’s Project](#) will hold its national conference addressing practical perspectives of the domestic violence/animal abuse Link.

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

Dec. 3-7 – San Antonio, Texas: “The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” will be included in the [National Animal Cruelty Investigations School’s](#) Level III training for Expert investigators.



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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National Sheriffs Association
Director, National Coalition on Violence Against Animals
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