



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



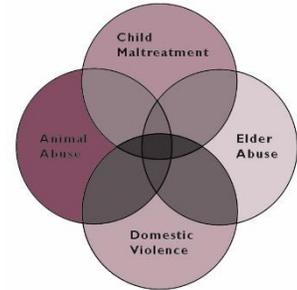
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON 2019 LEGISLATION

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Bills Would Define Coercive Animal Abuse as Domestic Violence

Four more states have introduced proposals in which an act of animal abuse intended to coerce, control or intimidate a domestic violence victim would be considered an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty.

New Mexico HB 52, sponsored by Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary (D – Doña Ana), would add to the statutory definitions of domestic violence under NMSA §40-13-2 “an incident by a household member consisting of or resulting in the act of or threat of: intentionally or maliciously torturing, mutilating, injuring or poisoning a companion animal; or maliciously killing a companion animal.” The bill is in the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee.



Rep. Joanne Ferrary

In **New York, A 588** would create a felony-level crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if the act is committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.

Utah SB 45, sponsored by Sen. Allen Christensen, would define an act of aggravated animal cruelty intended to coerce, control or intimidate a spouse or partner as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty.

In **Virginia, HB 2642** and **SB 1276** would make any violation relating to animal cruelty a Class 6 felony when such violation is carried out with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. The bill was introduced by Rep. Mark H. Levine (D – Alexandria) in the House and Sen. Adam P. Ebbin (D – Alexandria) in the Senate. The bills are in the House Committee for Courts of Justice and Senate Finance Committee.

Similar measures have been enacted in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Tennessee. Minnesota allows courts to double criminal penalties for felony animal abuse that is committed to threaten, intimidate or terrorize another person.

Pet Protection Orders Bills Introduced in Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, Rhode Island, and Wyoming

Five more states have introduced legislation that would allow courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include animals. **Florida HB 379**, introduced by Rep. Sam Killebrew (R – Winter Haven), would grant the petitioner exclusive care, custody, possession, or control of an animal owned, possessed, harbored, kept, or held by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child residing in the petitioner’s or the respondent’s home. It would order the respondent to have no contact with the animal and enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or otherwise disposing of the animal. The measure, if enacted, would take effect July 1, 2019.



Rep. Sam Killebrew



Mississippi SB 2014, sponsored by Sen. Angela Burks Hill (D – Marion), would prohibit respondents from removing, damaging, hiding, harming, or disposing of any companion animal owned or possessed by a person protected by the order. The court could also authorize the removal of a companion animal from the respondent. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“Companion animal” in Mississippi would be defined as any animal, other than livestock or wild animal, that is kept inside a residence and any dog or cat regardless of where it is kept.

Sen. Angela Burks Hill

Missouri HB 370, introduced by Rep. David Gregory (R – St. Louis), would add “intimidation” – the injuring, killing, or threat to injure or kill an animal if such act is done to coerce, control, punish, or be an act of revenge against a household member – as grounds for a court to issue a protection order. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rep. David Gregory

Rhode Island H 5023 would add a provision allowing courts to provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets in protection orders for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. A related measure, **H 5076**, would allow courts to award custody of household pets and to impose enforcement remedies including a restraining order or other injunctive relief. The bills are in the House Judiciary Committee.

Wyoming HB 235 would allow courts to issue protection orders that grant sole possession of any household pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child to the petitioner “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order would also order the respondent to not have any contact with the animal and to not abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet

Thirty-two states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia have enacted pet-protection-order laws since the concept was introduced in Maine in 2006.

Animal Abuse Link Addressed in Gun Control Measures

The increased risks presented by firearms and cruelty to animals are prompting legislators to expand existing provisions in protection-from-abuse orders to include a ban on abusers' owning weapons.

In **Arizona**, which has had pet protection orders since 2010, a new bill would allow courts to prohibit domestic violence offenders from owning a firearm. **HB 2161**, introduced by 14 legislators, would allow courts to use evidence of respondents' actions including "cruel mistreatment of an animal" as grounds for issuing a "severe threat order of protection." Such an order would prohibit the respondent from owning or acquiring any firearms or ammunition for a period of one year based on the petitioner's "personal knowledge that the respondent poses an immediate and present danger of causing physical injury to self or others."



In **Illinois**, which has included pets in protection orders since 2007, **SB 58** would ban anyone subject to a domestic violence order of protection from possessing firearms, stun guns or tasers. These individuals would have to relinquish all weapons for the period of time covered by the protection order.

New York A 1069 would add a conviction for felony animal abuse for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the definition of a "serious offense" which would affect the ability of someone to possess a firearm.

Washington HB 1541 would add a conviction for 2nd-degree animal cruelty as a crime making it illegal for a person to possess a firearm. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

A Canadian study of how firearms and animal abuse are instruments of control in domestic violence reported that the availability of firearms, especially in rural homes, is a perceived threat by abused rural women. Drs. Deborah Doherty and Jennie Hornosty surveyed transition houses in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in 2005-2007. They recommended that risk assessment tools include questions about the misuse and abuse of firearms as well as pet and animal abuse, and that legislatures create policies addressing the removal and confiscation of firearms in domestic violence cases.

Animals' Welfare Considered in N.H., N.Y. Divorce Legislation



A bill in **New Hampshire** would model laws enacted in Alaska, California and Illinois that allow courts to include animals in the disposition of property during divorces – and, more significantly, based on the animals' best interests. **HB 361**, sponsored by Rep. Debra DeSimone (R – Rockingham) is in the Children and Family Law Committee.

Courts would be required to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding possessions in a divorce or separation proceeding if **New York A 1097** is enacted. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The measure was sponsored by Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick with 12 co-sponsors.

Animals are frequently used as pawns in the power/control dynamics of domestic violence, and this phenomenon can extend to contentious divorce settlements. Measures to ensure the animals' welfare in these scenarios are a progressive recognition of The Link.

Animal Abuse Spotlights in Domestic Violence Law Reference Guide



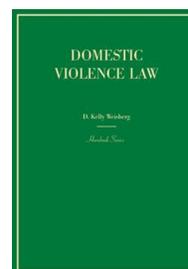
Kelly Weisberg

A new authoritative and comprehensive reference guide focusing on state and federal laws on domestic violence includes considerable information on animal abuse and its implications in responding to domestic violence survivors and prosecuting domestic violence cases. The 566-page book is written by Kelly Weisberg, a Professor at Hastings College of Law and Editor of the Civic Research Institute's [Domestic Violence Report](#).

A chapter on high lethality crimes includes several references to pet abuse. A "Background" section covers various forms of pet abuse, its prevalence, its status as a high lethality indicator, and a discussion of the landmark Kentucky Supreme Court case addressing pet abuse (*Pettingill v. Pettingill*). "Abusers' Motivations" explores how abusers threaten, abuse, or kill animals and the Link between pet abuse and separation violence.

A section on "State Law Reform" explains the common law view that animal cruelty was not a crime, and then identifies various state law approaches to animal abuse. It examines: the history of animal cruelty laws; the law reform movement in the 1990s; the inclusion of the term "animal abuse" in statutory definitions of domestic violence; the inclusion of animals as subjects of orders of protection; the regulation of ownership and possession of pets in cases of domestic violence; the development of state laws that permit cross-reporting/collaboration of pet abuse and family violence; and state laws on animal abuse in the presence of a child.

"Federal Law" explains the general absence of federal law on animal abuse and the 2016 inclusion of crimes of animal cruelty in the FBI's source of crime statistics. The rationale for the underlying law is to alert the criminal justice system about individuals who pose a danger to the community.



A section on "Shelter Accommodations" explains the phenomenon of survivors' delays in leaving abusive situations because of fear for their pets and law reforms that recognize the need for pet-friendly shelters.

The final section addresses the "Impact of Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence" and its role in children's subsequent perpetration of cruelty to animals. It explains: the prevalence and psychological effects of children's exposure to pet abuse; the motivations for these children to commit animal cruelty themselves; and the long-term negative outcomes for children's mental health for children who witness animal cruelty in the context of domestic violence.

Permission to Reprint

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

Pet Program Helps Domestic Violence Survivors and the Homeless

A new program has been started in Guelph, Ontario to provide foster care for the pets of people fleeing domestic violence, going into homeless shelters or faced with extended hospital stays. [Pet Protect Guelph](#) is the brainchild of Liz Vardon who secured initial grants from the Guelph Community Foundation and PetSmart that enabled the program to launch in early 2018.



The program was inspired by the SafePet Ottawa foster care program for domestic violence survivors but is expanded to address homeless and hospitalized populations as well. Referrals are made by the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition and other groups. Volunteer foster families are providing care for the animals. “Women are less likely to leave an abuser if that means they have to lose their pet. If we can keep those pets remaining with their owners and not having to go into a shelter, that’s our main goal – keeping families together,” Vardon told the [Guelph Mercury](#).

ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT



New York Considers Full Two-Way Cross-Reporting

A bill introduced in the State Assembly would make **New York** the third state to have full two-way cross-reporting of animal abuse and child maltreatment. **A 1211** would require all individuals responsible for enforcing animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and all persons required to report child abuse or maltreatment to report suspected animal abuse or maltreatment.

Assemblywoman Glick Currently, Illinois and West Virginia, plus the District of Columbia, are the only states in which animal control and humane officers are specified as mandated reporters of child abuse and child protection officials are named as mandated reporters of animal abuse. Louisiana, Nebraska, and Tennessee mandate child protection workers to report animal abuse but there is no reciprocity. Similarly, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Virginia animal welfare personnel are mandated reporters of child abuse, but there is no reciprocity. In 18 states all residents are mandated to report suspected child abuse.

The bill was introduced by Assemblywoman Deborah Glick and has four co-sponsors. It is in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Iowa, Florida, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island Bills Address Veterinarians' Reporting of Abuse



Sen. Tony Bisignano

A bill introduced in the **Iowa** Legislature would mandate veterinarians who “conclude that an animal is being subjected to animal cruelty” to complete an animal cruelty report and submit it to a local law enforcement agency.

SF 3, introduced by Sen. Tony Bisignano (D – Des Moines), notes that a situation would not be animal cruelty if the animal is provided care in a manner that meets the Department of Agriculture’s standard of care for that species. The conclusion must at least be based on clinical indications that, if true, could reasonably constitute elements of animal abuse as defined by Iowa’s statutes.

Individuals who report, cooperate with or assist in such investigations in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill also specifies new penalties for offenders convicted of seven types of animal abuse, neglect, abandonment, endangerment, and torture. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In **Florida**, **HB 47** was prefiled for the 2019 legislative session to exempt veterinarians who report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement agencies from lawsuits. Florida veterinarians are already immune from liability for participating in the investigation of animal cruelty. The measure was withdrawn prior to its introduction, presumably because the “investigation” process would include the reporting.

A second **Florida** bill **HB 379** would allow veterinarians to bypass the usual confidentiality restrictions in order to report suspected criminal violations to a law enforcement officer or certified animal control officer. Medical records could not be furnished except under a court order.

Missouri HB 111 would grant immunity from civil liability to all persons, including veterinarians, teachers and school personnel, who in good faith report suspected animal abuse to a law enforcement agency. The bill is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.

New York A 1170 would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal is the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect to report the incident and disclose necessary records to law enforcement and humane investigators. Currently, N.Y. veterinarians are permitted to make such reports. Both the existing and proposed law accord veterinarians who report in good faith – a belief that such action is necessary to protect the health and welfare of the patient or the public – immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

§4-1-37 of the General Laws of **Rhode Island** permits veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and animal shelter and kennel personnel to report suspected animal abuse with immunity from lawsuits if made in good faith. **S 82** would amend this permissive provision to mandate such reporting and would also impose a \$500 fine for failing to report. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee

Oregon Proposal Would Allow DVMs to Sue to Recover Expenses

A bill in the Oregon State Legislature would allow veterinarians and others who provide veterinary care addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. **HB 2500**, sponsored by Rep. Marty Wilde (D – Lane and Linn Counties) with four co-sponsors, would allow plaintiffs who prevail in such cases compensatory damages for all expenses incurred in providing the veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rep. Marty Wilde

Issues in Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse Hold Parallels for Veterinary Medicine

The premise behind the legislative mandates in 33 states for veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse (with immunity from civil and criminal liability) is based upon a 50-year history of physicians and other mandated reporters responding to suspected child maltreatment. Prior research has reported that the concerns veterinarians express regarding mandated reporting are similar to those expressed by physicians in the early years of that process. A more recent study is reporting that physicians' concerns are still very much extant today, offering veterinarians the opportunity to introduce planning and processes that avoid the pitfalls faced by their counterparts in human medicine.



Jill McTavish & Melissa Kimber

The study, a meta-synthesis of 44 articles describing 42 studies in 12 countries about factors influencing the reporting of child abuse and neglect, found 14% of the articles described positive experiences in the reporting process while 73% described negative experiences. Respondents included physicians, nurses, child protection professionals, teachers, psychologists, therapists, social workers, dentists, domestic violence workers, and police officers. The issues that were identified included:

- Only six articles discussed any training the mandated reporters had received.
- Individuals are more likely to report “overt” physical child abuse, e.g., physical evidence of injuries, and struggle to identify less overt forms of maltreatment such as “mild” physical abuse, emotional abuse, or children’s exposure to intimate partner violence.
- Only five articles discussed reporters’ decisions to report suspected child sexual abuse.
- Negative experiences included concerns for the child’s welfare, such as when the child was not removed from harm and the abuse continued or intensified, or when the foster care environment was worse than the child’s natural family.
- A lack of evidence about the effectiveness of mandatory reporting.

The study also identified strategies that should be undertaken to remove or reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes; these are applicable in the veterinary reporting processes as well. They included:

- 86% of the articles called for additional training to help mandated reporters better identify, respond to and report suspected child maltreatment. Such training can include developing skills for stress and coping management.
- Increased communications between mandated reporters and child protective services agencies.

- Increased support for mandated reporters including clear organizational protocols for identifying and reporting maltreatment and support for the time and other costs involved with reporting.
- Improved cultural competency among mandated reporters and child protective services personnel.
- Safeguards for mandated reporters' personal safety.
- Improved feedback from investigating agencies to inform reporters of case outcomes.
- National protocols about responding to and reporting maltreatment (such as have been implemented by AVMA and AAHA in the U.S. and national veterinary organizations in Canada, the U.K. and New Zealand).

Mandated reporters “need better support for the reporting process at many levels: personally, interpersonally, institutionally, in the community, and nationally,” the authors concluded.

-- [McTavish, J.R., Kimber, M., Devries, K., Colombini, M., & MacGregor, J.C.D., et al. \(2017\). Mandated reporters' experiences with reporting child maltreatment: A meta-synthesis of qualitative studies. *BMJ Open*, 7; e013942.](#)

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE **Bestiality Bills Introduced in Hawai'i, Kentucky**

With a preamble noting that 45 states have already criminalized animal sexual abuse, and that animal sexual abuse is “the single strongest predictor of increased risk for committing child sexual abuse,” **HB 24** was introduced on January 17 into the **Hawai'i** State Legislature by 16 legislators. The bill is in the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.



The bill would amend H.R.S. Sec. 711 by adding a new crime of sexual assault on an animal with eight specific actions considered illegal. It would be a Class C felony unless a minor were involved, in which case it would be a Class B felony. Offenders would have to surrender or forfeit all animals to a humane society; pay the organization for the animals' care; obtain psychiatric or psychological treatment; and would be prohibited from owning, keeping, residing, working, or volunteering with animals for at least five years.

“By establishing animal sexual abuse as a separate crime, law enforcement will be better able to identify potentially dangerous sexual predators in their community,” the preamble notes.

In **Kentucky**, Republican Sens. Julie Raque Adams and Damon Thayer have introduced **SB 67**, which would create a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the offense of sexual crimes against an animal. The bill would also amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In addition to Hawai'i and Kentucky, animal sexual abuse is still legal in New Mexico, West Virginia, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia.



Linda B. Rosenthal

New York, New Jersey Consider “CASA for Animals”

Two bills in the **New York** General Assembly would follow the lead established in Connecticut and Rhode Island and allow animals in cruelty cases to have a special court-appointed advocate to represent their interests, similar to the CASA system long in place for abused children.

AB 25 and **AB 702**, sponsored by Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal (D – New York City), would create a new Special Advocates for Animal Welfare Program. It would allow courts to appoint special advocates “to represent the interests of justice.” Such appointments would not be subject to appeal.

Advocates would be appointed from a list of attorneys and law school students familiar with animal issues and the legal system who would serve *pro bono*. The advocates would monitor cases, consult with individuals having relevant information regarding the case, attend hearings, and present relevant information and recommendations to the court.

Meanwhile, across the Hudson River, **New Jersey A4840** and **S 3322** would authorize courts to appoint advocates in criminal cases that affect the welfare or care of cats or dogs. Advocates would monitor the case, attend hearings, consult with relevant individuals, review records, and present information and recommendations to the court in the animals’ best interests. The bills were introduced by Assemblywoman and Deputy Majority Leader Annette Quijano and Senate Deputy Majority Leader Nicholas Scutari. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees.



Ass. Quijano & Senator Scutari



Kevin Cahill

N.Y. Considers Creating a Crime of Animal Hoarding

With a preamble emphasizing the increased national incidence of animal hoarding cases that co-occur with neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable children and elders in the household, legislators in **New York State** are considering **A261** which would create the crime of companion animal hoarding.

Under the measure, animal hoarding is defined as keeping more than 25 companion animals in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of the animals and people living in the household. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may have to complete treatment and counseling. The bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Kevin Cahill (D – Kingston), is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

“States around the country are responding to companion animal hoarding with legislation that gives law enforcement the tools it needs for early intervention – before the situation becomes a full-blown cruelty case,” adds the preamble.

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS FOR CRIME VICTIMS

New Hampshire Considers Courtroom Therapy and Facility Animals



New Hampshire is the latest state to take up legislation that would allow victims and witnesses of child abuse and sexual abuse to have a comforting facility dog or therapy animal accompany them to court. **HB 513**, with 10 sponsors in the House of Representatives, would add a new section to RSA 516:7-b.

Under the proposal, when taking the testimony of a victim or witness under the age of 18, a person who has an intellectual disability, or a victim or witness of a sexual offense, the court would be allowed the use of a facility dog or therapy animal in any proceeding. The court would have to consider the age of the victim or witness currently and at the time of the incident, the interests of the victim or witness, the rights of the parties to the litigation, and any other factor the court deemed relevant.

The bill is in the Judiciary Committee. Similar measures have been enacted in other states including Alabama, California and Louisiana. A similar measure, **A3729**, is being considered in **New Jersey**.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Animal Abuse “Red Flag” Cited as Precursor to Murder

The “red flag” warning signs that included animal abuse, which culminated in the brutal death of a Louisville, Ky. teenager, were described in a TV newscast spotlighting a bill in the Kentucky Legislature that would increase penalties for animal abuse.

Joshua Gouker is serving a life sentence after pleading guilty in 2013 to beating his 14-year-old stepson, Trey Zwicker, to death and leaving his body behind a high school. But the boy’s father recently told [WHAS-TV](#) that there were signs of Gouker’s violent behavior before the murder.



Joshua Gouker

Gouker was involved in several domestic violence cases and was sentenced in 2004 to five years in prison for robbery. In 2013 Gouker was convicted of animal torture for killing Trey’s dog.

“If you are willing to do this to an animal, in my opinion, it’s just a start before you start doing it to a human being. People need to look at that,” said Terry Zwicker, saying that incident should have been seen as a red flag.

Rep. Walker Thomas (Christian and Trigg Counties) likewise says there is a clear link between animal abuse and domestic violence. His bill, **Kentucky BR 66**, would automatically make it a class D felony (punishable by up to five years in prison) for those convicted of animal abuse. The measure would also require that these sentences could not be suspended, probated or conditionally discharged if the person also threatened, harassed or terrorized a family member or someone in a dating relationship.

Video Shows “Tough Guys” and Their Lovable Pets

Baltimore’s renowned “Show Your Soft Side” campaign ([See the October 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) – which uses “tough guy” athletes, law enforcement officers and others to show that even the toughest of macho men (and women) take care of their pets – has produced a new video to educate youths that it’s not cool to be cruel. The [1:45 video](#), titled “Show Your Soft Side Like the Tough Guys Do,” features such burly athletes as martial arts master John “Head Bonker” Rallo, center Ryan “Badass” Jensen, tight end Nick “Brick Wall” Boyle, and tackle Ronnie “Human Steamroller” Stanley romping with their pets.



“You know in football you never know what color jersey you’re going to wear but I know mine will always have dog hair on it,” says Boyle. “It doesn’t matter how much you bench-squat or deadlift, show me a guy who looks out for animals – that’s a tough guy,” says Rallo.

Police Officer Training Continues in Ukraine



Ukrainian police at an earlier Link training

Awareness of animal abuse as a possible precursor and indicator of other crimes, and The Link’s importance to law enforcement, continues to expand in Ukraine where police officers are receiving training on The Link. [Hidden-in-Sight](#), a British organization of animal welfare and former law enforcement officials, is expanding its training services in Ukraine ([See the April 2018 LINK-Letter](#)). Operations Director Mark Randell has announced that trainings for law enforcement officials will be held on Feb. 22 in Lviv, and on Feb. 26 in Ivano-Frankivsk. “We’re looking forward to training officers about the Link between animal abuse and human violence to help them not only save the lives of animals, but also protect people from potential domestic violence. Police officers are working hard on the front-line so it’s important they know how to recognize cases of animal abuse and deal with them professionally,” he says.

Connecticut’s “CASA for Animals” Gets Publicity Boost



Some of “Desmond’s Army” volunteers

Connecticut’s pioneering program of providing *pro bono* attorneys and law students to represent the interests of animals in court in cruelty cases ([See the October 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) got an additional boost of publicity on Jan. 27 when the [Greenwich Time](#) featured an extensive article on “Desmond’s Army,” the volunteers who track animal abuse cases around the state and attend court proceedings. Several animal advocates interviewed for the article noted that the impacts of the program include having the public recognize that animals are not mere property that can be disposed of, and that the public expects courts to take animal cruelty cases more seriously.

Attorney Thomas Cherry, of Cheshire, Conn., emphasized the importance of this work based on the Link between animal abuse, domestic violence and other violence. “In the past, many animal abuse cases were just dismissed. Animal abuse is a serious problem and it is connected to other violence and should be taken seriously,” he said.

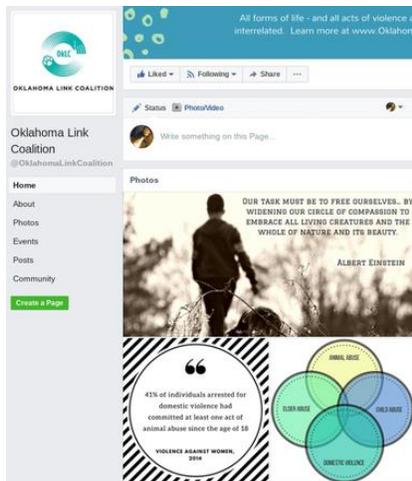
THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Study Examines Attitudes of Zoophiles

A new research study of people who prefer to have sex with animals is reporting that these individuals are remarkably self-aware of their sexuality and recognize that their behavior is illegal (even though they perceive it as an expression of love). They often relate their struggles with finding social acceptance to homosexuality, believing that one way of de-stigmatizing themselves would be to remove zoophilia from the list of disorders listed in the DSM. They believe that the quality of sex with animals is much higher than with humans, and physical features, such as the presence of a fur, can be sexually arousing, especially when seeing animals in public. These individuals utilize the Internet to network and connect with others, however such Internet-based friendships usually do not extend beyond online conversations, given that they tend to be mistrustful of other zoophiles particularly in the area of personal safety.

-- Sendler, D.J. (2019). Contemporary understanding of zoophilia – A multinational survey study. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 62, 44-51.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS



Oklahoma Link Coalition Has a New Website

Our Oklahoma Link Coalition affiliate has created a new and improved website. It includes pages inviting a variety of professionals to join; announcements of upcoming events; news items; a PowerPoint that organizations can use for training purposes; extensive resources for professionals and for the public; and detailed information on how to report animal, child, elder and domestic abuse in Oklahoma, based on the National Link Coalition's [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#).

The Oklahoma Link Coalition held five group meetings across the state in 2018 and now has 149 members, 75 of whom have joined in the past year.



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

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

As the 2019 legislative season opens, we're following a record number of bills impacting animal abuse and its Links with other crimes. *If you know of any such bills not included here, please let us know.*

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Arizona HB 2161 would allow a petitioner to request an ex parte severe threat order of protection based on the respondent's ownership of a firearm; in determining whether ground exist for such an order, the courts shall consider all relevant evidence including the respondent's cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would require the respondent to relinquish all firearms and ammunition.



Florida HB 379 would allow courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or otherwise disposing of any animals owned by the petitioner and/or respondent and minor children in the home. *The bill also addresses Cross-Reporting.*



Kentucky HB 25 would: prohibit pretrial diversion for a person charged with torture of a dog or cat; make torture of a dog or cat a Class D felony; and prohibit early release for those who torture a dog or cat as a way to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family member or member of a dating relationship. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Mississippi SB 2014 would prohibit respondents from removing, damaging, hiding, harming, or disposing of any companion animal owned or possessed by a person protected by the order. The court could also authorize the removal of a companion animal from the respondent. "Companion animal" would be defined as any animal, other than livestock or wild animal, that is kept inside a residence and any dog or cat regardless of where it is kept. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Missouri HB 370 would add "intimidation" – the injuring, killing, or threat to injure or kill an animal if such act is done to coerce, control, punish, or be an act of revenge against a household member – as grounds for a court to issue a protection order. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Hampshire HB 361 would add animals to the tangible property whose disposition courts may determine during divorce or annulment settlements; this property settlement "shall address the care and ownership of the parties' animals, taking into consideration the animals' wellbeing." The bill is in the Children and Family Law Committee.



New Mexico HB 52 would define an act of animal abuse intended to coerce, control or intimidate a domestic violence victim as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty. The bill is in the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee.



New York A 588 would create a felony-level crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if the act is committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 767 and **S 1251** would amend the language of the state’s pet protection orders to allow the court to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals kept by the petitioner, respondent or child, and to order the respondent to stay away from, take, transfer, conceal, harm, or dispose of the animal. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Children & Families Committees.



New York A 1097 would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H 5023 would add a provision allowing courts to provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets in protection orders for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. A related measure, **H 5076**, would allow courts to award custody of household pets and to impose enforcement remedies including a restraining order or other injunctive relief. The bills are in the House Judiciary Committee.



Utah SB 45 would define an act of aggravated animal cruelty intended to coerce, control or intimidate a spouse or partner as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty.



Virginia HB 2642 and **SB 1276** would make any violation relating to animal cruelty a Class 6 felony when such violation is carried out with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. The bills are in the House Committee for Courts of Justice and Senate Finance Committee.



Wyoming HB 235 would allow courts to issue protection orders that grant sole possession of any household pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child to the petitioner “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order would also order the respondent to not have any contact with the animal and to not abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



New York A 831 would increase the penalty for aggravated cruelty to animals from two to four years when the crime is committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York A 955 would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine, to knowingly cause a minor child under age 16 to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York A 1211 would require all individuals responsible for enforcing animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and all persons required to report child abuse or maltreatment to report suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families.



Washington HB 1235 would create a new crime of “providing a harmful material to a minor” that includes bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill is in the House Committee on Public Safety.

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



New York A 1153 would prohibit a person 62 years of age or older from being denied residential occupancy or being evicted solely because the person keeps a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of such pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing Committee.

Animal Hoarding



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 Environment & Energy Committee and the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.



New York A 261 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as keeping more than 25 companion animals in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well being of the animals and people living in the household. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may have to complete treatment and counseling. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Mississippi HB 843 and **HB 984** would require law enforcement officials investigating animal cruelty crimes to use a standardized form compliant with the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). **HB 843** is in the House Agriculture Committee and **HB 984** is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey A3693 and **S2239** would add individuals convicted of animal cruelty to the list of offenders who are prohibited from possessing a firearm and obtaining a permit to purchase a handgun. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



New Jersey A 1334 and **S 3294** expands the definition of animal cruelty to include the theft or release of an animal from the residence of the owner during a burglary. The bills are in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



New York A 1069 would add a conviction for felony animal abuse for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the definition of a "serious offense" which would affect the ability of someone to possess a firearm. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 1834 and **S 186** ("Kirby and Quigley's Law") would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the respective Agriculture Committees.



Washington HB 1541 would add a conviction for 2nd-degree animal cruelty as a crime making it illegal for a person to possess a firearm. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders

 **Colorado HB 19-1092** would allow courts to order mental health treatment to offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill would also require courts to impose a ban of either five or 10 years upon conviction for a misdemeanor or felony offense, respectively. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Mississippi HB 984** would require offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Missouri HB 111** would allow courts to require adults and juveniles convicted of animal abuse to undergo psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment; these would be mandatory if the offense were torture or mutilation, or upon a second conviction for animal abuse. *The bill also addresses Cross-Reporting* and is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.

 **New Jersey** currently requires juveniles (but not adults) convicted of animal cruelty to undergo mental health counseling. Five bills would expand that to include adults as well. **A3049** and **S1636 (“Shyanne’s Law”)** would require a mental health evaluation for juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders, to be followed by mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Health, Human Services & Senior Citizens Committee. **A3856** and **S2165** would require both juveniles and adults to undergo mental health counseling; those bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Economic Growth Committee. **S2749** would likewise require mental health counseling for all persons convicted of animal cruelty; it is in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

 **New York A 984** and **S 385** would require courts to impose mandatory psychiatric evaluation and treatment for juvenile and adult offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals. **S 384** would require juvenile offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are in the respective Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committees.

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

Animal-Assisted Interventions for Crime Victims and Witnesses

 **New Hampshire HB 513** would allow victims and witnesses of child abuse and sexual abuse, and persons with intellectual disabilities, to have a comforting facility dog or therapy animal accompany them to court. The court would have to consider the age of the victim or witness currently and at the time of the incident, the interests of the victim or witness, the rights of the parties to the litigation, and any other factor deemed relevant. 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.

Animal Sexual Abuse

 **Hawai'i HB 24** would add a new crime of sexual assault on an animal with eight specific actions considered illegal. It would be a Class C felony unless a minor were involved, in which case it would be a Class B felony. Offenders would have to surrender or forfeit all animals to a humane society; pay the organization for the animals' care; obtain psychiatric or psychological treatment; and would be prohibited from owning, keeping, residing, working, or volunteering with animals for at least five years. The bill is in the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.

 **Kentucky SB 67** would create a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the offense of sexual crimes against an animal, and amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **Massachusetts SD.1566** would amend Chapter 272, Section 34 of the General Laws to replace the archaic "Crime against nature" – the "abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast" – with a new crime of a "sexual act on an animal."

Cross-Reporting

 **Florida HB 47**, prefiled for the 2019 legislative session, would have exempted veterinarians who report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement agencies from lawsuits. Florida veterinarians are already immune from liability for participating in the investigation of animal cruelty. The measure was withdrawn prior to its introduction.

 **Florida HB 379** would allow veterinarians to bypass the usual confidentiality restrictions in order to report suspected criminal violations to a law enforcement officer or certified animal control officer. Medical records could not be furnished except under a court order. *The bill also addresses domestic violence pet protection orders.*

 **Iowa SF 3** would mandate veterinarians who "conclude that an animal is being subjected to animal cruelty" to complete an animal cruelty report and submit it to a local law enforcement agency. Individuals who report, cooperate with or assist in such investigations in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **Missouri HB 111** would grant immunity from civil liability to all persons, including veterinarians, teachers and school personnel, who in good faith report suspected animal abuse to a law enforcement agency. *The bill also addresses Psychological Evaluations* and is in the Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committee.

 **New York A 1170** would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal is the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect to report the incident and disclose necessary records to law enforcement and humane investigators. Currently, N.Y. veterinarians are permitted to make such reports. Both the existing and proposed law accord veterinarians who report in good faith – a belief that such action is necessary to protect the health and welfare of the patient or the public – immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

 **Oregon HB 2227** would add animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. The measure is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Oregon HB 2500** would allow veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail in such cases could collect compensatory damages for all expenses incurred in providing the veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Rhode Island S 82** would amend §4-1-37 of the General Laws, which permits veterinarians, technicians, and animal shelter and kennel personnel to report suspected animal abuse, to mandate such reporting with immunity from lawsuits if made in good faith. The measure would also impose a \$500 fine for failing to report. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“CASA for Animals”

 **New Jersey A4840** and **S 3322** would authorize courts to appoint advocates in criminal cases that affect the welfare or care of cats or dogs. Advocates would monitor the case, attend hearings, consult with relevant individuals, review records, and present information and recommendations to the court in the animals’ best interests. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees.

 **New York A 25** and **A 702** would allow for the creation of a court-appointed advocate for animals. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS



Andrew Chilton

Ohio Man Gets Probation for Killing Estranged Girlfriend’s Cat

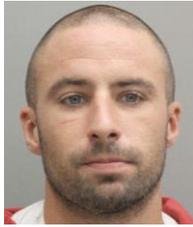
A man who hanged and then viciously beat his girlfriend’s cat to death and then posted pictures of it for her to see while they were in the midst of a break-up was sentenced to five years of probation and 100 hours of community service. “The way to get back at her, I guess, is to do this and make sure she saw the pictures,” said chief dog warden Kurt Merbs. [WLWT-TV](#) reported that Andrew Tyler Chilton, 19, of Middletown, Ohio, had been arrested last August on felony charges in the death of his girlfriend’s cat, “Tinker.” Butler County Sheriff Richard Jones added, “Obviously he has some serious issues if he feels he has to harm an innocent animal.”

Retaliatory Dognapper Gets Up to 2 Years in Prison

A man who retaliated after a failed relationship by breaking into a home and kidnapping and killing his friend’s dog (*See the [December 2018 LINK-Letter](#)*) was sentenced to one-to-two years in prison. Christopher Roberts, 19, of Elizabethville, Pa. had pled guilty to charges of animal cruelty, burglary and theft in the stabbing death of “Bella,” [WHTM-TV](#) reported. Roberts and Bella’s owner had reportedly been close friends, but the owner said he had ended the relationship about a year earlier.



Christopher Roberts



Cody Toups

Man Gets 3 Years in Prison for Killing Girlfriend’s Cat

Cody Toups, 30, of Thibodaux, La., was sentenced to three years in prison for killing his girlfriend’s cat with a machete and throwing it into a bayou. Toups had pled guilty to one count of aggravated animal cruelty and is also barred for owning any animals for 10 years. The [Houma Courier](#) reported that Toups had grabbed the cat from inside his girlfriend’s home and thrown it into Bayou Lafourche. When the woman’s father tried to pull the cat out of the water, he grabbed a machete and fatally struck the cat, according to authorities. “As a civilized society, cruel acts of violence against defenseless domesticated animals are an affront to our values,” said Assistant District Attorney Ben Caillouet.

New York Animal Hoarder Charged with Assault and Parole Violation



Elizabeth Grant

A New York City woman suspected of violating her probation in an animal hoarding case has been charged with assaulting a peace officer and other animal abuse offenses after probation officers, NYPD and ASPCA officials reportedly recovered another excess number of animals. The [New York Daily News](#) reported that Elizabeth Grant, 50, of Queens, who had been convicted last April of 108 counts of animal abuse for housing 55 cats, 12 dogs and two turtles in her home, was accused of pushing a probation officer making an unannounced inspection. Her probation includes a ban on owning any animals for 10 years, but the officers allegedly recovered two turtles, seven dogs, two rabbits, two guinea pigs, two fish, and a cat crammed in an ammonia-filled, fly-infested home in 90-degree temperature. She faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted of the new offenses.

Man Charged with Stabbing Girlfriend’s Cat that Scratched Him

A man who allegedly punched and stabbed a kitten that had scratched him, and then sent a photo of the cat with a knife in its head to his girlfriend’s new boyfriend, was charged with animal cruelty and carrying a dangerous weapon. Prosecutors are also seeking to revoke the bail of Peter Rice, 43, of Salem, Mass., stemming from an earlier domestic abuse case brought against him by his girlfriend. The [Salem News](#) reported that the girlfriend called police when she saw the image of the kitten, which she had been “cat-sitting” for a neighbor. Police helped Rice retrieve the body of the cat from a trash can after Rice said he was too “wasted” to remember where he had dumped it.

Michigan Man Held on Child and Animal Abuse Charges

An Escanaba, Mich. man who was already in jail on a separate child abuse case was arraigned on charges of animal torture for the alleged severe abuse of a puppy. The [Escanaba Daily Press](#) reported that the animal cruelty charge against Michael Anthony Madril, 27, came to light after a severely abused puppy was brought to the Delta County Animal Shelter with multiple fractures and all four legs broken. Madril was already in the Delta County Correctional Facility on the child abuse charge when he was arraigned on the animal torture allegations. He was being held on a \$125,000 surety bond.



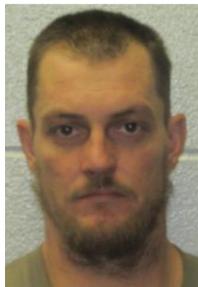
Michael Madril

Fishermen's Dispute Leads to Multiple Charges and Crimes

A Maine fisherman is facing charges of burglary, theft, aggravated criminal mischief, and aggravated animal cruelty for allegedly shooting a dog that belonged to another fisherman while he was on administrative release from an earlier conviction on three counts of terrorizing a third fisherman. Justin T. Chipman, 23, of Steuben, Maine, had been convicted in January 2018 of firing a gun at another man's house and leaving a threatening note in his car as part of a fishing dispute. He was on administrative release – essentially an unsupervised probation – from that conviction when he is alleged to have entered the third fisherman's house, kidnapping his dog "Franky," taking the owner's Hummer for a joyride, and then shooting the dog. The [Bangor Daily News](#) reported that Chipman had spent time in jail and then was placed on administrative release, rather than probation, because the court did not see the need to require him from staying away from certain behavior or seeing a probation officer.



Justin Chipman



Christopher Hall

Deputies Charge N.C. Man with Child and Animal Abuse

Christopher Hall, 37, of Mills River, N. Car., was charged with felony animal cruelty and misdemeanor child abuse after Henderson County Sheriff's deputies arrived at his home to serve him paper on an unrelated matter. The [Hendersonville Times-News](#) reported that the deputies saw an extremely malnourished and emaciated Doberman pinscher tied to a tree in the yard. The conditions in the house where a minor was living among nine cats, one bird and another dog, triggered the child abuse charges. The animals were recovering at the Henderson County Animal Shelter.

Landscaper Charged with Burying Dead Child Instead of a Cat



David Zuber and Monique Romero

A man in Albuquerque, N. Mex., who told his landscaper it would be okay to bury a cat in his backyard pet cemetery was shocked when police searching for the landscaper's missing 1-year-old daughter found her body instead. The [Albuquerque Journal](#) reported that landscaper David Zuber, 26, and his wife Monique Romero, 23, were arrested on charges of child abuse resulting in death. The body of Anastazia Romero was found buried in a trash bag inside a duffel bag underneath the remains of a dog. Police began looking for the toddler after a relative said Zuber had said the child had drowned in the bathtub. Zuber allegedly showed police where to find the girl's remains. The couple's two other children were placed with the DCYF.



Ariane Borg

Mother Charged with Child Abuse and Torture of Family Cat

Ariane Christine Borg, 38, of Holladay, Utah, was arrested in January on three charges of child abuse and one count of torturing a companion animal for allegedly killing the family cat in front of her children last September. [KUTV](#) reported that her son and daughter told investigating officers that Borg beat the cat repeatedly and snapped its neck in front of them. The children were removed from the home and the daughter is reportedly undergoing therapy for acute stress disorder.

Attorney Gets Probation in Bestiality/Drug Case in Plea Bargain

An environmental attorney from Highland Park, Pa., who had been charged with more than 20 counts of animal sexual abuse, cruelty, weapons, and narcotics offenses for allegedly having sex with his dog ([See the April 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) was sentenced to four years of probation after prosecutors withdrew the animal abuse and bestiality charges in exchange for a guilty plea on the drug and weapons charges. Ivan Devoren, 62, of Highland Park, Pa., had to surrender the dog to a foster family and will not be allowed to own or be around pets, according to the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#). A veterinarian examined the 6-month-old Labrador retriever named “Snoopy” and reported there were signs of abuse.



Ivan Devoren

Colorado Man Charged with Child Sexual Abuse and Bestiality

A Greeley, Colo. man, who was not named by the [Greeley Tribune](#) because of his relationship to the child victim, was arrested on suspicion of child sexual assault, possession of child pornography, child abuse, and forcing a young girl to engage in bestiality while he recorded it. The 24-year-old man was arrested following a nine-month investigation by the Greeley Police Department triggered when the young girl who was treated for injuries in a hospital ER told authorities she had been sexually assaulted multiple times. Authorities said the suspect allegedly had pornographic videos of sexually exploited children, including the victim. Two short videos, about 11 seconds and 15 seconds in length, reportedly show a dog licking the victim's private parts. There are also photos of the victim and the dog locked in a small kennel together, authorities said.

Pit Bull Rescuer Charged with Cruelty Facing Domestic Violence Allegations

The former president of a Connecticut pit bull rescue group who had been charged last December with six counts of animal cruelty and criminal damage to her landlord’s property ([See the December 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) was re-arrested on Jan. 29 on charges of assault, threatening and disorderly conduct following a domestic dispute. Heidi Lueders, 31, of Fairfield, had been charged earlier in connection with the starvation deaths of five dogs allegedly found in her home. [News 12 Connecticut](#) reported the dogs had been locked in cages in a feces-filled house, were mostly decomposed, and had been dead for two to 10 months. The subsequent arrest followed New Canaan police officers reportedly finding a family member holding Lueders down to prevent her from attacking another family member. Officials said the family told police Lueders was intoxicated, out of control, and threatening to shoot them if police were called.



Heidi Lueders



Antonio Simmons

Man With Criminal History Charged with Starving Four Dogs

A St. Petersburg, Fla. man with a criminal history of operating a drug house, fleeing and eluding officers and driving with a suspended license has been charged with animal cruelty after officers allegedly found four emaciated dogs, one of which had died. [WFLA-TV](#) reported that a court affidavit accused Antonio Lafayette Simmons, 44, of the charges after the dogs were found chained in the back yard of his residence. Simmons reportedly said the dead dog had a heart condition but police said there was no evidence that he had ever taken the dog to a veterinarian.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Feb. 12 (online): Martha Smith-Blackmore will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Working with your Veterinarian to Better Document Animal Maltreatment.”

Feb. 19 – New Brunswick, N.J.: Phil Arkow will the N.J. [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#).

Feb. 20 (online): Jaki MacKinnon of Bethesda House and Kia Rainbow of Interval House of Ottawa will discuss issues and solutions in “Women’s Shelters Housing Pets” in a [webinar](#) for the Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses.

Feb. 21 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Dog Fighting Investigations and Prosecutions” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association.

Feb. 22 – Lviv, Ukraine: [Hidden-in-Sight](#) will conduct a Link training for police officers.

Feb. 22 – Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine: [Hidden-in-Sight](#) will conduct a Link training for police officers.

Feb. 26 (online): Amy Morgan will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar to help first responders cope with the trauma of experiencing child, domestic, elder, and animal abuse cases.

Feb. 28 (online): Adam Ricci will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Advanced Components of Animal Cruelty Investigations” on behalf of the National Animal Care & Control Association.

March 3 – Orlando, Fla.: Rachel Barton of Tallahassee Animal Services will present on “The Link: What Would You Do?” at the [Florida Animal Control Association](#) conference.

March 4 – Sewell, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train on the Link for the [Center for Family Services](#).

March 5 (online): Michelle Welch will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Creating an Animal Abuse & Cruelty Unit for Your Agency.”

March 6 – Pittsfield, Mass: [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network – will meet.

March 8 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

March 13 – Voorhees, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train the N.J. [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#).

March 15 – Portland, Ore.: Diane Balkin will present on The Link at the Lewis & Clark Law School’s 8th Annual [Animal Law Review Symposium](#).

March 19-23 – Knoxville, Tenn.: The [Veterinary Social Work Intensive](#) at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine will integrate animal-related bereavement, compassion fatigue management, and the Link into veterinary social work practice.

March 26 – Cleveland, Ohio: Phil Arkow will headline a [Link seminar](#) at Fairhill Partners.

March 27 – Toledo, Ohio: Phil Arkow and Janet Hoy-Gerlach will headline a [Link seminar](#) at the University of Toledo.

March 29 – Columbus, Ohio: Phil Arkow will headline a [Link seminar](#) at COAAA.

April 3 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the [University of Pennsylvania](#) School of Social Policy & Practice.

April 12 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will offer a 3-hour CE & CEU training event.

April 12 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Maya Gupta and Mary Lou Randour will present on “What Every Psychologist Should Know about The Link between Animal Abuse and Family Violence” for the [British Columbia Psychological Association](#).

Apr. 14 – Montreal, Que., Canada: Sarah May Lindsay will present “Co-Sheltering Companion Animals in Emergency Women’s Shelters: From Model to Practice & Solutions,” and Margaret Doyle and Brad Nichols will present “CSI Animal: Veterinary Forensics in Practice” at Humane Canada’s [National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Apr. 16 - 18 – New Orleans, La.: Martha Smith-Blackmore will present on “Putting the ‘Doc’ in Documenting Animal Cruelty,” and Katie Campbell will present on “Domestic Violence Shelters and Pets: How Animal Care Organizations Can Help” at the [HSUS Animal Expo](#).

Apr. 23-26 – Honolulu, Hawai’i: Katie Campbell of RedRover will present on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse and strategies for co-sheltering pets and people at the [Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma](#) 16th International Summit.

Apr. 28 – Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on “Introducing The Link to Students: The Cruelty Connection” at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

May 10 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

May 15 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct two webinars on “Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

May 15 – Denver, Colo.: The Link between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence will be a breakout session at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys’ 3rd National [Domestic Violence Prosecution Conference](#).

May 23-24 – João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil: The Link will be featured at the [9th International Conference of Collective Veterinary Medicine](#) sponsored by the Education and Animal Control Technical Institute and Veterinary Council of Paraíba State.

June 14 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

June 25-26 – Hartford, Conn.: Phil Arkow and Aubrey Fine will discuss cross-reporting between child and animal protection agencies and therapeutic interventions for child abuse victims at the [Paws for Kids](#) conference.

July 12 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will offer a 3-hour CE & CEU training event.

July 18-19 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: Jyothi Robertson will present four sessions on animal welfare, animal hoarding and forensics, and Rebecca Ledger will present four sessions on forensic behavioral analysis, at the [joint conference](#) of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

Aug. 2-6 – Washington, D.C.: Phil Arkow will present on “Preparing the Practice to respond to Suspected Animal Abuse” at the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Convention 2019.

Aug. 9 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

Aug. 27 (online): Terry Mills of the ASPCA will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “What Dog Fighters Don’t Want You to Know: Considerations for the Justice Professional.”

Sept. 9 – Edinburgh, Scotland: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Scottish SPCA and University of Edinburgh](#) conference on “The Links between Animal Cruelty, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Human Violence: Research and Practice.” Other Link speakers will include Paula Boyden, Jo Williams, and Mike Flynn.

Sept. 13 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

Sept. 18-19 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Positive Links’ biennial [New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence](#) will be held.

Oct. 1 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Creating an Animal Abuse Task Force: How Law Enforcement Can Work with Local resources to Investigate and Prosecute Crimes” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association and the National Animal Care & Control Association.

Oct. 11 – Dallas, Texas: Chelsea Rider will present at a 3-hour CE & CEU training event hosted by the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Oct. 24 – Plano, Texas: Phil Arkow will present “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse” at the [North Texas Facing Family Violence conference](#). The conference’s theme is “All Systems Go: Working Together – Family Violence Across the Lifespan.”

Nov. 8 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular business meeting.

Nov. 21-22 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: The [Canadian Violence Link Conference](#) will examine the Link between violence to humans and animals, look at the vulnerabilities among both populations, and explore how various sectors can learn from each other and gather the necessary tools to stop the cycle of violence.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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

Lesley Ashworth

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund
Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

Diane Balkin, J.D.

Senior Staff Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund
Past President, Int'l. Veterinary Forensic Sciences Assn.
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