



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



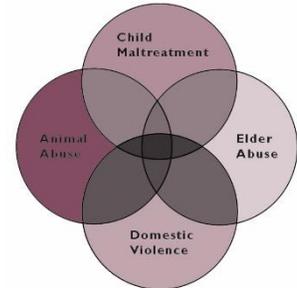
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### Four Funding Opportunities Announced

### To Support Pet Co-Sheltering

Increased recognition of how threats to companion animals deter significant numbers of domestic violence survivors from leaving abusive environments is prompting an increased funding stream for domestic violence shelters to modify their facilities to accept pets. In recent weeks, four new grant opportunities have been announced:

### Purina/RedRover \$500,000 Purple Leash Project



The [RedRover Safe Housing](#) program, which has awarded almost \$600,000 in 83 grants to enable domestic violence

shelters to become pet-friendly ([See the December 2017 LINK-Letter](#)), has received a significant increase through the announcement of a four-year, \$500,000 commitment from Purina. The pet food company's grants will be awarded on a biannual basis to provide funding and resources to transform domestic violence emergency shelters into safe spaces for survivors with pets.

The [Purple Leash Project](#) is a visible symbol of an invisible struggle for domestic violence victims and their pets --purple representing domestic violence awareness and the leash symbolizing the  
**(Continued on Page 2)**

### Bayer Expands \$130,000 "Grants Fur Families"



Bayer – the multinational pharmaceutical company with interests in animal and human health – has expanded its campaign to fund domestic violence shelters by announcing \$130,000 in "[Grants Fur Families](#)" donations to 13 shelters.

Each shelter will receive \$10,000 to support their efforts to provide safe places for people with pets fleeing physical, emotional and mental abuse. The shelters will be able to either improve their existing pet facilities or open on-site pet kennels for the first time.

"We recognize the deep, life-changing bond that people share with their pets," said Raymond F.  
**(Continued on Page 2)**

## Purina/RedRover

unbreakable bond between pets and their owners, said RedRover and Purina officials in a joint announcement.

“We have a responsibility to our family members, friends and neighbors and their pets who may be silently suffering from domestic abuse to create safe places where they can escape and heal together,” said Nina Leigh Krueger, President of Purina. “Together with RedRover, we can reshape the way domestic violence victims and their pets are served and strengthen our communities in the process.”

Approximately 120 shelters in the U.S. allow pets, but numerous studies have identified significant numbers of survivors who will not leave their abusers because they can’t bring their animals. By working together, RedRover and Purina hope to offer more resources for domestic violence survivors with pets, so that a beloved pet is never again an obstacle to leaving -- instead, a leash comes to represent a lifeline that leads to a brighter future together.

There are now pet-friendly shelters in 44 states. A priority for RedRover’s Safe Housing grants is to add co-sheltering programs in Hawai’i, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.

“Together with Purina, we’ll be able to accelerate our goals with a hope of having a pet-friendly shelter in all 50 states by 2020,” said Nicole Forsyth, President and CEO of RedRover.

“Alongside Purina, we encourage any domestic violence shelter that is ready to become pet-friendly to apply for a Purple Leash Project grant. We are ready to help!”

Purina will also provide grant recipient shelters with a donation of pet foods as the animals begin a new chapter with their owners.

## Bayer

Kerins, Jr., Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Bayer. “We are so humbled and moved by all the Grants Fur Families applicants that we increased our funding so even more domestic violence shelters can open their doors to pets. No one should have to choose between their safety and their pet.”

The shelters receiving grants are:

- **180 Turning Lives Around**, Hazlet, N.J.
- **Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties**, Akron & Medina, Ohio
- **Bridges of Williamson County**, Franklin, Tenn.
- **Center for Hope and Safety**, Salem, Ore.
- **Crisis Center**, Littleton, Colo.
- **Domestic Violence Intervention Program**, Iowa City, Iowa
- **Haven Hills**, San Diego, Calif.
- **Haven House**, Rio Rancho, N. Mex.
- **Next Step Domestic Violence Project**, Ellsworth & Machias, Maine
- **Quigley House**, Clay County, Fla.
- **R.E.A.C.H. of Macon County**, Franklin, N.C.
- **Safehouse Services**, Cheyenne, Wyo.
- **Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh**, Pa.

“We recognize the deep, life-changing bond that people share with their pets,” said Raymond F. Kerins Jr., Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Bayer. “We are so humbled and moved by all the Grants Fur Families applicants that we increased our funding so even more domestic violence shelters can open their doors to pets. No one should have to choose between their safety and their pet.”

Bayer initiated this campaign in 2016 with three \$20,000 grants to shelters in Missouri, New York and Nevada ([See the November 2016 LINK-Letter](#)).

## Banfield Foundation \$1,000,000 “Safer Together” Initiative

The [Banfield Foundation](#) – the charitable arm of the national chain of some 1,200 veterinary clinics – has announced a new four-year, \$1,000,000 initiative to broaden the foundation’s commitment to improving the health and welfare of pets caught up in families experiencing domestic violence. The pet-friendly domestic violence initiative, *Safer Together™*, is comprised of three elements:



- **GRANTS:** The grant program will fund veterinary care, temporary shelter, behavior training, and animal care specialists’ roles in pet-friendly domestic violence shelters or foster systems. Banfield has been funding in this area since 2015 (*See the [February 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) and has already awarded 29 grants in 19 states totaling \$198,000.
- **VETERINARY EDUCATION:** The initiative will engage and train veterinarians through continuing education at national veterinary conferences and select local veterinary medical associations in areas with the highest prevalence of domestic violence. The training will focus on: the prevalence of abuse in animals; the veterinarian’s role in identifying abuse; signs to look for; resources for survivors in need of help; reporting requirements; and helping shelters accept animals.
- **AWARENESS:** The campaign will raise public awareness and drive action with the general public and veterinary profession around how domestic violence and animal abuse frequently occur simultaneously in a family.

The foundation has created an all-volunteer Advisory Committee of leading experts to help guide the Safer Together program. Committee members include:

- **Phil Arkow**, Coordinator, The National LINK Coalition
- **Maya Gupta, Ph.D.**, Senior Director of Research, ASPCA
- **Allie Phillips**, Founder & CEO, Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)™
- **Myra Rasnick**, Executive Director, Ahimsa House
- **Robert Reisman, DVM**, Supervisor of Forensic Sciences, ASPCA
- **Marlene Richter**, Executive Director, Noah’s Animal House

“Veterinary care is essential to providing comprehensive services to human and animal victims of domestic violence. Because domestic violence is about power and control, many victims are prevented from seeking veterinary care for their pets by their abuser,” said Rasnick. “Approximately 95% of pets entering our program require some form of veterinary care to treat injury or illness due to abuse and neglect. Veterinarians play a crucial role in not only treating these pets, but also recognizing the signs of animal cruelty. Making the connection between animal cruelty and domestic violence makes veterinarians a lifeline for victims of domestic violence, providing earlier intervention that can help save both animal and human lives.”

The foundation is also funding an additional \$100,000 in grants to cover capital costs for an existing pet-friendly shelter or foster system to enhance its pet experience or provide new amenities designed to improve the overall wellbeing of pets.

For more information on the Safer Together grant program, to apply for a grant, or donate to the Banfield Foundation, visit [BanfieldFoundation.org](#).

## \$50,000 Maddie's Fund Grant to Explore Homeless Co-Sheltering



Another funding opportunity to assist the pets of domestic violence survivors has been announced by [Maddie's Fund](#)<sup>®</sup>, a national family foundation established by Dave and Cheryl Duffield to revolutionize the status and well-being of companion animals. The [Animals & Society Institute](#) (ASI) has received a \$50,000 grant to evaluate and identify best practices in co-sheltering homeless people and their companion animals. While the focus of the grant appears to be on homeless populations, a significant number of these individuals become homeless as a result of domestic violence.

ASI will partner with [My Dog is My Home](#) in the campaign. The lack of animal-friendly policies in many homeless shelters means people are often asked to choose between their pets and a warm, safe place to stay. The evaluation will inform development of animal-friendly policies and practices in homeless shelters nationwide, reducing the likelihood that animals will be relinquished simply because their caregivers are experiencing a period of homelessness. The project has the potential to fundamentally transform the way homeless services are provided to people and the animals they love.

## New Book Explores Domestic Violence's Impact on Pets

A new book on The Link between domestic violence and animal has come from "Down Under," where Nik Taylor, Associate Professor at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand and Heather Fraser, Associate Professor at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia advocate an intersectional feminist understanding of human-animal relationships.

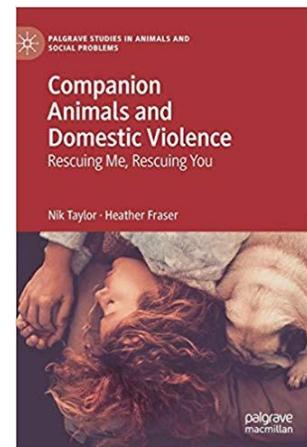
*Companion Animals and Domestic Violence: Rescuing Me, Rescuing You* not only draws attention to The Link, but also encourages the public and professionals to take physical and emotional animal abuse and neglect in domestic settings more seriously. They see human-animal interactions in domestic violence scenarios through a lens of rescue, refuge and recovery.

They view our relationships with companion animals as not being unidirectional, but rather as circular, flowing from human to animal and back again in a loop that is constantly reinforced through caring, empathy and touch. They describe how interspecies compassionate relationships of connection and love can be life-sustaining.

They emphasize that in addition to the trauma and terror inflicted upon human victims, domestic violence carries additional risks for companion animals. These include: being killed by human perpetrators of violence, often without any redress or public scrutiny; being left with violent perpetrators when human victims flee; and the very real possibility of being sent to an animal shelter for fostering, adoption and even forced euthanasia.

The 222-page book is part of the Palgrave Studies in Animals and Social Problems series.

-- Taylor, N., & Fraser, H. (2019). *Companion Animals and Domestic Violence: Rescuing Me, Rescuing You*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.



## Family Justice Center Takes a First-Of-Its-Kind Stride in Pet Advocacy



Given the large numbers of domestic violence survivors whose pets are also at risk, Oklahoma City's [Palomar Family Justice Center](#) and the [Central Oklahoma Humane Society](#) have partnered to create what may be the first dedicated, full-time pet advocate specialist position in the U.S. The position focuses on providing rescue for pets of families fleeing traumatic or abusive relationships.

The advocate, Elizabeth Stoverink, is an employee of the Humane Society but is on-site at Palomar to help those needing resources. Her priorities include: coordinating resources to help the pets of survivors; overseeing the pet therapy program; stocking the pet pantry; educating the public on the correlation of domestic violence and animal abuse; conducting animal safety planning with family advocates; and coordinating emergency veterinary assistance.

Stoverink is also starting a network of pet foster families who are trained in responding to domestic violence, seeking funding to construct kennels at Palomar, and developing an educational program for groomers, veterinarians and others on what to look for in abuse and ways to approach a situation in a trauma-informed way. The position is funded by a grant from the Watershed Animal Fund.

Palomar is a one-stop location for survivors of domestic abuse or trauma. Instead of having to go to numerous locations for services, a survivor can go to one central location to meet with 36 partner agencies. Collaborations include police, domestic violence agencies, children's services, counseling, sexual trafficking advocacy services, parent organizations, and counseling services.

"The barriers are high for people to report and to receive services, and it gets very difficult," said Bekah Mercer, director of IT and Marketing at Palomar. One frequent barrier is the worry over leaving pets with abusers or not being able to care for pets, which are often used as leverage or control.

"Many won't leave for fear of leaving their animals behind. Right now, there aren't many resources or shelters out there that will take animals," Mercer said. "Animals are an easy power and control tactic. So if someone gets attached to any animal, it's an easy target to use against the person."

"Many survivors report that they delayed moving to a shelter because of concerns for their pet's welfare," said Dana McCrory, Humane Society President and CEO. "Mental health professionals are starting to include assessment questions about family pets to identify abuse, whether it is targeted at animals, people, or both, understanding that survivors often experience stigma, guilt, fear, and shame and may be more likely to share information about abuse of their animals before indicating that they, too, are victims.

"Oklahoma faces many social service obstacles including poverty, lack of education, mental illness, substance abuse, and violence/incarceration," added McCrory. "Animals can and are a unifying factor, but oftentimes the animals are subjected to violence as well. By working together, we will have a much-needed impact on a demographic that is oftentimes overlooked in domestic violence cases — the pets."

## Study Calls for More Nuanced Understanding of Animal Abuse-Intimate Partner Violence Link

This study tests the theoretically-informed assumption that intimate partner violence and animal abuse so frequently co-occur because animal maltreatment is instrumentalized by abusers to harm human victims. Using data from a survey of abused women in Canadian shelters, the authors report that threats to harm pets, emotional animal abuse, and animal neglect are clearly perceived by survivors as being intentionally perpetrated by their abuser and motivated by a desire to upset and control them; the findings related to physical animal abuse are not as straightforward. Building on these findings, the authors propose a more nuanced theorizing of the coexistence of animal maltreatment and IPV.

-- Fitzgerald, A. J., Barrett, B. J., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2019, Feb. 2). [Animal maltreatment in the context of intimate partner violence: A manifestation of power and control?](#). [Violence Against Women](#).

## Link Case in Taiwan Nets Guilty Plea and New Laws

The first known Link incident in Taiwan has surfaced in the case of a Taipei man who pleaded guilty to killing a hamster when he got into a heated argument with his girlfriend. The [Taiwan News](#) reported that in a fit of rage during an intense argument last August, a man named Shih grabbed a cage with a male and a female hamster he had been raising with his girlfriend Chang and smashed it against the wall. When Chang tried to save the hamsters, Shih picked up the male hamster named “Mochi” and hurled him against the wall, killing him. An animal forensics physician from the Taipei City Animal Protection Office determined Mochi died from physical trauma.



“Mochi” during happier times

Following the incident, Shih and Chang changed their relationship status on Facebook from “In a relationship” to “It’s complicated.” Chang moved out of her apartment and changed her Facebook photo to two hamsters with links to sites with information about adopting and feeding hamsters.

Cases such as this prompted the Taiwanese government to [enact legislation](#) mandating the teaching of animal protection in schools and allocating funds for animal shelter management, stray dog control and animal adoptions.



## Injuring Animals Definable as Coercion in Oregon

A basic premise of the animal abuse/domestic violence Link is that the threat or act of harming animals is a coercive control tactic employed by abusers to keep their human and animal victims trapped. Nine states – Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Tennessee – define such acts as domestic violence, prosecutable under domestic violence and/or cruelty statutes.

We recently came across an existing law in Oregon that may be similarly applicable. ORS 163.275 defines the crime of coercion, a Class C felony, as including eight activities in which a person compels or induces another person to engage in or refrain from conduct by instilling a fear. One such fear is the unlawful causing of physical injury to an animal.

If any LINK-Letter readers are aware of similar statutes in other states, please [let us know!](#)

## ANIMAL ABUSE &... CROSS-REPORTING

### Ohio Bill Would Mandate Cross-Reporting of Child, Adult and Animal Abuse and Fund Domestic Violence Pet Programs

A new bill in the Ohio Legislature would establish cross-disciplinary reporting procedures for suspected animal and child abuse. Ohio **HB 33** would require veterinarians, agents of children's services agencies and adult protective services, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected animal abuse in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator.



Reps. Laura Lanese (L) and Sara Carruthers

The bill establishes provisions whereby good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability; however, penalties and court costs would be assessed if reports are made maliciously. Any such civil penalties would go towards providing funding for domestic violence shelters to assist victims in finding temporary shelter or other support for their companion animals.

The bill would also add dog wardens and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. Its primary sponsors are Republican Reps. Laura Lanese (Grove City) and Sara Carruthers (Hamilton). The measure is in the House Criminal Justice Committee.

### The Link... In Poetry

Sometimes the best way to tell a story is through poetry. Joye Estes of the Kentucky Link Coalition shared this powerful poem with us, written by her friend Jennifer Kanady:

#### *That's JUST The Way It Is*

Why didn't you bring whole milk screamed dad?  
I'm sorry babe, wept mom, fat free is all they had  
Bitch how many times do I tell you this ain't the right brand?  
Her arms flew up and over her head bracing for the blow from his hand

*As she cried he looked at me and gruffly said:  
That's just the way it is, it's what we do  
While growing up, it's all I knew  
This son's, the way that you'll be too*

"Grape candy's my favorite!" baby sis calls out,  
With a fistfull of my candy she quickly touts  
"NO you don't" I tell her as I slap her face  
"Well she deserved it son", put her in her place

*Dad winks as he reminds me:  
That's just the way it is, it's what we do  
While growing up, it's all I knew  
This son's, the way that you'll be too*

Ok Son, we've bought a pitbull pup  
You and I will spend time to go bulk him up  
We'll hook him to this tree on this great big chain  
This will help make him a fighter, with the strength of a train

*And here dad says to me again:  
That's just the way it is, it's what we do  
While growing up, it's all I knew  
This son's, the way that you are too*

Day after day, the pup out the window I see  
As he suffers through the elements, in a lonely barrel by that tree  
Now and again, for him I feel twinges of guilt and remorse  
But if I try to bring him in the house, dad said he belongs there of course

*Dad quite disgusted with me says:  
That's just the way it is, it's what we do  
While growing up, it's all I knew  
This son's, the way that you are too*

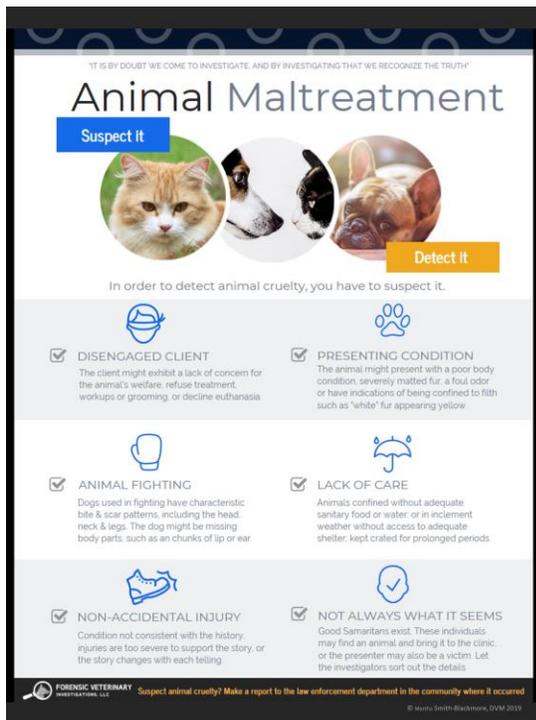
Here son, take this stash we're getting ready for the match  
For the winner this snow's part of the pool, it's from the best of the batch  
Alright boy, the time has come to turn him loose into pit  
You knew these days would finally come once we got him all fit

*Seriously chap, I still must tell you this?  
That's just the way it is, it's what we do  
While growing up, it's all I knew  
This son's, the way that you are too*

Damn it's the COPS, grab your dogs dad shouts out  
As a death grip clamps down, and our poor pup bleeds out  
"Son you're coming with us, the men in blue turn me round  
The cuffs click out loudly, as to my knees I drop to the ground

*The officer then tells me there:  
This is just the way it is, this is what WE do  
We must keep society safe from criminals like you  
son it's a shame, o're your wayward learning you could have broke through*

## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE



### “Suspect It, Detect It” Campaign Raising Veterinary Link Awareness

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, has created a handy infographic that can help veterinarians become more comfortable with reporting suspected animal abuse to the appropriate authorities in their community. Her “Suspect It, Detect It” campaign helps ease veterinary professionals’ trepidations when they see the most common signs of animal abuse that should raise their Index of Suspicion about abuse.

“I have been coaching and mentoring many veterinarians through their first animal cruelty case documentation for a while,” says Smith-Blackmore. “One of my great learning lessons is that many veterinarians (including myself once upon a time) are quite naïve. Once they see a case, suddenly the rosy spectacles are off and they see it with a greater frequency,” she adds.

Smith-Blackmore, whose Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC, helps “put the doc in documentation.” encourages Link advocates to share the infographic with their personal veterinarians as well as others in the profession. The

infographic is available in the [Resources section on the National Link Coalition’s website](#). Smith-Blackmore also serves on the National Link Coalition’s steering committee.

### One Health Research Sees Potential Interdisciplinary Collaboration



The Institute for the Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work is undertaking a four-year study to look at whether increased outreach providing veterinary services and pet care to underserved communities leads to significant policy change, expansion in funding sources and increased interdisciplinary collaboration.

One Health is a collaborative framework between veterinary and human medicine stating that human, animal and environmental health are interconnected. The [Pets for Life as One Health study](#) was launched in 2018 in Madison, Wis., Wilder, Idaho, and Granger and Seattle, Wash., to look at the community-wide impacts of the Pets for Life program of the Humane Society of the U.S. The program promotes animal health and welfare through community outreach in underserved areas where access to veterinary care is limited and the costs of care can be prohibitive.

The study has the potential to transform the animal welfare field by highlighting the importance of companion animals on overall community health. Research partners include HSUS, the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Shelter Medicine program, and the Dane County, Seattle, Yakima, and Idaho Humane Societies.

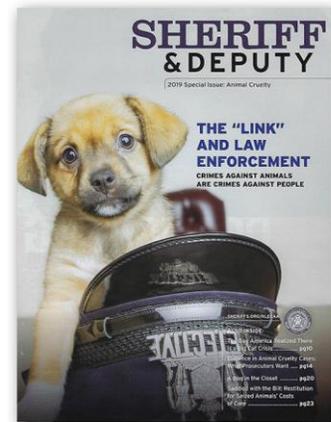
## ***ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE*** **Sheriffs' Magazine Dedicated to Response and Prevention of Animal Cruelty and Link Incidents**

A special issue of the National Sheriffs' Association's flagship magazine has just been published, featuring 20 articles on The Link and law enforcement that emphasize how crimes against animals are also crimes against people.



**Sheriff John Layton**

“The sheriff’s role is to protect and serve the community in which he or she resides,” says NSA President Sheriff John Layton, a 45-year veteran with the Marion County, Ind., Sheriff’s Office. “While many times we get bogged down handling ‘human’ cases, we cannot overlook the seriousness of crimes against the animals in our communities. Addressing animal cruelty is just one of the ways we ensure that we are fulfilling our duties to keep our communities safe.



“By addressing animal cruelty in our communities, we are also addressing other possible safety concerns and preventing future acts of violence,” he adds, emphasizing The Link between animal abuse, domestic violence, and child and elder abuse.

The *Sheriff & Deputy* magazine’s articles include:

- **Phil Arkow**, of the National Link Coalition, presents evidence of how animal abuse is Linked with child, elder and domestic abuse and other crimes.
- **Kitty Block**, of the Humane Society of the U.S., describes how training police officers to identify animal crimes has led to prosecution of other crimes and aggressive animal protection laws.
- **Andrew Campbell** offers resources for domestic violence survivors to find housing for their pets.
- **Howard Lawrence** describes the unique collaborative partnership between the ASPCA and the NYPD for training, response and investigations.
- **April Doherty** of the Baltimore County, Md., State’s Attorney’s Office, and forensic veterinarian **Martha Smith-Blackmore** present best practices for animal cruelty crime scene investigations.
- **Jenny Edwards** presents a law enforcement officer’s guide to bestiality.
- **Randall Lockwood** of the ASPCA explains the evidence prosecutors need as interest in cruelty cases has accelerated due to greater awareness of The Link and veterinary forensics.
- **Sheriff Matthew Lutz** of Muskingum County, Ohio, and **Jennifer Leon** of Big Cat Rescue, recall the tragedy of having to shoot 48 tigers, lions, bears, mountain lions, and wolves that posed a public safety risk.
- **Nichole Parisi** of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys recalls a domestic violence case that linked domestic violence survivors and their animals in a cycle of violence.
- **Mary Lou Randour** of the Animal Welfare Institute updates the inclusion of four types of animal abuse in the FBI’s new National Incident-Based Reporting System.
- **Chelsea Rider** of the NSA details the Michael Vick case that brought dogfighting to national attention and the challenges law enforcement officers face in investigating these crimes.
- **Kathleen Wood** of the Animal Legal Defense Fund offers suggestions to help smaller communities get restitution for the costs of caring for animals seized in cruelty cases.

The special issue is the second that NSA has produced on the topic and the first since 2013. The landscape in law enforcement has changed since then, with much greater awareness of the connection between violence towards animals and people, notes John Thompson, former NSA Deputy Director and now Executive Director of the National Animal Care & Control Association. Response has prompted NSA to create the National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse, an Animal Abuse and Cruelty Committee, and the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals (*see accompanying articles*).



To obtain individual or multiple copies of the special issue, contact [Chelsea Rider](#).

## National Sheriffs' Association Committees Address The Link

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) continued to advance its emphasis on animal abuse as a gateway crime often linked to family violence by convening two key committees during its Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. The day featured a meeting of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals (NCOVAA) and the inaugural meeting of the NSA's Animal Cruelty & Abuse Committee.



Nazmia Comrie of the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office described two new Link-based videos that local law enforcement agencies can present during roll calls. "Cruelty and Neglect" and "Dog Fighting," produced with Humane Society of the U.S. feature subject matter experts. A third video on cockfighting is planned for the future. Information about the videos is available from NCOVAA Co-chair [April Doherty](#).

**Nazmia Comrie**

Comrie announced a new free app for first responders called "Animal Cruelty" on both Apple and Android systems. The app offers a checklist of questions to ask during investigations; tips on taking evidentiary photos; and animal abuse's Link with domestic, child and elder abuse. She also described COPS publications including "[Animal Cruelty as a Gateway Crime](#)" (*See the [December 2018 LINK-Letter](#)*), guidance in avoiding unnecessary shooting of dogs, and a toolkit for investigating dogfighting.

Mary Lou Randour and Julie Palais of the Animal Welfare Institute presented preliminary animal cruelty case data from the second year of the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The first year's data from 2016 reported 1,143 incidents of animal neglect, intentional abuse, animal fighting, and animal sexual abuse from 13 states (*See the [January 2018 LINK-Letter](#)*) with widespread recognition that not all states participate in the system and that non-certified animal control and humane officers are not permitted to log into the system. These issues continue to affect compliance with some 3,000 incidents reported in 2017 in 23 states, figures which committee members recognized are just "the tip of the iceberg."



**Julie Palais**

April Doherty of the Baltimore County, Md., State's Attorney's Office encouraged participants to "collaborate, cooperate, and communicate" with other community organizations for more effective investigation and prosecution of Link crimes.



**Michelle Welch**

Virginia Senior Assistant Attorney General Michelle Welch presented strategies for effective investigations of dog- and cock-fighting. “It’s all about the money,” she said, noting that it is not unusual to have a \$50,000 purse at these illegal events. “We always see drugs, money and guns,” she said, emphasizing the money laundering, public corruption, illegal gambling, and weapons offenses common to the fights. “Get the dog and cock fighters and you’ll get a whole array of other criminals.”



**Martha Smith-Blackmore**

Forensic veterinarian Martha Smith-Blackmore identified several issues that historically have kept law enforcement officers from being more proactive in investigating animal cruelty. These include: a lack of confidence in their ability to investigate these specialized incidents; the challenges of managing these crimes’ evidence; and jurisdictional confusion over who has authority. The result is that animal cruelty is often seen as a “hot potato” crime that no one wants to handle.

She noted that veterinarians are similarly reticent about getting involved in these cases. “But violence against animals is violence, and it’s not something petty when you go after animal abusers,” she said. She recommended several strategies to overcome these barriers:

- Include training about animal cruelty in existing training programs for disaster management; such training can identify animal care and control partners who can be called upon when a non-disaster situation occurs.
- More training for front-line law enforcement, animal control and 911 personnel on the Link implications of animal abuse and the immediate steps to take at the outset of a complaint.
- Additional training for veterinarians to build their confidence in reporting suspicions of abuse, and to feel more confident in serving as resources for law enforcement agencies.

NCOVAA also discussed fraudulent Go Fund Me campaigns in which appeals for money to rescue animals are actually fronts for con artists and possible terrorist organizations.

The Animal Cruelty & Abuse Committee endorsed a resolution, approved earlier that afternoon by the NSA’s Domestic Violence Committee, supporting the investigation of animal cruelty and the often-connected crimes to human victims. The resolution cites the widespread recognition of pets as family members and animal abuse as being Linked to other crimes, the FBI’s new inclusion of animal abuse within the NIBRS system, and abusers’ ploy of animal abuse to manipulate and coerce victims into remaining at home. It calls for law enforcement, humane enforcement, prosecutors and animal control agencies nationwide to work together to more effectively combat animal abuse which may also include other members of the family. It goes to the NSA leadership for action at the Annual Conference in June.



**Members of the NSA Animal Cruelty & Abuse Committee (left) and NCOVAA met to discuss numerous Link issues affecting law enforcement.**

## Multi-Agency Task Force Created in Cooperstown

Following a model of a multi-agency response to animal cruelty developed in New York State in Syracuse ([See the December 2016 LINK-Letter](#)), the Otsego County, N.Y. Sheriff's Office and District Attorney have teamed up with the Susquehanna SPCA to create an animal cruelty task force in the Cooperstown region. The task force will help residents prevent, respond to and report animal cruelty cases,



“Right now, there is no system in place, so between our three offices we sort of scramble as the emergency is unfolding to figure out what we need to do,” Stacie Haynes, Executive Director of the SPCA, told [WXFV-TV](#). The SPCA can do preliminary and animal care work but has to turn over the formal investigation to law enforcement to pursue a case.



Other participants in the task force include three veterinarians. A representative from the New York State Police will join the group. A telephone hotline is being planned.

“It will take people working from all different aspects of animal cruelty to make it work,” Haynes said.



## California Animal Abuser Bill Cites The Link

A bill in the California State Legislature repeatedly cites The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence as the rationale for improved procedures in rehabilitating animal abuse offenders.

**SB 580**, the Animal Welfare and Violence Intervention Act of 2019, would give judges tools to help rehabilitate convicted animal abusers to prevent the escalation of dangerous behaviors. Sen. Scott Wilk (R – Santa Clarita), in introducing the bill, noted that The Link makes it critically important that cruelty toward animals be taken seriously by law enforcement and by society at large for the sake of the animals and for people who are also at risk.

“Animal abuse crimes should be treated seriously because they are serious,” said Wilk. “Our animal friends need and deserve our protection, but this bill isn’t just about them. It’s also about our mothers and daughters, our friends and neighbors, our children and grandchildren; it’s about all of us.”

Citing Link statistics, Wilk added, “It has become ever more apparent that our current mechanisms for identifying and addressing these offenders is neither restorative nor rehabilitative in any meaningful way.” The bill would require offenders convicted of egregious animal abuse crimes to undergo mental health assessments and, if deemed beneficial by the assessing mental health professional and the court, to seek treatment. The bill would also permit judges to order offenders of less serious crimes to enroll in humane education courses about proper techniques for interacting with animals in a positive way.

“Californians want effective animal cruelty laws that stop the cycle of violence,” said [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#) Executive Director Stephen Wells. “This bill addresses the underlying causes of animal abuse by ensuring that people convicted of crimes against animals receive the proper rehabilitative treatment – whether counseling or education – to prevent more animals, and humans, from future harm.”



## **BUILDING LINK AWARENESS**

### **Link Cases Magnify Investigators’ Emotional Stresses**

The emotional stressors that humane and animal control investigators face when dealing with the graphic nature of animal cruelty cases – situations which are exacerbated when human violence is also involved – are challenges to the well-being of front-line personnel. Kendra Coulter, of the Labor Studies Department at Ontario’s Brock University, brought awareness of these issues to wide attention in two blogs recently published in [Salon](#) and [The Conversation](#).

**Kendra Coulter**

Sensational cruelty cases reported by the media disturb and shock the public, she writes. “But some people not only have to look, but also to listen, touch, document and, when possible, rescue the animals themselves, continuously.”

Compassion fatigue inherent in animal care and control is magnified when officers also see child, intimate partner or elder abuse. “This amplifies the emotional difficulties of cruelty investigations work as well as its importance. They’re part police officer, part nurse, part social worker,” she says.

The psychological and physical risks of dealing with people who have been marginalized, abused, or subjected to the worst situations in society can result in high rates of PTSD. Other complications include: inadequate evidence or resources to pursue these cases fully; contending with violent settings; and jurisdictional issues over whether nonprofit or government agencies are best equipped to investigate.

“The emotional challenges are compounded by the physical risks. Many officers work in the field alone. Many are women – and most animal abusers are men. Officers are harassed, threatened and assaulted. The dangers of such occupational conditions are clear and cause for serious concern. The risks increase further in larger cases of cruelty, like dog- and cock-fighting, where other kinds of crime thrive.”

### **Animal Cruelty Enforcement Called a Smart Public Policy – Because of The Link**

Coulter also cited The Link as the rationale for the Government of Ontario to invest in animal cruelty investigations following a Superior Court ruling that the decades-old investigation of animal abuse by the Ontario SPCA is unconstitutional. The court had ruled that the nonprofit OSPCA was not subjected to the same accountability or oversight measures as other law enforcement agencies.

The government is appealing the ruling, but Coulter noted in an op-ed in [iPolitics](#) that as different options are being explored, the benefits of animal welfare to human safety should prompt a full-fledged cruelty enforcement program.

“There are more fare inspectors employed by the Toronto Transit Commission than there are animal cruelty investigators for the entire province,” she noted. An aggressive animal cruelty program doesn’t spend public money on animals instead of people. Animal cruelty’s Link with narcotics and weapons crimes and animal abuse as a terrorism tactic in domestic violence are causing governments to take crimes against animals seriously, she writes.

“The well-being of animals is inextricably connected to the health of people and to public safety. Government investment in animal cruelty investigations is not just the ethical thing to do, it is smart public policy that benefits us all.”

**“There are more fare inspectors employed by the Toronto Transit Commission than there are animal cruelty investigators for the entire province.”**

## Video Promotes The Link to Encourage Humane Education



humane education  
coalition

The power of The Link to explain how animal abuse also hurts people is being presented as a way to facilitate getting humane education programs introduced into schools. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow presented a 20-minute video, entitled "Making Humane Education More Relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," as part of the [Humane Education Coalition's](#) week-long Speaker Series.

The video emphasizes that school educators and administrators are more concerned with school safety, bullying prevention and child development than they are about animal rights or the traditional message of kindness to animals. Focusing on The Link makes it easier for humane educators to gain access to classrooms, Arkow argued. The video is available on [YouTube](#).

## THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

### Funders Seek Research on Puerto Rico Animal Fighting



ANIMAL WELLNESS  
FOUNDATION

Animals & Society  
Institute

The [Animal Wellness Foundation](#) and the [Animals and Society Institute](#) are seeking proposals for a research study on animal fighting in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory with an extensive network and cultural heritage of cockfighting. The study will provide empirical data to inform the implementation of current legislation and future policy regarding these crimes which have been Linked to other criminal activities including racketeering, gambling, weapons and narcotics offenses, and homicide.

Empirical findings on animal fighting are timely as the 2018 Farm Bill included federal prohibitions against animal fighting in the five U.S. territories, scheduled to take effect in December 2019. Cockfighting and dogfighting are illegal in all the states, with Louisiana becoming the 50<sup>th</sup> state to ban cockfighting in 2008.

The primary research goals are to: assess subjects' attitudes to the practices and prohibition of animal fighting; probe cockfighters' attitudes and compliance with the federal law; and assay lifestyle issues related to animals and relevant demographic data.

The research proposal should address economic issues, such as betting, equipment and impact on tourism and the attitudes of tourism leaders on the island about whether the continuation of an illegal enterprise will mar the image of the Commonwealth. The funders hope that the research leads to a manuscript suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Applicants should submit proposals with a budget in the range of \$15-20,000 and a one-year timeline with milestones by March 31 to [ken.shapiro@animalsandsociety.org](mailto:ken.shapiro@animalsandsociety.org)

### *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](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

## NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

### Oklahoma Link Coalition Annual Report Describes Fabulous Year

Our [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) affiliate has published a comprehensive Annual Report detailing its activities in 2018, describing what was a very successful year after the foundational year of momentum-building in 2017. “We were able to capitalize on that momentum to make real progress toward achieving our mission,” Coordinator Kathleen Romero tells *The LINK-Letter*.



Kathleen Romero

Among the group’s many activities were five meetings, each held in a different location, offering tours so members could learn about their counterpart colleagues. There were 11 presentations, panels and booths/tables at meetings of social workers, sheriffs, CASA, shelter veterinarians, and coordinated community response teams.

Thirty posts on the Facebook page addressed such issues as homelessness and pets, animal abuse in Native America, the Parkland, Fla. school shooting, and children’s experiences witnessing animal abuse and domestic violence. The coalition presented four trainings and published two press releases and an op-ed.

Questions about animals were integrated into intake questionnaire and assessment forms for the YWCA’s domestic violence hotline and NorthCare’s home visitation program. A section on The Link was included in the OKDHS Domestic Violence Manual for Child Welfare Professionals and their training manual for the Adult & Family Services division. Link materials were added into the judges’ bench manual. The coalition developed the only comprehensive directory of domestic violence services in Oklahoma.

“The spring and summer had been about building connections and relationships, and it really started to pay off. People started reaching out wanting to partner or develop trainings to bring the LINK message to their population or profession,” Romero said.

“I feel really good about our year. We were able to provide training for law enforcement, animal advocates, prosecutors, legislators, veterinarians, and other disparate disciplines. We have really spread this message significantly throughout the state, both with the public and professionals. It has made a difference, in small ways and big ways. It’s just a start, but with each presence comes strong interest from the right people, which is how movements grow.”



Lauren Brightwell

### South Florida Coalition Has New Intern, Plans Training

The South Florida Link Coalition has welcomed a new intern to assist the group with its work in the West Palm Beach area. Lauren Brightwell, a junior at Florida Atlantic University majoring in criminal justice and psychology, hopes to use her internship to learn more about the connections between animal abuse and domestic violence and to contribute her help to raise awareness and combat this cycle of violence.

Coalition founder and director Amber Marchione will present a training on “Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse with a Focus on Service Animal Abuse” at the [Coalition for Independent Living Options](#) on March 20.

## 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 protection order based on the respondent's ownership of a firearm; in determining whether ground exist for an order, 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.

**California AB 415** would expand provisions of the California Victim Compensation program to allow the costs of temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence victims to be reimbursable as part of relocation expenses. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.

**Florida HB 379** and **SB 774** would allow courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or disposing of animals owned by the petitioner, respondent or minor children in the home. The bill is in the Business & Professions Subcommittee. *The bills also address Cross-Reporting.*

**Indiana HB 1615** amends existing provisions in IC 31-9-2-42 which include "beating" an animal without justification within the definition of "domestic or family violence" to read "abusing" an animal. The bill passed the House and is in the Senate.

**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. The bill passed the Senate and is in the House Judiciary Committee.

**Missouri HB 370** would add "intimidation" – 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 passed the House and is in the Senate.

**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 passed the House 50-13 and is in the Senate Judiciary and Public Affairs Committees.

 **New York A 588** would create a felony 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 existing pet protection orders to allow the court to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals kept by the petitioner, child or respondent, 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 pets in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

 **North Dakota HB 1537** would allow family members to petition for a “public safety petition order” prohibiting the respondent from having or obtaining a firearm if the respondent is believed to pose a risk of injury to self or others; among the criteria to establish such risk is a history of violence or cruelty toward an animal.

 **Rhode Island H 5023** and **SB 225** would allow 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 House Judiciary Committee recommended both bills be held for further study.

 **Texas SB 194** and **HB 309** would add “indecent assault” (illegal sexual gratification) to the crimes for which victims could obtain protection orders that include harming or threatening the victim’s animals. Such pet protection orders are already in place for victims of domestic or family violence, sexual assault or abuse, and stalking. The bills are in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.

 **Texas HB 2516** would add cruelty to non-livestock animals with the intent to coerce, control, punish or intimidate another family member to the definition of “family violence”.

 **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. The bill passed both the Senate and the House and is awaiting Enrolling.

 **Virginia HB 2642** and **SB 1276** would have made 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. **These provisions were deleted** when substitute measures that adopted stronger animal cruelty penalties were approved by the House and Senate.

 **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. The bill passed the House and Senate and was sent to the Governor.

### *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*

 **New York A 831** would increase the penalty for aggravated cruelty to animals from two to four years when 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** and **S 3415** 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 Other Crimes*

 **Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths between the ages of 14 and 18 if the offense involved the infliction or threat of serious bodily harm to a person or an animal. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Mississippi HB 843** and **HB 984** would have required law enforcement officials investigating animal cruelty to use a standardized form compliant with the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). **The bills died in the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.**

 **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 Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate Agriculture Committee discharged the bill and committed it to Domestic Animal Welfare.

 **Pennsylvania HB 353** would add animal fighting to the definition of corrupt organizations’ “racketeering activities.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Washington HB 1541** would add a conviction for 2<sup>nd</sup>-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.

### *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 4<sup>th</sup>-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.

### *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*

 **California SB 580** would amend current procedures requiring animal abuse offenders on probation to complete counseling for behavior or conduct disorders, to instead undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation, treatment, and a responsible animal owner education course as the court deems appropriate. The bill is in the Rules Committee.

 **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 have required offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. **The bill died 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 Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate Agriculture Committee discharged **S 384** and **S 385** and committed them to Domestic Animal Welfare.



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

### *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*



**California AB 611** would expand the prohibitions against animal sexual abuse. It would: change the prohibition against sexually assaulting certain animals to prohibiting defined sexual contact with any animal; authorize the seizure of animals in such cases; expand the ban of owning or keeping animals to include animal sexual abusers; and require veterinarians to report suspected animal sexual abuse as they are already mandated to do for animal abuse or cruelty.



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

 **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 passed the Senate unanimously and also the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Kentucky HB 98** would create a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to prohibit cruelty to equines including situations involving abuse, neglect and sexual contact. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Maryland SB 355** and **HB 641** would amend §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include “sexual contact with an animal” and further define aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal would be included among Tier III sex offenders. The bills are in the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committees.

 **Massachusetts S.891** 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.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **West Virginia HB 2792** prohibits activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal; establishes criminal penalties; and provides for forfeiture of animals, payment of associated costs, and restrictions on owning animals upon conviction. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

### *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** and **SB 774** 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 is in the Business & Professions Subcommittee. *The bills also address 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.

 **Minnesota HF 1530/SF 1517** would grant veterinarians, who are already mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, immunity from civil and criminal liability for making such a report in good faith. The bills are in the House Agriculture and Food Finance and Policy Division and the Senate Agriculture, Rural Development and Housing Policy Committees.

 **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 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.

 **Ohio HB 33** would require veterinarians, agents of children’s and adult protective services, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected animal abuse in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability; however, penalties and court costs would be assessed if reports are made maliciously and such penalties would go towards providing funding for domestic violence shelters to assist victims in finding temporary shelter or other support for their companion animals. The bill would also add dog wardens and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. The measure is in the House Criminal Justice Committee.

 **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”*

 **Illinois HB 1631** would allow a special pro bono attorney or law student advocate to be court-appointed to represent the health or safety of a cat or dog in judicial proceedings. The bill is in the Criminal Administration and Enforcement Subcommittee.

 **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, S 3027** and **A 702** would allow for the creation of a court-appointed advocate for animals. The bills are in the respective Judiciary Committees.

## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

### Triple Homicide/Dogfighting Suspect To Get 8-16 Years in Plea Bargain



**Severo Luera**

A man charged with four felonies in a 2013 Idaho triple homicide that was linked to a dogfighting ring and a marijuana-growing operation ([See the March 2015 and May 2013 LINK-Letters](#)) has agreed to a plea bargain that could get him a prison sentence of eight and possibly 16 years. Severo Luera, 39, had been apprehended in Utah in 2015 and charged with aiding and abetting a murder and conspiracy to commit murder, the [Idaho State Journal](#) reported. The victims, Brent and Trent Christensen and Yavette Carter, were found shot to death inside their home in Holbrook, Idaho; two girls, aged 2 years and 2 months old, survived the attack. Sheriff's deputies also found 38 marijuana plants and 64 pit bulls chained on the property. Luera initially pleaded innocent but sought delays and refused to identify which two men, out of five who went to the home, actually committed the shootings. The Idaho Attorney General's Office eventually dropped the conspiracy charge and downgraded the aiding-and-abetting charges. Prosecutors are recommending a sentence of 8-16 years plus a \$2,000 fine, but if the judge chooses to not accept the agreement Luera could face life in prison. Luera also has multiple prior convictions on narcotics charges.

### Veterinarian Gets 6 Years in Drug-Smuggling Scheme



**Puppies rescued after DEA agents arrested 21 people in Colombia charged with smuggling heroin into the U.S.**

A Colombian veterinarian who turned nine puppies into "mules" – by surgically implanting packets of heroin into their abdomens to smuggle them into the United States – was sentenced to six years in prison. [CBS News](#) reported that Andres Lopez Elorez, 38, had been indicted in 2005 for the scheme but eluded capture until he was apprehended in Spain in 2018 and extradited to the U.S. He pleaded guilty to conspiring to import heroin, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. Prosecutors said three puppies died from post-surgical complications and criticized Elorez for betraying the veterinarian's pledge to prevent animal suffering.

### Cat-Torturing Teen Convicted in Brutal Rape and Murder of 6-Year-Old Girl



**Aaron Campbell**

A court in Glasgow, Scotland has convicted a cat-torturing teenager who was addicted to the Slender Man video games of the brutal abduction, rape and murder of a 6-year-old girl. Aaron Campbell, 16, abducted Alesha MacPhail last July 2 and apparently recreated scenes from an interactive video game with Slender Man, a fictional character who kidnaps and traumatizes young children. MacPhail suffered 117 injuries, including what officials called catastrophic sexual injuries both before and after her death. The Scottish [Sun](#) tabloid described Campbell as a "sadistic cat-skinning monster desperate for fame on YouTube with a warped interest in gory video games" and a "serial killer in the making." He has a history of torturing, killing and skinning cats and burying them in the back yard. Neighbors said he also had a history of sexually abusing teenage girls, holding a little girl's head under water at a swimming pool, and excessive use of cannabis and alcohol as he desperately tried to impress his friends. Investigators feared he had a warped obsession with video gore and violence and would have struck again. Neighbors who were familiar with the cat tortures thought he was just practicing voodoo rituals.

## Troubled Teen Gets 6 Years for Shooting Dog During Break-in at Police Officer's Home

A Virginia Beach, Va. teen whose chaotic upbringing included his father's being in jail, his mother's substance abuse and physically abusive boyfriends, a history of drug use, and five years in the juvenile court system was sentenced to six years for shooting a police officer's dog during a break-in at the officer's home.

Dashaun Robinson, who was 17 at the time, will spend most of that term in a juvenile detention facility where he's been held since his arrest, the [Virginian-Pilot](#) reported. Robinson pleaded guilty to armed burglary, conspiracy, animal cruelty, and two gun charges for the incident. Robinson had gone to the house with two friends to confront the officer's teenage cousin who had been talking with and texting his girlfriend. He sent his girlfriend into the house to try to coax the cousin outside. When that didn't work, he and his friends kicked in the door and ran upstairs with a stolen gun. The officer's pit bull, "Zulu", chased the teens out the house and was shot as it ran after them. Zulu survived emergency surgery.



Zulu is recovering from the shooting

## Former Teacher with Alcohol Problems Gets 6 Months for Killing Puppy

A former high school physical education teacher who fatally kicked a puppy after getting into an argument with his then-fiancée and her 4-year-old daughter over his drinking problem was sentenced to a six-month jail term. Todd Anthony Corron, 36, of Coloma, Md., who has had three DUI convictions over the past 10 years, had earlier been convicted of assault for kicking a Cecil County Sheriff's deputy during a DUI apprehension, according to the [Cecil County Whig](#) newspaper. Corron had earlier strangled the dog and threatened to put it outside the house so it would run away.



Todd Corron

Corron told the court he loved the puppy named "Buck," and blamed the incident on his level of intoxication and the emotional intensity of the argument with his fiancée, who left him after the incident. As part of the plea agreement, Corron will also serve 30 months' probation and complete anger management and alcohol counseling and treatment programs. Cecil County Circuit Court Judge Keith Baynes told Corron, "If you're looking for sympathy from me, you're not going to get it. You may not think so, but I think you're a dangerous person."

## Australian Man Gets 2 Months for Bashing Puppy and Assaulting Police



Alex Gilbert

Alex Christopher Gilbert, 25, of Beenleigh, Queensland, Australia, was sentenced to two months in prison and 12 months' probation after pleading guilty to five counts of animal cruelty, threatening his neighbors, assaulting a police officer, and "hooning," an Australian term for driving excessively recklessly. The [Daily Mail](#) reported that Gilbert admitted throwing his Siberian husky, "Chase," before punching it in the mouth. Chase has fully recovered from a broken leg and has been rehomed by the RSPCA.

## Oregon Man Charged with Raping Fiancée's Dog

Fidel Lopez, 51, of Portland, Ore., was arrested on charges of sexual assault of an animal and aggravated animal abuse for allegedly attempting to rape his fiancée's dog. [The Oregonian](#) reported that "Estrella," a Lhasa Apso mix, had to be euthanized after the sexual assault caused internal injuries. Lopez reportedly told authorities he had been drinking heavily at the time and sexually assaulted the dog in anger after his fiancée didn't respond to his calls and texts. According to the police affidavit the girlfriend said that Lopez had previously showed his genitals to dogs, bragged about watching another person sexually assault a dog, and asked her if she'd consider getting a dog bigger than Estrella.



Fidel Lopez



Chad Toney

## Suspect in Burglary and Cat Torture Turns Himself In

Chad Toney, 30, of Vinton, Iowa, turned himself in to police authorities where he was charged with burglary and animal abuse for allegedly stealing a cat from a home, torturing it and sending photos and videos of it to the owner's sister. Spencer Kimm, the cat's owner, told [KGAN-TV](#) that he believed Toney stole the cat to get his sister to talk to him. The cat was subsequently returned to the family. Toney also had a warrant out for his arrest for driving under a suspended license when he turned himself in.

## Ohio Man Charged with Attacking Wife after Sexually Abusing Their Dog



Wayne Langsdale

An Ohio man with multiple prior convictions for domestic violence was arrested by police on suspicion of domestic violence and sexual conduct with an animal after his wife reportedly said he struck her after she caught him having sex with their dog in the bathroom. Wayne Langsdale, 27, of South Euclid, was being sought for allegedly pushing his 55-year-old wife to the floor and breaking her cellphone in the incident, which involved their 10-pound maltipoo dog. The Cleveland [Plain Dealer](#) reported that after the wife heard the dog crying in the bathroom, saw what was happening, screamed at her husband several times and told him to leave, Langsdale said the police wouldn't do anything about it because it was "just a dog."



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

## ***LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES***

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

**March 15 – Portland, Ore.:** Diane Balkin will present on The Link at the Lewis & Clark Law School's 8<sup>th</sup> 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 between violence to humans and animals into veterinary social work practice.

**March 20 – West Palm Beach, Fla.:** Amber Marchione of the South Florida Link Coalition will present "Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse with a Focus on Service Animal Abuse" at the [Coalition for Independent Living Options](#).

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

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

**March 28 – Columbus, Ohio:** Phil Arkow, Vicki Deisner and Ethan Arenstein will present a [webinar](#) on "Animal Abuse and Family Violence" for the Ohio State Bar Association.

**March 29 – Columbus, Ohio:** Phil Arkow and Nancy Blaney will headline a [Link workshop](#) at the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging.

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

**April 11 – Aykley Heads, U.K.:** The Durham County Council [Safeguarding Adults Board](#) will offer training on recognizing abuse of vulnerable adults to RSPCA animal abuse first responders.

**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](#).

**April 23 – New Brunswick, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will train staff of the New Jersey [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#).

**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](#) 16<sup>th</sup> 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’ 3<sup>rd</sup> National [Domestic Violence Prosecution Conference](#).

**May 23 – Newtown, Pa.:** Phil Arkow will present a keynote address on “Animal Abuse, Animal Hoarding and Elder Abuse: Challenges and Strategies for Adult Protective Services” at the [Bucks County Area Agency on Aging](#).

**May 23 – João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil:** Melinda Merck, Nestor Calderon, Marcelo Robis, and Janina Hammerschmidt are among the speakers presenting on “Veterinary Expertise and Animal Abuse: Advances and Challenges,” “Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse: Theory of The Link,” and “Animal Hoarders” at the [9<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Collective Veterinary Medicine](#).

**June 3 – Niagara Falls, Ont., Canada:** Phil Arkow will present on “The Link between Animal abuse and Human Violence, and its Implications for Educators and the Humane Movement,” at the [OSPACA](#) Annual Educational Conference.

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

**June 15-16 – Louisville, Ky.:** The Link will be addressed at the meetings of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals and the National Sheriffs Association’s Animal Cruelty Advisory Committee.

**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.



## What is The LINK?

**L**egislation...

**I**ntervention...

**N**etworking...

**K**nowledge...

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



## ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

### Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

#### Phil Arkow, Coordinator

Consultant, ASPCA  
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.  
Denver, Colo.

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

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

#### Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Research,  
ASPCA Strategy & Research Division  
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#### Helen Holmquist-Johnson, MSW, Ph.D.

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Colorado State University School of Social Work  
Ft. Collins, Colo.

#### Jane A. Hunt

Community Volunteer  
Loveland, Colo.

#### Mark Kumpf, CAWA

President, Ohio County Dog Wardens Association  
Dayton, Ohio

#### Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President, Anti-Cruelty Special Projects  
ASPCA  
Falls Church, Va.

#### Paul Needham

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

#### Maria Luisa O'Neill

Account Representative, Wages & Investments  
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#### Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.

Animal Welfare Scientist, Animal Welfare Division  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
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#### Allie Phillips, J.D.

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

#### Gale Rasin, J.D.

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

#### Chelsea Rider, J.D.

Director, National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse  
Alexandria, Va.

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

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#### Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

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#### Hugh Tebault III

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