



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



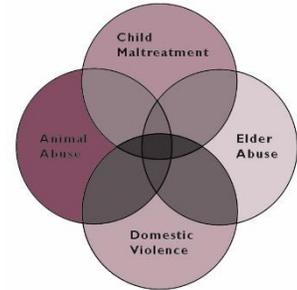
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

NCJFCJ and ALDF Announce Partnership

The National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges and the Animal Legal Defense Fund have announced [an exciting new partnership](#) focusing on the judicial treatment of animal abuse cases based,



Participants gathered at the January judicial conference

NCJFCJ staff, took a deep dive into issues surrounding animal abuse and neglect, especially those affecting domestic violence and juvenile delinquency and dependency cases.

in part, on recognition of how animal abuse adversely impacts people. This is believed to be the first formalized partnership between an animal protection organization and a national judicial group.

The initiative was launched last January when the two organizations hosted a two-day convening on animal cruelty cases, believed to be the first of its kind ever held. ALDF attorneys and 10 judges from throughout the country, led by

Topics covered included: the importance of recognizing the Link between human violence and animal cruelty cases; the crucial impact that cross-reporting and inter-agency communication can have on both human and animal victims; and tools already available to judges, such as including pets in domestic violence protection orders and prohibiting offenders from owning animals for a set time period.

Diane Balkin, ALDF Senior Staff Attorney and a member of the National Link Coalition's Steering Committee, is working with NCJFCJ staff on a technical assistance bulletin for judges on animal crimes. A program on "Animal Abuse and Juvenile Justice" will be featured at NCJFCJ's national conference at the end of July.

Colorado Legislature Enacts Two Link Procedural Provisions



“Punky” Valdez

“Punky’s Law” Adds Mental Health Treatment, Pet Ownership Bans for Colorado Offenders

Lawmakers in Colorado have enacted “Punky’s Law,” a new provision which allows courts to order mental health treatment that addresses “the underlying causative factors” for the violation upon juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders. Current law only allows for the imposition of anger management treatment. **HB 19-1092** was signed into law by Gov. Jared Polis on May 1 and takes effect August 2.

The new law also requires courts to impose upon adult offenders a ban of three to five years against owning or caring for pets upon conviction for a felony offense. It also permits the court to impose a similar restriction for juvenile offenders. In both situations, the prohibition may be waived if the treatment provider specifically recommends against such a prohibition and the court agrees.

The measure was named in honor of “Punky,” a beloved dog who died on March 28 belonging to sponsor Rep. Alex Valdez (D-Denver). Punky’s death was not related to animal cruelty.

Court Facility Dogs Now Allowed

Colorado lawmakers have also enacted a new law allowing a witness to testify during criminal proceedings while a court facility dog is in the courtroom. The measure requires the dog to have graduated from an accredited training program in providing support to witnesses without causing a distraction.



Rep. Tom Sullivan & Sen. Rhonda Fields

The law allows the court discretion to allow the dog if the judge determines its presence would reduce the witness’ anxiety and enhance the ability of the court to receive full and accurate testimony. The court can instruct the jury regarding the presence and role of the dog so as to not improperly influence the jury. The measure only affects court facility dogs and not service animals that accompany a disabled individual.

The original version of the bill was restricted to child witnesses, such as in cases of child sexual abuse, but was replaced by a more expansive measure permitting court facility dogs regardless of the age of the witness. The bill’s prime sponsors were Rep. Tom Sullivan (D – Arapahoe County) and Sen. Rhonda Fields (D – Arapahoe County). It takes effect July 1.

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

Survey Cites Link Among Factors Influencing Cruelty Prosecutions

A [forthcoming survey](#) of 200 prosecuting attorneys concerning their priorities in taking on animal cruelty cases, and the factors that help or hinder prosecuting such cases, is reporting that prosecutors most frequently rely upon “traditional” sources of evidence, including detailed medical and crime scene reports and good quality photographic evidence, to decide whether to take on a cruelty case and what evidence will be used in court. Prosecutors’ increased interest in pursuing such cases is being fueled, in part, by “the proliferation of research into the association between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence and other crimes.”

The survey found that other sources of forensic evidence such as DNA, computer forensics, forensic accounting, blood, and trace evidence were rarely employed. Veterinary forensic evidence, including forensic necropsies and detailed medical reports, was viewed as an important factor by a majority of prosecutors in deciding whether to accept a case for prosecution and in achieving a successful outcome. The authors call for additional training for investigators, including on The Link, for better outcomes in the investigation, documentation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases.

-- Lockwood, R., Touroo, R., Olin, J., & Dolan, E. (2019). *The influence of evidence on animal cruelty prosecution and case outcomes: Results of a survey. Journal of Forensic Sciences.*

“Defensive Driving” Diversion Program Offered for Cruelty Offenders



A judge in Marietta, Ga., has started an online diversion and training program for animal offenders described as a “defensive driving class for pet owners.” Philip Taylor developed [AnimalCourts.com](#) to provide an educational alternative to animal- and pet-related criminal violations, similar to the way defensive driving classes may be offered to resolve traffic tickets.

The course is also available to homeowners and renters as a way to reduce insurance costs and to enable insurance companies to reduce an estimated \$570 million a year in claims for dog bites and related injuries – which are said to represent one-third of all homeowners’ insurance claims.

Philip Taylor

The 3-4 hour course includes five modules: common criminal violations; civil lawsuits and insurance issues; common veterinary concerns and responsible pet ownership; bite prevention and medical care issues; and common pet behavior issues. The court diversion program is designed to appeal to cases where fines, fees, probation, and/or incarceration may not be preferred or effective.

WEAAD

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

ANIMAL ABUSE &... ELDER ABUSE

Research Funds Available for Elder/Animal Abuse Link

The Retirement Research Foundation, which seeks causes and solutions to significant problems facing older adults, has announced a grant program to support applied and policy research for which federal funding is not available. There is a deadline of June 15 to submit a Letter of Intent. Eligible institutions include 501c3 nonprofits and other nonprofits such as universities. Additional details are available from the [Retirement Research Foundation](#).

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Rep. Billy Mitchell

Pet Care Bill in Divorce Cases Defeated in Georgia

An intriguing legislative approach to recognizing the welfare of companion animals when couples are engaged in what are often bitter divorce cases was recently defeated in Georgia, contrary to progress that has already been made in three states and under active consideration in three more.

HB 582, sponsored by Rep. Billy Mitchell (D – Stone Mountain), would have taken the unusual step of allowing courts in Georgia to create a “pet care plan” as part of the proceedings for marriage dissolutions. In cases where the custody of a pet was at issue, courts would have been able to make a determination regarding sole or joint ownership and order a party to care for the pet. Any final divorce order would have had to include such a pet care plan.

The pet care plan would have had to take into consideration the recognition that:

- a continuation of the owner-pet relationship would be in the animal’s best interest;
- the pet’s care would need to evolve with the animal’s needs over time;
- the party with physical custody would make day-to-day and emergency decisions;
- both owners would have access to all pet records;
- where the animal would spend each day of the year would be designated; and
- transportation and exchange arrangements would be specified.

Laws enacted in Alaska, Illinois and California, and bills under consideration in New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island, similarly address custody of pets in a more generalized consideration of the animals’ best interests, similar to long-standing procedures in awarding child custody. However, the Georgia proposal was far more detailed in specifying the terms of pet care, responsibilities and schedules than the other states’ efforts.

The bill was in the House Judiciary committee when the Georgia General Assembly adjourned.

Indiana Expands Coercive-Control Animal Abuse Definition

Indiana has amended its groundbreaking law which includes acts of harm to animals intended to intimidate, coerce or control a family member as constituting an act of domestic or family violence.

Under current law, “domestic or family violence” is defined as, without legal justification: attempting, threatening or causing physical harm to another family or household member; placing that person in fear of physical harm; causing that person to engage involuntarily in sexual activity; or beating, torturing, mutilating or killing an animal with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass or terrorize the person.

HB 1615 expands the existing language, replacing “beating” with the broader term “abusing.” The original law was enacted in 2007 in recognition of how animals are frequently abused as coercive control techniques in domestic violence. The new definition takes effect July 1. Similar provisions are also in effect in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Utah.

ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Oregon Adds Animal Control Officers to Mandated Reporters

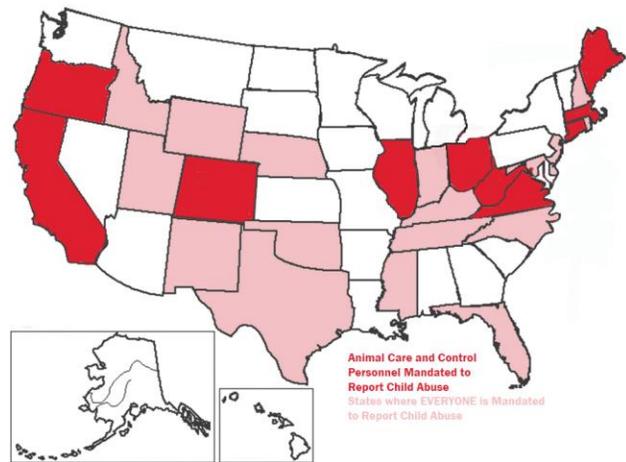
Efforts to bring child protection and animal protection back closer to their historical roots took another step forward on May 22 when Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed into law **HB 2227**. The measure adds Oregon's animal control officers to the list of other public and private officials mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Under Oregon law, child maltreatment is reported to the local office of the Department of Human Services or a law enforcement agency in that county. Oregon defines animal control officers as any person operating under state, federal or local government authority or pursuant to an agreement with a state or local government unit to provide animal shelter, information about lost and found animals, protect the public from animals running at large, or protect animals from neglect, cruelty or abuse.

Oregon animal control officers now join an extensive list of 32 public and private officials, including medical, educational, social services, legal, therapy, athletic, and home health aide personnel required to report suspected child abuse. Law enforcement officers are similarly required to report.

The child protection movement emerged from animal protection work following the ASPCA's intervention in 1874 in the celebrated "Little Mary Ellen" case in New York City. Until the passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, many humane societies and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals offered child protection as well as animal welfare services.

Eighteen states (shown in pink in the above map) mandate everyone to report suspected child maltreatment. Animal control officers are specified mandated reporters in 10 states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, West Virginia) plus the District of Columbia.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...
Intervention...
Networking...
Knowledge...

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

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Florida Proposes Animal Abuse Reporting (with Agricultural Exceptions)



Veterinarians in Florida are poised to be able to report suspected abuse of companion animals under revisions to the state’s criminal code that were passed on the last day of the 2019 legislative session. The massive, 389-page **HB 7125** would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officers without notice to or authorization from the client. However, clients who own animals at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land would need to be given notice before the vet can call the authorities. The measure is awaiting the Governor’s signature. It would take effect Oct. 1, 2019.

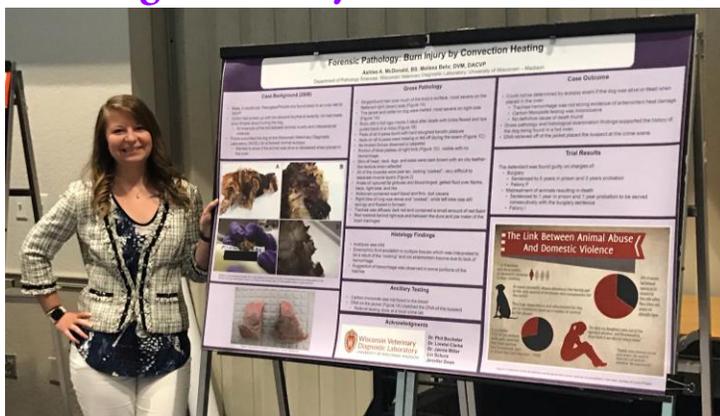
Current state law prohibits Florida practitioners from discussing a patient’s condition without a subpoena and notice to the client and penalizes veterinarians who share medical records by referring them for disciplinary action by the state’s licensing board. This was said to have a chilling effect on practitioners who wished to report clear-cut cases of animal hoarding and other animal abuse.

The new provisions state that reports may not include written medical records except upon the issuance of a court order. The bill represents a compromise between animal cruelty and agricultural lobbying efforts, Diana Ferguson, legislative chair of the Florida Bar’s Animal Law section, told [WUFT-TV](#).

“On a legitimate, bona fide agriculture operation the owner operator might not know if something bad is happening, and they would want notice, so that they could address it immediately,” Ferguson said. In addition, abuse of animals on agricultural land differs from pets because most animals on farms will be slaughtered, said one of the main sponsors of the bill, Rep. Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast), who called the bill “a reasonable step” toward clearing up vague laws regarding veterinarians’ reporting.

Three earlier iterations of the provision -- **HB 379**, **SB 774**, and **SB 1738** – which addressed veterinary reporting of all suspected animal abuse without agricultural exemptions, were tabled when the legislature adjourned. Other provisions that were lost in **HB 379** and **SB 774** included allowing domestic violence survivors to include animals in protection-from-abuse orders.

Winning Veterinary Forensics Poster Addresses The Link



Ashlee McDonald, Pathology Team Lead at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, poses with her winning poster at the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association conference. The poster described a case study of a dog’s burn injury by convection heating; the poster featured an infographic on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence describing the incidence of domestic violence and Link cases.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

How To Build a Community Link Taskforce: Tips From the Experts

The multi-agency Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce – which pioneered the concept of a streamlined centralized hotline for reporting animal abuse in the sprawling metropolitan areas around Houston, Texas ([See the March 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) that has resulted in a 200% increase in animal cruelty arrests ([See the April 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) is offering tips to other communities on how to launch their own interdisciplinary programs.



Jessica Milligan prepares to speak at the Texas Unites for Animals conference

“Just because we’re the big city of Houston doesn’t mean you can’t do this as well in your smaller town,” Assistant District Attorney Jessica Milligan, chief of the DA’s animal cruelty section, told participants at the recent Texas Unites for Animals conference. “All you need are the communications and the connections. Reaching out to other agencies, learning what resources they have, and telling them what you have makes things happen,” she said. “A task force is like a ‘field of dreams.’ If you build it, they will come.”

Milligan offered suggestions based on how they launched their program in the nation’s 4th-largest city:

- Find a key person in the district attorney’s office who cares enough, and who has the passion and connections to make things happen.
- Start small with a core group of invited partner agencies, and don’t give up if some agencies don’t want to participate initially. “People are afraid of something new until they see that it’s happening,” she said. “Start small and watch it grow.”
- Encourage reluctant for- and non-profit partners that they stand to gain legitimacy, increased public presence, and additional marketing and funding opportunities by affiliating with a regional taskforce. Government agencies can benefit from additional funding, legislative and political support, and the rewards of working collaboratively.
- Create a [central website and phone number](#) where cruelty cases can be reported spanning multiple jurisdictions; the public’s lack of awareness of who to call leads to many cases “falling through the cracks.” Efficiency is the key to make reporting as user-friendly as possible for witnesses and to connect multiple law enforcement agencies. Document the number and disposition of calls for reporting purposes.
- Get letters of commitment from all partner agencies, including private veterinarians where cases may be referred.
- Plan in advance what will be done with horses, livestock, fighting animals and exotic animals seized in cruelty cases. Local stables and livestock handling facilities have specialized equipment and transportation capabilities that will be necessary; these agencies gain community credibility by being a part of a task force.

- Market the taskforce: publicize cases through press conferences and social media; create a logo and a secure website; get donated billboards; speak to public groups; interface with Crime Stoppers.
- Emphasize to partners that once the initial organization is done, the efficiency gained through collaboration requires less of a time and financial commitment than if each agency were doing these cases independently. “Sharing resources saves everybody money,” she said.
- Funding for medical needs, equipment, and other expenses can be obtained through donations or starting a separate 501c3 nonprofit, such as the “[Paw & Order](#)” Friends of the Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce. Funders may be more likely to support a collaborative partnership than an individual agency.
- Engage legitimate, screened and trained rescue groups as “ambassadors” to inform the community about what and how to report animal abuse and the evidence and documentation that courts will need.
- Create a Council of Resources, including domestic violence agencies, law schools and others, who can be called upon when needs arise.
- Be flexible as the taskforce evolves and be prepared to continually assess its evolution.

Veterinary Care for a Community Animal Cruelty Task Force	
Providing veterinary services for the expected increase in animal cruelty cases that will be handled once a taskforce is implemented requires planning. Jessica Milligan outlined the pros and cons of utilizing veterinary facilities at municipal or county animal shelters versus referring specialized cases to private practitioners:	
Government – PRO	Government -- CON
Cheaper than private care	Limited budget for extended care
Costs can be absorbed in budget	Limited expertise and time
“Friends of” can raise \$\$\$	High staff turnover
Already doing surgeries daily	Limited hours of operation
Housing available at shelter	Space may be limited
Network of rescues & fosters	City/County policies
Private Veterinarians Can Offer:	
ER consults and assistance	Temporary housing
Case medical & nutritional counseling	Disease prevention & therapy
Supportive care & pain management	Quality of Life evaluations & euthanasias
On-call & emergency care after-hours	Necropsies & veterinary forensics

New Animal Cruelty Task Force Convenes First Meeting

One of the newest of the growing number of multi-disciplinary animal cruelty task forces springing up across the U.S. held its first meeting on May 9. The Otsego County, N.Y., Animal Cruelty Task Force ([See the March 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) is a collaboration between the Otsego County Sheriff’s Office and District Attorney’s Office and the Susquehanna SPCA. The group met at the Sheriff’s office in Cooperstown and included several area veterinarians and officers from the New York State Police.

Indiana Link Task Force Protecting Pets from Domestic Violence

The new Central Indiana Pet Abuse Link Task Force is making progress in building a group of strong members from the veterinarian, domestic violence, legal, and law enforcement arenas. Coordinator Sandra Ziebold, CEO of the Beacon of Hope Crisis Center, tells *The LINK-Letter* that the group is organizing its strategy and writing grant requests for funds for violence prevention presentations and awareness outreach.



A [new video](#) features Beacon of Hope's Foster Pet Program that helps protect the safety and well-being of all members of the family. The foster pet program has been an integral part of the center's support services and removes a common barrier to survivors' achieving independence. The program offers veterinary care and safe, loving foster homes which allow survivors to heal. Vaccines, spaying and neutering, and regular veterinary care are offered.

In the video, Victim Advocate Lydia Wood and her therapy dog, "Echo," are featured, describing how they help clients to share their difficult stories and provide emotional support to overcome the isolation and "gaslighting" that occur through abusers' psychological manipulations.

Victim Advocate and Foster Pet Coordinator Martin Burttt recalls an incident where an abuser forced his child to place the family's cat in the microwave. "This single, unthinkable act will undoubtedly cause lifelong trauma for both the victim and the child," he says. "This is reality."

Crisis Call Intervention Coordinator Jess Counsell describes a call in which a woman requested emergency veterinary assistance for a dog that received multiple stab wounds while protecting her from her abuser. Emergency surgery saved the life of the pet, a safe and secure location was provided, and the survivor found shelter without the stress and worry about her dog.

"There is a significant Link between pet abuse and domestic violence," Ziebold says, recalling her personal experience with an abuser who tried to pacify her anxiety with the gift of a dog. "At the time, I never imagined that my dog would be harmed in my own home," she says. The dog paid the price for her resistance and was kicked nearly to death in front of Ziebold and her children. "I was told that if the dog wasn't gone upon his return he would finish him off."

Ziebold is providing litigation consultation on an active pet abuse case in Southern Indiana, assisting the prosecutor with data about lethality risk and potential for future violent behavior given the excessive crime. The abuser shot his girlfriend's dogs and then set them on fire. Ziebold previously testified before the Indiana State Legislature to help secure passage in 2017 of the state's law allowing courts to include pets in protection-from-abuse orders.

THE LINK -- INTERNATIONAL



Link Training Expands in Spain

Our Link affiliate in Spain, the [Observatorio de Violencia Hacia los Animales](#), has had an extremely busy Spring offering Link trainings. Coordinator Núria Querol tells *The LINK-Letter* that she and her colleagues recently presented on the implications of animal and human violence to: police departments in Sant Cugat and Barcelona; a conference on veterinary forensics and crime scene investigation; a conference on “Joining Souls”; the Catalan College of Criminology and the University of Barcelona Law School; a conference on security planning with gender perspectives; a veterinary nonprofit; and a series of conferences organized by Asociación para el Vínculo Humano-Animal.

“Blue Lives Matter” in Spain, as well, where Núria Querol presented on *The Link* to several law enforcement agencies

Humano-Animal. Spanish [news media](#) are reporting that domestic violence shelters in Langreo, Oviedo and Zaragoza are now co-sheltering the pet victims of domestic violence as well.

New German-Language Link Coalition Organized in Europe



A new Link coalition – believed to be the only one specifically available in the German language – has emerged in Europe. Die Link-Koalition für Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz – [the Link Coalition for Germany, Austria and Switzerland](#) – was recently organized to inform, collaborate and connect people, scientists and authorities to a better and safer world for animals and humans.

The Coalition is based on the premise that thousands of animals are abused and mistreated because they are in the position of the weaker, often in connection with child abuse or violence in the family or with a domestic partner.

The Coalition, like the European Link Coalition and other similar groups in Sweden, France, Spain, Italy, and the U.K., is building greater awareness of how animal abuse is a precursor and indicator of interpersonal violence and developing legislative and programmatic responses.

Italian Link Leader Recognized

Francesca Sorcinelli, coordinator of [Link Italia](#), was honored recently with the prestigious Pegasus Award by ATA-PC Lecce OdV (Associazione Tutela Ambiente, Animali e Protezione Civile). The organization is dedicated to protecting animals, the environment and society and the award is given to women who are making a difference. Sorcinelli was recognized for her work in promoting awareness and knowledge about *The Link* and how animal cruelty is Linked to social dangerousness.



Link Activities Coming to Croatia

Link activities are beginning to be developed in Croatia, where an animal-assisted therapy center in Medulin named [UPTIV](#) (Udruga za Pet Therapj Indeficienter) is promoting the connections between animal and human violence and how animal-assisted interventions can aid victims and build empathy.



The organization's website notes that violence as a social phenomenon has long existed, and that violence among children is a serious problem in Croatia as it is elsewhere. Over the past 35 years, researchers and experts in health, social welfare and animal welfare have established significant correlations between animal abuse, abuse and neglect of children, domestic violence, abuse of the elderly, and other forms of violence. Animal abuse can no longer be viewed as an isolated incident. Neglect is often an indicator of prevalent crime and an alarm that other members of the household are also at risk of safety, it notes.

UPTIV's Empastija interventions are designed to develop empathy among peers and towards animals and to increase self-esteem in children who are victims of violence. Strengthening children's relationships with teachers, peers and families creates a sense of security and trust which is crucial for quality and safe child development. Every child needs to know that he or she enjoys protection, especially when classical parental functions are missing, UPTIV emphasizes.

UPTIV President Goranka Furlan tells The LINK-Letter that she presented on The Link on May 17 to a conference of all Croatian Juvenile Delinquency Departments.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Link Website Helping People and Pets in Saskatchewan



The Saskatchewan SPCA has developed a comprehensive website that outlines information about The Link, strategies for pet safekeeping for domestic violence survivors, research, and other resources to help abused people and animals in Canada's sprawling western province.

The [Violence Link](#) website includes: telltale signs of animal abuse and domestic violence; how to create a safety plan that includes the family pets; downloadable brochures; a 17-minute video; relevant news media clips; and other information for professionals and private individuals. It includes ideas to keep pets safe during domestic violence situations and strategies if the animals have been abused. It provides links to domestic violence emergency and second-stage domestic violence shelters, support and counseling centers, and animal shelters in the province that may be able to provide housing for pets while a domestic violence survivor is in transition.

We salute this website, which could serve as a template for other organizations to use as a model.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Authors Argue that Animal Abuse Should Be Considered as Trauma

With increasing evidence that animal abuse frequently occurs at the same time and the same place as other types of violence,



particularly family violence, a new article in the journal [*Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*](#) is drawing attention to gaps between understanding of the phenomenon and its application into practice. The authors encourage professionals in human and animal services to consider animal abuse as trauma.

The article proposes that it is the responsibility of both animal service and human service professionals to be aware of the occurrence of The Link, understand its significance, and promote appropriate professional and policy responses. The article reviews significant peer-reviewed research literature relevant to some aspect of The Link between animal abuse and child abuse and/or domestic violence, and legislation and court cases that have been decided that were relevant to the topic.

Strong associations were found between domestic violence, child abuse, and animal abuse; the authors argue that animal abuse, whether witnessed or committed, is a form of trauma. Severe animal abuse as a predictor for severe domestic violence has recently emerged as a promising association. The past 20 years have seen an increase in state and federal legislation and policies that have been enacted, in part, because of the growing body of evidence on The Link. Knowledge of the link also has influenced court cases deciding parental rights. Moreover, awareness of The Link is illustrated by the passage of pet protection orders for survivors of domestic violence as well as the inclusion of pet abuse as a form of domestic violence.

The authors note, however, a disconnect because these findings have not been translated into practice; for example, domestic violence advocates and child protection workers frequently do not ask questions about pets in the family. They encourage human service and animal service professionals to articulate more ways in which they can communicate with one another, thus adding more information and resources to any intervention or treatment of family violence.

-- Randour, M.L., Smith-Blackmore, M., Blaney, N., DeSousa, D., & Guyony, A.-A. (2019, May 1). *Animal abuse as a type of trauma: Lessons for human and animal service professionals. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838019843197>

Link Literature Review Published in Canada

A comprehensive and themed [literature review](#) of academic reports describing the interface of animal abuse with interpersonal and family violence has been published by Humane Canada (formerly the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies). The 12-page literature review includes key references to many Link topics, including:



- **Domestic Violence**
 - Intimate partner violence and domestic violence
 - Domestic violence and pet abuse
 - Pet abuse as a sign of more severe domestic violence
 - Animals as a deterrent to victims seeking help
- **Youth**
 - Youth as perpetrators of animal abuse
 - Sexual felonies among juveniles
 - Conflict in the home impacting childhood animal cruelty
 - Intersections of youth, gangs and dogfighting
 - Youth as victims
- **Major Crimes**
 - Animal abuse as a marker for serial homicides
 - Mass shootings
 - Guns, drugs and gangs

“There is a widely accepted notion that violence begets violence, which has led researchers in recent decades to look into the correlation between violence toward animals and violence toward people in order to find new preventative measures for both forms of criminal behavior. Given the co-occurrence of animal abuse and violence toward humans, it is important to develop interventions for individuals who abuse animals – for the sake of both animals and humans,” the report notes.

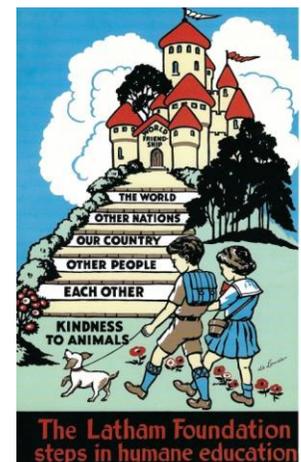
THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR OFFENDERS

Grants Available for Humane Education and Interventions

The Latham Foundation’s 2019 grants priorities will support organizations conducting animal-assisted activities that demonstrate people and animals working together for the benefit of both, and that include humane education. Grants up to \$10,000 will be for one year beginning in September.

To be eligible, organizations should be able to show that their animal-assisted program uses education to nurture compassion, empathy and respect for living beings. Latham emphasizes promoting kindness to animals and others.

Organizations outside the U.S. are welcome to apply. Grants for capital improvements and equipment, publications, training, travel, or conference registrations will not be considered. Latham cautions against applying for funding for salaries as there is no guarantee that grants will continue past the initial award period. Proposals will be accepted only between July 1-26, 2019. Additional details and an application form are available on the Latham Foundation’s [website](#).



THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

As the majority of the 2019 state legislative sessions wind down, 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 have allowed 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 would have considered all relevant evidence including the respondent's cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would have required the respondent to relinquish all firearms and ammunition. **The bill died when the Legislature adjourned.**



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 Public Safety and Appropriations Committees have approved the bill.



Colorado HB 19-1177 creates "Extreme Risk Protection Orders" that allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a significant risk to self or others. In determining grounds for the issuance of such an order, courts can consider the person having been arrested for domestic violence and/or animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on April 12.**



Florida HB 379 and SB 774 would have allowed courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or disposing of any animals owned by the petitioner and/or respondent and minor children in the home. **The bills died when the Legislature session adjourned.**



Georgia HB 582 would have allowed courts to create a detailed "pet care plan" of responsibilities and schedules to ensure animals' best interests in marriage dissolutions. **The bill was in the House Judiciary committee when the Assembly adjourned.**



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 both houses overwhelmingly and **was signed into law on April 29.**



Kentucky HB 25 would have: prohibited pretrial diversion for a person charged with torture of a dog or cat; made torture of a dog or cat a Class D felony; and prohibited 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 died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Mississippi SB 2014 would have prohibited 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 have also authorized the removal of a companion animal from the respondent. The bill passed the Senate 51-0 but **died in the House Judiciary Committee**.



Missouri HB 370 would have added “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 died 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 has passed the House and Senate.



New Mexico HB 52 would have defined 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 but **died in the Senate**.



New York A 588 would create a felony crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if 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 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.



North Dakota HB 1537 would have allowed family members to file a 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. **The bill died in the House**.



Pennsylvania SB 90 and **HB 1075** would create “Extreme Risk Protection Orders” that would allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a risk of suicide or of causing death or serious bodily injury to another person. Factors that could help make such a determination include a history of domestic abuse and/or animal cruelty. **HB 1028** would allow household members to file a petition for a “Firearm Restraining Order” prohibiting a respondent from having firearms, weapons or ammunition if the respondent presents an immediate and present danger to physical safety, as represented by acts of domestic violence or killing or threatening to kill pets or other animals. The bills are in the respective Judiciary Committees.



Rhode Island H 5023 and **SB 225** 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. The House and Senate Judiciary Committees each recommended their bill be held for further study. 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 also recommended this bill be held for further study.



Rhode Island H 5483 and **H 5822** would allow the district court to determine the ownership of a pet between “formerly cohabiting parties” based on what would be in the pet’s best interests. Both bills were held by the House Judiciary Committee for further study.



Texas SB 194 and **HB 309** would add “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions for illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims could obtain a protection order that includes 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. **SB 194** passed the Senate and the House. **HB 309** was approved by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.



Texas HB 3021 would direct the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to develop information to provide to the public about the availability of provisions that allow pets to be included in protective orders. The bill was approved by the House and is in the Senate State Affairs 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”. The bill is in the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.



Utah SB 45 defines 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 was signed into law on March 27.**



Virginia HB 2642 and **SB 1276** would have made any animal cruelty violation a Class 6 felony if carried out with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. **The bills died in the Senate.**



Wyoming HB 235 will 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 will 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 became law on March 8 and takes effect July 1.**



Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment

 **Colorado HB 19-1144** would have allowed courts to permit a child witness, as in a case of child sexual abuse, to be accompanied by a court facility dog while testifying. **That bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Judiciary Committee.** A more expansive measure, **HB 19-1220**, which allows any witness, regardless of age, to be accompanied by a court facility dog while testifying, **was signed into law on May 1.**



 **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** and **S 3415** would permit individuals already mandated to report suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding other provisions of confidentiality, if the act were committed by a person also suspected of child abuse or maltreatment. (The original version of the bill mandated such reporting.) Individuals already permitted to report suspected child abuse (which includes everyone in New York State) would also be permitted to report suspected animal cruelty. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The bills are in the Assembly Children & Families and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.

 **New York A 2664** and **S 3327** would amend the definition of child endangerment and other related statutes to include committing acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child and to strengthen penalties for existing animal cruelty charges when committed in the presence of a child. The bills are in the Assembly Codes and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.

 **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

 **Maryland HB 561** would have added the crime of psychological abuse of a vulnerable adult, defined as the intentional use of verbal or other conduct resulting in a vulnerable adult’s apprehension of fear, confusion, intimidation, depression or emotional distress; such conduct would include the destruction or harm of an animal owned by the vulnerable adult. **The bill was withdrawn from the Judiciary Committee.**

 **New York A 1153** would bar landlords from denying residential occupancy or evicting persons over age 62 solely for keeping a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes

 **Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths 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. **The bills died when the legislature adjourned.**

 **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** would define the theft or release of an animal during a burglary as animal cruelty. The bills are in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

 **New York A 1069** would add a felony conviction for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the “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 aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture Committee and the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

 **New York A 2509** and **S 609** would allow animal fighting charges to be eligible for an enterprise corruption charge. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.

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

 **Pennsylvania HB 1071** would add sentencing enhancements to crimes of burglary and criminal trespass if a domestic animal is killed or harmed. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Washington HB 1541** would make it illegal for offenders convicted of 2nd-degree animal cruelty to possess a firearm. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

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 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 criminalize companion animal hoarding of more than 25 pets in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of animals and people in the home. 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 has passed the Public Safety and Appropriations Committees.



Colorado HB 19-1092 allows courts to order mental health treatment to adult and juvenile offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill also requires courts to impose a ban of three to five years upon a felony conviction for adults and permits such a restriction for juvenile offenders. **The bill was signed into law on May 1.**



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 have allowed 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 addressed Cross-Reporting* . It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**



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 bills are in the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.



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; **S 2007** is in the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

Animal Sexual Abuse



California AB 611 would: close loopholes to make any sexual act with an animal a crime; authorize the seizure of animals in such cases; expand the ban of owning or keeping animals to animal sexual abusers; and require veterinarians to report suspected animal sexual abuse as they are already mandated to do for animal abuse or cruelty. The bill passed the Assembly and is in the Senate Public Safety Committee.



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 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the felony 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 was signed into law** on March 26.



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



Maryland HB 641 amends §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include “sexual contact with an animal.” It further defines aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal will be included among Tier III sex offenders. **HB 641 was signed into law by the Governor on April 18.** The new law takes effect on Oct. 1, 2019.



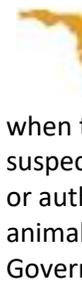
Massachusetts S.891 would amend Chapter 272, Section 34 of the General Laws to replace the archaic “Crime against nature” – the “abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast” – with a new crime of a “sexual act on an animal.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Pennsylvania HB 1312** would deny offenders convicted of having sexual intercourse with animals the right of having their criminal records expunged. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **West Virginia HB 2792** would have prohibited activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal; establish criminal penalties; and provide for forfeiture of animals, payment of associated costs, and restrictions on owning animals upon conviction. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee **when the regular legislative session ended.**

 **Wisconsin AB 152** and **SB 139** would increase penalties for bestiality from current misdemeanor levels to a variety of felony charges for sexual contact with an animal; advertising, harboring, transporting, providing or transporting animals for sexual contact; and creating, distributing or possessing animal pornography. Penalties would be further enhanced if a child is involved. The bill would also require offenders to register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration. The bills are in the respective Committees on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Cross-Reporting

 **Florida** companion measures **HB 379**, **SB 774**, and **SB 1738**, which would have allowed veterinarians to report suspected criminal violations to a law enforcement officer or certified animal control officer without notice to or authorization from a client, died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. A related measure, **HB 7125**, would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officer humane without notice to or authorization from the client unless the suspected violation occurs at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land. **HB 7125** passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

 **Illinois SB 1778** would designate domestic violence crisis line and program personnel and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. The bill has passed the Senate and is in the House.

 **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. **HF 1530** is in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division; **SF 1517** is in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee.

 **Missouri HB 111** would have granted immunity from civil liability to all persons, including veterinarians, teachers and school personnel, who report suspected animal abuse to a law enforcement agency in good faith. *The bill also addressed Psychological Evaluations.* It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees, but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**



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 – 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, children’s services agencies, 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 would 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 adds animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. **The measure was signed into law** by the Governor on May 22.



Oregon HB 2500 would allow veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail could collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The bill passed the House and Senate and is awaiting the Governor’s signature.



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 Senate Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study.



Texas SB 1750 and **HB 2787** would allow veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to appropriate governmental entities without violating veterinarian/client confidentiality. **SB 1750** is in the Senate Business & Commerce Committee. **HB 2787** was approved by the House Agriculture & Livestock Committee and was sent to the Senate Business & Commerce Committee.



Washington HB 1919 expands provisions against animal fighting to include fighting paraphernalia and mutilating or abandoning fighting animals, but a requirement that the Washington State Patrol establish and maintain a statewide toll-free hotline to allow the public to report animal abuse **was deleted in a substitute bill**. The deleted section would have facilitated community reporting and law enforcement response to animal abuse by creating a central repository of incidents of animal abuse, neglect fighting, and sexual abuse for inclusion in the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System. The State Patrol would have referred incidents to local law enforcement agencies for investigation as appropriate. The animal fighting provisions were **signed into law by the Governor on April 29 and take effect July 28**.



“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. A court’s denial of a request for a separate advocate would not be subject to appeal. Advocates would be selected from attorneys and law school students with knowledge of animal law issues. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



Maine LD 1442 would allow a court to appoint volunteer advocates for justice in animal cruelty cases, either under its own initiative or upon the request of a party or counsel. Advocates could monitor the proceedings, consult with individuals and records relevant to the case, and present appropriate information and recommendations. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey A 4840 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 create court-appointed advocates for animals. **A 25** and **S 3027** are in the Judiciary Committees; **A 702** is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Trio Sentenced to 21-to-40 Years for 1,460 Counts of Animal Sexual Abuse



From left: Terry Wallace, Marc Measnikoff, & Matthew Brubaker

The three Pennsylvania men who were each charged with 1,460 counts of animal sexual abuse and animal cruelty plus charges of corrupting a minor ([See the September 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) will spend decades in prison after pleading guilty to what Clearfield County Judge Paul Cherry called “one of the most disgusting, despicable” cases he has ever seen. Marc Thomas Measnikoff, 35, originally from Linden, N.J., Terry James Wallace, 41, formerly of Blair County, Pa., and Matthew Joseph Brubaker, 33, from Maumee, Ohio, were living on a makeshift farm in Munson, Pa., with a teenager. They had been having sexual intercourse for years with dogs, horses, a cow, and a goat, and making video recordings of many episodes, the [Centre Daily Times](#) reported. On April 29, Cherry sentenced each man to 20 to 41 years in state prison. District Attorney William A. Shaw, Jr., said, “This was a violent crime. It was a rape of animals.”

Man Who Killed Roommate’s Cat Gets Two Years in Prison

A Bristol, Conn. man with a criminal record of strangulation, assault and probation violation ([See the November 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) was sentenced to two years in prison for killing his roommate’s cat after the two men argued about charges for carpooling to work. The cat, named “Gus,” died after being kicked with steel-toed boots. Bristol Superior Court Judge John Cronan told Jonathan Ely, 28, “We see bad behavior every day here, but this is beyond my comprehension. You should really be ashamed of yourself. I don’t know how you can live with yourself. Anybody that could do this kind of thing is a monster,” [Fox 61 News](#) reported.

S.C. Couple Charged with Cruelty and Narcotics Offenses

A South Carolina couple were charged with 18 felony counts of animal cruelty plus narcotics offenses after Horry County police officers allegedly found 30 dogs in poor health, cocaine, nearly \$53,000 in cash, and a handgun. Kimberly Schuler, 53, and Ronald Moore, 43, both of Loris, were charged in the case. [WMBF-TV](#) reported that all 30 dogs had fleas and suffered from dehydration. Several dogs also tested positive for parvo and had lice, intestinal parasites, eye issues, ear injuries and heartworms. The animals were placed in an isolation unit at the Horry County Animal Care Center.



Kimberly Schuler & Ronald Moore



Jason Washington & Ashley Duque

Domestic Disturbance Call Leads to Cruelty Charges

Police in Las Vegas, Nev. responding to a domestic disturbance reportedly discovered a dead pit bull tied to a fence and charged the couple with four counts of animal cruelty. Jason Washington, 36, and Ashley Duque, 31, were cited after witnesses observed a fight in progress and heard gunshots. Washington was also charged with domestic battery, resisting a public officer and providing a false statement. The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) reported the dog was tied to the fence on a two-foot string without food, water or shelter; blood and flies were also observed.



Thi Thuy Harper

Louisiana Woman Charged with Elder Abuse; Dogs Rescued

Sheriff's deputies in Avoyelles Parish, La., arrested Thi Thuy Harper, 48, of Marksville, on charges of elder abuse after investigators reportedly found evidence that an elderly female relative was kept locked in a room without air conditioning or proper ventilation for extended periods of time. [Avoyelles Today](#) reported that there was no running water or food in the home and the victim appeared malnourished and had been physically assaulted. Three malnourished and sickly dogs were also found and were turned over to humane society and animal control for care and safekeeping. The elderly relative was taken to a hospital. Authorities said there was evidence of alleged illicit drug use and that additional charges were possible.

Prosecutors Mull Child and Animal Abuse Charges in Ohio Puppy Mill Raid



Deputy Sarah Fraley with one of the rescued dogs

Prosecutors in Miami County, Ohio may file charges of animal cruelty and child endangerment after a complaint about barking dogs led sheriff's deputies and agents of the county Animal Shelter, Children's Services and Public Health to an alleged puppy mill where 125 dogs were rescued. The [Troy Daily News](#) reported that deputies responding to the barking dog complaint observed filthy conditions and the carcasses of two dead dogs in the yard of the home. The homeowner relinquished 122 of the dogs to the shelter, and two teenage children were moved to a different home. The health department condemned the house.

Woman Arrested as Elderly Sister and Father Rescued from Rat-Infested Home



Catherine
Vandermaesen

Ventura County, Calif. sheriff's deputies arrested Catherine Ann Vandermaesen, 65, of Ojai, after an investigation reportedly found she had been keeping her 96-year-old father and 74-year-old sister in a home filled with hundreds of rats. Adult Protective Services had notified law enforcement after their well-being check on Vandermaesen's sister found both women to have visible fecal matter and urine on their bodies plus a scent of ammonia from urine, the [VC Star](#) reported. Deputies obtained a warrant to search the home with support from APS, animal control and the county fire department, where they impounded eight dogs, two rabbits, a cat, a parrot, and 55 rats. Authorities said the ammonia stench could be detected 20 feet from the house. Investigators estimated an additional 200 to 700 rats were living in the home, which was declared unlivable. APS took custody of the father and helped the elderly sister obtain temporary housing; the animals were turned over to the Humane Society of Ventura County. Vandermaesen was charged with felony elder abuse and misdemeanor failure to care for animals.

Illegal Immigrant Detained by ICE After Raping Fiancée's Dog

An undocumented Mexican immigrant who was released from jail after pleading guilty to raping his fiancée's dog (See the [March 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) was being held in detention by ICE. Fidel Lopez, 52, of Multnomah County, Ore., had been sentenced to 60 days in jail for sexually assaulting "Estrella," a Lhasa Apso mix who had to be euthanized due to her extensive internal injuries. [KXL-FM](#) reported that Lopez had to be released because he had already spent more than 60 days in jail awaiting trial. If Lopez is not deported, he will also face sentencing terms of: 36 months of probation; \$500 in restitution payments; a 15-year ban on possessing dogs; a no-contact order with his fiancée; and assessments and treatment for animal abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. The investigation was triggered when law enforcement learned from veterinarians at Portland's DoveLewis Animal Hospital that forensics indicated the dog had been sexually assaulted. Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Angel Lopez said he imposed Oregon's current maximum sentence for the offenses. "If it could have been more, I would have gladly given you more," he told the defendant.



Fidel Lopez



Preston Stegall

2nd Louisiana Man Charged with Child and Animal Pornography

Preston Stegall, 41, of Princeton, La., who had been charged in March with pornographic sexual abuse of an animal, was re-arrested in May and charged with possession of child pornography. The [Shreveport Times](#) reported that Bossier Parish Sheriff's deputies began forensic investigations of Stegall's electronic devices last February and reportedly found the images. He was being held under a \$150,000 bond. A second man from Bossier Parish, former Bossier City police officer Terry Yetman, was charged earlier this year with 71 counts of child and animal pornography (See the [May 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). It is not known whether the two cases are related.

Trio Charged with Witness Tampering and Bestiality



Denise Kearney, Ashley Pinkett, and Jermaine Gaye

Two Norfolk, Va. women and a jail inmate were charged with 61 counts of bestiality, animal cruelty, and witness tampering when the women allegedly had sex with the inmate's dog as he encouraged them to try to convince a witness to not testify against him. [WTVR-TV](#) described the bizarre incident in which Jermaine Gaye, 34, had been arrested for a hit-and-run accident in which he allegedly hit a police car, drove off at a high speed and eventually crashed, injuring two people. While in the Norfolk jail, Gaye reportedly spoke on the phone to Denise Kearney and Ashley Pinkett on several occasions encouraging them to try to convince a witness to either change her story or not come to court. The two women allegedly had sex with Gaye's dog on six days and photographed the incidents. After Gaye was later moved to the Virginia Beach jail for allegedly trying to establish an improper relationship with a jail employee, Pinkett allegedly had sex with Gaye's dog during a video chat with him. Gaye, Pinkett and Kearney are facing 34, 20 and seven counts, respectively, of bestiality, animal cruelty and witness tampering and were being held without bond.

Two Norfolk, Va. women and a jail inmate were charged with 61 counts of bestiality, animal cruelty, and witness tampering when the women allegedly had sex with the inmate's dog as he encouraged them to try to convince a witness to not testify against him. [WTVR-TV](#) described the bizarre incident in which Jermaine Gaye, 34, had been arrested for a hit-and-run accident in which he allegedly hit a police car, drove off at a high speed and eventually crashed, injuring two people. While in the Norfolk jail, Gaye reportedly spoke on the phone to Denise Kearney and Ashley Pinkett on several occasions encouraging them to try to convince a witness to either change her story or not come to court. The two women allegedly had sex with Gaye's dog on six days and photographed the incidents. After Gaye was later moved to the Virginia Beach jail for allegedly trying to establish an improper relationship with a jail employee, Pinkett allegedly had sex with Gaye's dog during a video chat with him. Gaye, Pinkett and Kearney are facing 34, 20 and seven counts, respectively, of bestiality, animal cruelty and witness tampering and were being held without bond.

Ex-cruelty Offender Charged with Stabbing Boyfriend

A woman who was reportedly convicted in 2017 on two counts of animal cruelty has been charged with assault for allegedly stabbing her boyfriend in the shoulder with a paring knife. Sapphire Lizardi, 23, of Reading, Pa., was charged in the incident which reportedly occurred after an argument and the boyfriend was packing his belongings to leave. The unnamed boyfriend also reportedly suffered scratches and bruises, according to the [Reading Eagle](#).



Sapphire Lizardi



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.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

June 11 – Naples, Fla.: Joanna Fitzgerald will present on the veterinarian’s response to elder abuse issues at the [Collier County Veterinary Society](#) meeting.

June 12 – Regina, Sask., Canada: Christiana Bratiotis and Colleen Marion will present a [workshop](#) on interagency approaches to animal hoarding for human and animal service providers.

June 12 – Stratford, N.J.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link and Domestic Violence for the [S.A.S.H.A.](#) Foundation.

June 14 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold a panel discussion on “Safe Havens: Supporting Domestic Violence Victims and their Pets.”

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

June 20 – Greenville, Ga.: Jessica Rock and Douglas Bridges will present on “The Link Between Animal Abuse, Dog Fighting and Other Violent Crimes” at a [training](#) hosted by the Meriwether County Sheriff’s Office.

June 23 – Wetherby, West Yorkshire, U.K.: [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

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 8 – Sept. 28 (online): The Federal University of Parana, Brazil, will offer a 10-week online [Training Course on The Link between Human Violence and Animal Abuse](#). Topics include: Human-animal interactions; Family vulnerability and pets; Violence against women, children and the elderly and their relationships with pets; Animal abuse; How to report; The veterinarian’s role; Diagnosis of animal abuse; and Interdisciplinary actions.

July 12 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will offer a 3-hour CEU training on “Understanding the Nature of Animal Hoarding.”

July 13 – Santa Fe, N.M.: [Tammy Fiebelkorn](#) will provide an overview of The Link to the Santa Fe Vegan Meetup.

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.

July 21-24 – Oxford, U.K.: 62 world-class speakers from 16 nations will present on numerous aspects of humane education at the 6th Annual [Oxford Animal Ethics Summer School](#) on the theme of “Humane Education: Increasing Sensitivity to Animals and Humans.”

July 22-25 – Phoenix, Ariz.: Katie Campbell of RedRover will present on “Domestic Violence and Pets: How to Create and Run a Pet-Friendly Housing Program” at the [National Organization for Victim Assistance](#)’s 45th Annual Training Event.

July 28 – Tokyo, Japan: The Animal Literacy Research Institute will host Japan’s 1st [Veterinary Social Work Workshop](#) with presentations on The Link and human-animal welfare issues in animal hoarding.

July 30 – Orlando, Fla.: Two judges will present on “Animal Cruelty and Juvenile Justice” at the 82nd Annual Conference of the [National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges](#).

Aug. 4 – Washington, D.C.: An all-day animal welfare track at the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s 2019 Convention will feature: Phil Arkow on “Preparing the Practice to respond to Suspected Animal Abuse”; Martha Smith-Blackmore on “Crime Scene Findings, Evidence Handling and Veterinary Forensics”; Maya Gupta on “Responding to Animal Abuse and Neglect in the Context of Suspected Domestic Violence”; Randy Lockwood on “Veterinary Pathologists as Part of the Team Investigating Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect”; Jyothi Robertson on “The Veterinarian’s Role in Responding to Animal Hoarders”; Rachel Touroo on “The Role of the Veterinarian in Investigating Animal Fighting”; and Todd Stosuy on “Collaborating with Animal Care and Control Officers in Responding to Abuse and Neglect Cases.”

Aug. 9 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will discuss “Animal Cruelty in Violent Homes: The Intersection of Domestic Violence & Animal Abuse” with a presentation by Tina Regier.

Aug. 21 – Denver, Colo.: Phil Arkow will present on “Animal Abuse, Animal Hoarding and Elder Abuse: Challenges and Strategies for APS” at the 30th [Annual National Adult Protective Services Association](#) Conference.

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. 9 – 10: Albuquerque, N. Mex.: The [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) between Animal Abuse and Human Violence will feature multiple Link authorities in a two-day event at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. John Thompson will be the keynote speaker.

Sept. 13 – Dallas, Texas: Sandra Brackenridge will present on “Crisis Intervention, Workplace Stress and Compassion Fatigue: Veterinary Social Work” at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Sept. 16 – Quedgeley, Gloucester, U.K.: [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

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

Sept. 22 – Falls Church, Va.: Deborah L’Heureux will present on “Animal Cruelty and The Link” at the [VCA SouthPaws CE conference](#).

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 on “The Nexus of Animal Cruelty and Serious Crime” at a 3-hour CEU training event hosted by the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Oct. 24 – Plano, Texas: Phil Arkow and Felicia Kerney will present at the 17th Annual [North Texas Facing Family Violence conference](#) on “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse” The conference’s theme is “All Systems Go: Working Together – Family Violence Across the Lifespan.”

Oct. 27 – Cambridge, U.K.: [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

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.

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