



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 12, No. 7 July 2019**

*A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER*



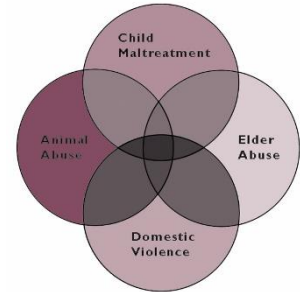
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



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

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## **ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE**

### **AVMA Amends Position on Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse**

The American Veterinary Medical Association appears to have backtracked from its previous long-standing position statements which declared that veterinarians have a responsibility to report animal abuse and neglect. AVMA's new policy merely encourages state legislatures to provide immunity from civil, criminal and state licensing actions to any practitioners who choose to make such reports.

The new statement, approved in April by AVMA's Board of Directors following a review begun in 2017, disregards language approved in 1995, and revised in 2000, 2009 and 2012 that declared veterinarians have such a responsibility, similar to even older responsibilities by physicians to report suspected child abuse and neglect. AVMA's prior position statements helped prompt 34 states to enact laws either requiring or permitting

veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse, usually with immunity from civil and criminal liability and from fear of violating client-practitioner confidentiality.

#### **American Veterinary Medical Association Position Statements on Animal Abuse and Animal Neglect**

**(2012)**

"The AVMA recognizes that veterinarians may observe cases of animal abuse or neglect as defined by federal or state laws, or local ordinances. The AVMA considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to appropriate authorities, whether or not reporting is mandated by law. Prompt disclosure of abuse is necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people. Veterinarians should be aware that accurate, timely record keeping and documentation of these cases are essential. The AVMA considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to educate clients regarding humane care and treatment of animals."

**(2019)**

"The AVMA recognizes that veterinarians may observe cases of suspected animal abuse or neglect as defined by federal or state laws, or local ordinances. The AVMA encourages state legislation providing immunity from liability in any civil, criminal, or state licensing action to any veterinarian who reports, in good faith, a suspected case of animal abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Additionally, the AVMA encourages state legislatures to pass legislation that client/patient records related to suspected cases of animal abuse or neglect provided to proper authorities are exempt from confidentiality restrictions. Prompt disclosure of abuse is necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people. Veterinarians should be aware that accurate, timely record keeping and documentation of these cases are essential. The AVMA encourages veterinarians to educate clients, recognize the signs of animal abuse and neglect, and familiarize themselves with relevant laws and the appropriate authorities to whom they should report suspected cases of animal abuse or neglect within their jurisdiction."

## AN ONGOING EVOLUTION... AND DEVOLUTION

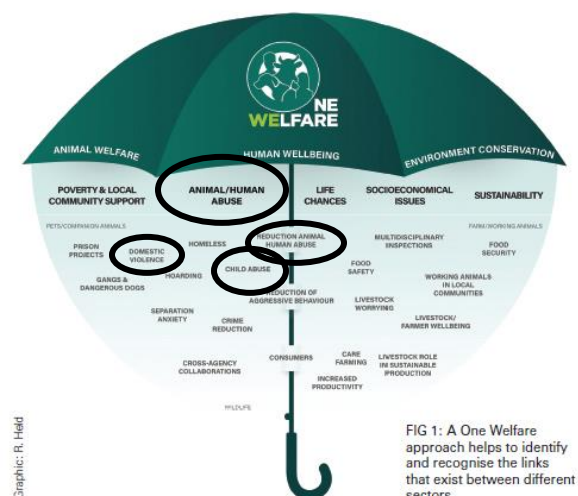
In 1995, the AVMA Executive Board approved a policy on Cruelty to Animals, Animal Abuse, and Animal Neglect, declaring, “The AVMA recognizes that veterinarians may have occasion to observe cases of cruelty to animals, animal abuse, or animal neglect as defined by state law or local ordinances. When these observations occur, the AVMA considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to the appropriate authorities. Such disclosures may be necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people.”

This position statement was augmented in 1996 with the addition of language in the Model Veterinary Practice Act, Section 2 (8), which defined the practice of veterinary medicine as including the reporting of known or suspected cases of animal cruelty, abuse or neglect to appropriate humane or law enforcement officials where required by law. (That provision was removed, however, in 1997, when it was reportedly argued that defining the reporting of animal abuse as a component of veterinary medicine would prevent non-veterinarians from reporting animal maltreatment.)

In 2010, AVMA amended the Veterinarian’s Oath to include, for the first time since the Oath was adopted in 1954, provisions calling for practitioners to benefit society through the **protection** of animal welfare and the **prevention** of animal suffering.

Meanwhile, other national veterinary associations were similarly adopting progressive recognition that the veterinarian should be as proactive in responding to animal abuse as physicians are in responding to human violence. The American Animal Hospital Association in 2012, and again in 2015, issued position statements supporting the reporting of suspicions of animal abuse to appropriate authorities and encouraging the adoption of laws that mandate veterinary professionals to report suspicions of animal abuse and that provide immunity from legal liability when filing such reports in good faith.

The United Kingdom’s Code of Professional Conduct, updated this past February, allows veterinarians to breach confidentiality when disclosure is justified by animal welfare concerns and wider public interest. The more such welfare or interest is compromised, “the more prepared a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse should be to release information to the relevant authority.” The UK’s Code also adds, “Given the links between animal, child and domestic abuse, a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse reporting suspected or actual animal abuse should consider whether a child or adult within that home might also be at risk.”



The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association updated its animal welfare position statement in 2011, declaring that while veterinarians do not have a *legal* responsibility to report suspected animal abuse, they do have a *moral* responsibility. CVMA encouraged veterinary associations to “work with their provincial governments to develop legislation to require veterinarians to report animal abuse, and to provide immunity to those who do so using their professional judgment and in good faith.”

On a global level, the One Health/One Welfare movement, which defines veterinary medicine as having a unique voice in protecting people, animals and the environment, includes The Link between animal abuse and human violence and the response to child abuse, domestic violence and animal abuse, within its purview ([See the August 2017 LINK-Letter](#)).

Programs implemented in New Zealand and Scotland go even further and encourage veterinarians to become more active in the prevention of domestic violence.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

AVMA explained the revision by saying it was made to provide immunity, permit the release of records to appropriate authorities, and prevent possible prosecution of veterinarians who report suspected animal abuse in good faith in places such as Kentucky, believed to be the only state where practitioners are specifically prohibited from reporting (unless they are under a subpoena or court order). AVMA said the new statement is designed primarily to provide guidance to state veterinary associations rather than to individual practitioners. The revision was based upon legal advice to ensure it was appropriate and responsible while retaining, to the extent possible, the ethical responsibility of veterinarians to report suspected abuse without acting contrary to their state laws.

In addressing veterinarians' liability concerns, when AAHA came out with its recommendation in 2012 calling for mandatory reporting of suspected abuse with the caveat that immunity had to be included in these laws, a flurry of states enacted such legislation. Of the 34 states that have enacted mandatory or permissive reporting, only Alabama, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, and Wisconsin fail to include some form of immunity. Kentucky is the only state that prohibits reporting.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund's [annual ranking](#) of the best and worst states for animal protection has ranked Kentucky #50 for 12 years in a row.

Our contention is that AVMA's updated statement would be significantly stronger and more proactive by retaining the "responsibility to report" language while adding "unless prohibited by law." The addition of language encouraging states to provide immunity from liability and confidentiality concerns for good-faith reporting is a welcome improvement; so is the addition of "suspected" abuse which recognizes that veterinarians are medical experts, not legal ones, and others will determine the merits of a case. Nevertheless, the removal of the veterinarian's "responsibility" to report seems to have been a step backward.

[AVMA members can comment on the new policy.](#)

## Oregon Veterinarians Can Sue Animal Abusers for Damages

**Oregon** veterinarians who respond to cases of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect have achieved a financial and moral victory for themselves and the animals under their care through a new measure just signed into law. **HB 2500** allows veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail will be able to collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The bill was signed into law by the Gov. Kate Brown on May 28 and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2020.

## Veterinary Forensics Seen as Essential for Effective Cruelty Investigations

Kendra Coulter, whose groundbreaking labor research has focused on how The Link makes animal cruelty a smart public policy but also exacerbates the stressors affecting female animal cruelty investigators ([See the March 2019 LINK-Letter](#)), has published an article summarizing the recent [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#) conference.



Writing for the online publication [The Conversation](#), Coulter argues that “veterinary forensics are essential for every jurisdiction committed to effective and comprehensive animal cruelty investigations,” particularly since “animal abuse often occurs alongside violence against women and children, upping the emotional ante – and the significance – of this work.”

Coulter cited growing global recognition of veterinary forensics in the U.S., the U.K., Taiwan, and Colombia as illustrating the worldwide risks that animal cruelty poses to animals, people and public safety. “For something as serious as animal abuse, we need more than charity,” she concludes. “Animal cruelty is an urgent public safety matter that deserves the careful attention of our law enforcement and political leaders.”

## THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

### Study Examines Health Issues in Hoarded Cats

The psychological disorders underlying hoarding behaviors in general, and the more specialized manifestation of animal hoarding, and their adverse impacts on the animals and people involved have received some scholarly attention. Less is known about the medical conditions befalling animals kept in large numbers in often unhealthy environments, particularly questionable rescue or shelter operations that mask hoarding situations. A new study examines medical conditions and outcomes in 371 cats surrendered to the Toronto, Ont., Humane Society from 2011-2014. The study examines “institutional” hoarders – occurring within a designated facility for housing animals such as a rescue or shelter – and non-institutional hoarders. The study reports high rates of unaltered cats and widespread diseases associated with malnutrition, overcrowding and general neglect, consistent with other studies. The most common condition reported was upper respiratory infections, associated with stress and crowding in cat populations. The study is believed to be the first to compare disease prevalence between institutional and non-institutional environments and draws additional attention to the issues of hoarders who masquerades as legitimate rescue or shelter operations.

-- Jacobson, L.S., Giacinti, J.A., & Robertson, J. (2019). Medical conditions and outcomes in 371 hoarded cats from 14 sources: a retrospective study (2011-2014). *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, 1-8.

### Collaborative Model Helps Manage Animal Hoarding

It has long been recognized that animal hoarding cases are exceedingly complex and involve multiple community animal and human health and welfare agencies. This study reports on a proactive plan for addressing companion animal hoarding in Wake County, N. Car., that implemented a team approach engaging animal control officers, crisis intervention counselors, and law enforcement, veterinary and animal rescue partners. The diverse team approach is said to best assist animals at risk, hold people accountable, address the mental health component, and create a more humane community.

-- Strong, S., Federico, J., Banks, R., & Williams, C. (2019). A collaborative model for managing animal hoarding cases. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 22(3), 267-278.

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

### **Study Examines Risks of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse to First Responders, Families and Communities**

While the impact of animal abuse as a coercive control tactic is well understood as it affects the victims of domestic violence, the impact on other family members, first responders and the community has not received as much attention. [Andrew M. Campbell](#), an Indianapolis researcher and consultant whose earlier work described how domestic violence survivors are at greater risk of harm and death when their animals are also abused ([See the September 2018 LINK-Letter](#)), is expanding his studies to address The Link's impact on families, communities and responders.

Campbell has created geospatial map clusters correlating over 10,000 police department reports of domestic violence, sexual assault, rapes and weapons offenses with animal control incidents. He found, not surprisingly, significant overlaps in neighborhoods where both crimes occur.

An unrecognized aspect of The Link is the risk to police responding to domestic violence incidents. While law enforcement has long recognized that these cases are inherently highly charged and dangerous, the additional risks posed by animal abusers portend hidden threats to law enforcement.

Most domestic violence suspects appear calm, crying and apologetic on the surface, Campbell told the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals in a presentation titled "Behind the Mask". "Law enforcement officers don't know what exists below the surface. They need to know before responding to domestic violence that there's a history of cruelty to animals in the house."



Campbell found that where 31% of domestic violence suspects had easy access to firearms, that risk increased to 68% among suspects who had also abused animals. When suspects have a history of pet abuse, victims are more likely to wait before calling 911 and often experience 20-50 incidents before calling 911.

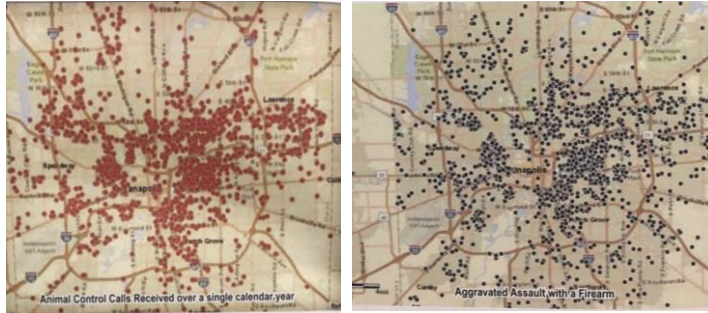
**Andrew Campbell: "Behind the Mask"**

"The risk for all in the home increases with each incident," he said. Alarming, 50% of children subjected to these multiple abuses appear calm and silent, fearful to talk. Mothers who are victimized become emotionally unavailable to their children who, in turn, come to rely more on their pets for emotional support and safety. "The impact of animal abuse and domestic violence in these homes is what's creating our future perpetrators."

The emotional abuse inflicted on children who experience child, domestic and animal abuse is a toxic stress that affects brain development and traumatic memories. If these occur at an early age, "we don't get a second chance" to correct the situation, he said. "We really can't separate the welfare of the children, the adults and the animals in the home."

Risks to the community include data showing that domestic violence perpetrators with histories of animal abuse are less likely than non-abusers to remain on the scene. When these dual offenders are found, 46% are under the influence, creating additional risks for DUI offenses, he said.





Maps show animal control calls (left) and aggravated assault with a firearm

The risks to all involved are exacerbated by communication gaps between animal control and law enforcement agencies, especially in rural counties where there is no designated animal control. Campbell found that 20% of Indiana's 92 counties lack animal control programs and such enforcement is left up to the discretion of the sheriff.

Animal control enforcement offers additional opportunities to identify people who pose a risk to others. Boone County, for example, lacked an animal control program and only some 200 calls for service were logged per year; when the Sheriff's Office added an animal control division, 2,323 calls were received in the first year.

Neighbors are more likely than victims to report animal control problems which can indicate underlying domestic violence issues. "The neighbors don't have the same barriers as victims; they don't have to make the same difficult decision about whether to report," he said.

"Animal control agencies may have a unique opportunity to detect and respond to violence in the home earlier than most victim-serving agencies. With effective community partnerships and cross-discipline collaboration, this response can significantly improve outcomes for all adults, children and animals residing in these homes."

## Awareness Event Helps Survivors in Oklahoma City

The Oklahoma Humane Society and the Oklahoma Link Coalition partnered with the Palomar Family Justice Center on June 29<sup>th</sup> for the First Annual "Make Leaving Pawsible" pet and family fun event. The awareness event raised funds for Palomar's [Animal Advocacy Program](#), which has a full-time staff member dedicated to the needs of the animal members of the 36,000 Oklahoma City families who call 911 each year to report domestic violence (*See the March 2019 LINK-Letter*). The program also builds a network of foster families to allow human survivors of domestic violence to focus on their needs and find safe homes, knowing their pets are being kept safe.

JOIN US  
FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL

## Make Leaving Pawsible

Saturday, June 29  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

FREE ADMISSION

Palomar Family Justice Center  
South parking lot  
1540 N Hudson Ave.  
(across from dog park)

Did you know up to 71% of women seeking shelter reported that their abuser had threatened or harmed their pet to stop them from leaving?

**Pet + family fun, including:**

- Pet costume contest @ 11:00
- Silent auction
- Face-painting + caricatures
- Food galore
- Local pet vendors
- Live DJ
- Kids activities
- Goat + bunny petting zoo

Any donations go towards the Animal Advocacy Program at Palomar, a collaboration with the Central OK Humane Society to serve clients' pets affected by family violence

## Permission to Reprint

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

## New Hampshire Adds Pets' Welfare to Divorce Custodies

New Hampshire has become the fourth state to recognize that divorcing couples' bitter disputes often adversely impact their pets by enacting the newest law allowing courts to include animals' well-being in determining their disposition during divorce settlements. Gov. Chris Sununu signed [HB 361](#) which takes effect Aug. 24. It declares animals to be tangible property and that courts "shall address the care and ownership of the parties' animals, taking into consideration the animals' wellbeing." Similar laws have been enacted in Alaska, California and Illinois.



## Pet-Friendly Shelter Planned in Kentucky

A groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for July 1 in Maysville, Ky., to build the 20-kennel Barking Tales Resort at the [Women's Crisis Center](#) to enable more women, children and pets to leave abusive homes. A \$20,000 grant from [RedRover](#) will create 20 kennels and green space for exercise and activities.

Center director Melissa Greenwell said the Barking Tales Resort will save the agency money because they won't have to pay to board survivors' pets any more. The kennel will also break down a significant barrier that prevents many survivors from escaping domestic violence. "Separating a family from their pets, when they have already experienced so much trauma in their lives, can have so many adverse effects on the family unit," she said. "This grant will help us alleviate that added stress."

## THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### Sheriffs Explore Opportunities and Gaps in Cruelty Enforcement



Gaps in systems and opportunities for greater linkages between law enforcement and animal control agencies were the main topics at back-to-back meetings of the National Sheriffs' Association's Animal Cruelty & Abuse Committee (left) and the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals. Sheriffs' work can be enhanced by understanding what the animal control officers in their community do, said John Thompson of the National Animal Care & Control Association. The Virginia State Police will shortly roll out a training program for animal control officers and law enforcement officers who investigate animal cruelty, said Virginia Assistant Attorney General Michelle Welch. Chelsea Rider told the groups that the National Sheriffs' Association has issued a policy statement declaring that sheriffs should investigate animal cruelty seriously because of its Links to other crimes and the prevention of domestic violence. Ashley Mauceri of HSUS reported that three roll-call videos are being distributed to train law enforcement officers on investigating animal cruelty, dogfighting, and cockfighting. On the downside, there is still no effective system to integrate the animal control agencies that investigate animal cruelty into the law enforcement agencies now in 36 states that can enter those data in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System, said Mary Lou Randour of the Animal Welfare Institute.

## Animal Cruelty Task Forces Forming in Detroit and Laredo

From the Canadian to the Mexican borders, American communities are recognizing the value of inter-agency collaborations to advance animal cruelty investigations and prosecutions as a more effective way of protecting animals and people from violence and abuse.

Prosecutors in Macomb County, Mich. – a suburb of Detroit – are forming a task force to combat animal abuse and cruelty, combining the efforts of numerous agencies to bring attention to animal welfare and to prosecute animal abusers.

The task force is named **PAWS – Protecting Animal Welfare and Safety** – and comes shortly after a man who stabbed his pit bull multiple times and left it for dead was sentenced to 3-to-6 years in prison, and an animal hoarding case brought the issue of animal abuse to greater public attention.



Prosecutor Smith announces PAWS

“I can tell you how to prosecute a murder or a home invasion, but I am not smart enough to do that with animal abuse cases,” Prosecutor Eric Smith told the [Detroit News](#). “For that, I need the help of animal welfare advocates.”

Smith noted that animal abuse complaints have increased 76%, prompting his plan to add an animal protection unit within his office to focus on animal cruelty cases. A series of meetings will formulate a countywide effort to train local, county and state agencies to identify and prosecute offenders.



Participants in Laredo, Texas form a Task Force

Meanwhile, municipal and county officials at one of America’s southernmost cities are similarly planning an interdisciplinary task force to address the growing recognition of animal cruelty as a serious concern to human welfare as well. Officials convened on May 22 as the first step in creating a **Laredo – Webb County Animal Cruelty Task Force** to protect those who can’t protect themselves in the Texas border city of 260,000.

Attending the meeting were the district attorney for Webb and Zapata Counties, a municipal court judge, a city councilman, two interim city managers, the deputy police chief, a veterinarian, two county constables, and representatives from the city attorney, Animal Care Services and Crime Stoppers. The council will be drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to be presented to the Laredo City Council.

Participants emphasized that the Task Force is needed to meet the increased demand for prosecution of cruelty cases, to enhance prevention efforts, and to show the public that the city is serious about animal abuse. The [Laredo Morning Times](#) reported that the Anti-Animal Cruelty Partner Council will collaborate on finding solutions to improve how crimes against animals are reported and responded to in Laredo. The council’s goal is to reduce duplication of efforts and make it easier for residents to report animal cruelty and neglect through the centralized 311 services number.



## Animal Crime Intervention Program Planned in Rochester, N.Y.



The Humane Society of Greater Rochester, N.Y., (Lollypop Farm), has announced a unique Animal Crime Intervention Program (ACIP), a three-month psycho-educational learning course designed for those convicted of animal crimes to learn accountability and understand prior motivations around animal abuse or neglect. The program's ultimate goal is to make communities safer for animals and people.

ACIP was created by the Animals & Society Institute and will launch in Fall, 2019 at the Monroe County Office of Probation. Sessions will accommodate up to 20 participants. Lollypop Farm's Humane Education team will implement ACIP sessions alongside two program facilitators who have degrees in Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing.

Officials emphasized that over the past 35 years, researchers and professionals have established significant correlations between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse, and other forms of violence. Today, the mistreatment of animals is recognized as an important indicator of other concerns and is no longer considered an isolated issue, they said.

Kim Ferris-Church, humane education manager at the farm, said there will be a variety of sessions offered. "We are going through various sessions where they are learning about blame versus accountability," Ferris-Church told [local news media](#). The lessons include "compassion and empathy, responsible pet care and animal body language."

Organizers also hope that the program will help prevent crime. "Oftentimes people that are charged with domestic violence, elder abuse or child abuse there's certain times where they actually committed animal crimes previous to that happening," Ferris-Church said.

"I think it means more if you actually get to the root of the problem," said District Attorney Sandra Doorley.

## "Linkin' Lawyers" Get the Word in Rhode Island

Animal welfare attorney Lenore Montanaro tells *The LINK-Letter* that in June she gave back-to-back Link presentations to the Rhode Island Bar Foundation and the Rhode Island Bar Association's Annual Meeting. Participants included many attorneys and justices, including the Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, who were unfamiliar with how animal abuse is Linked to human violence. The events included discussions about the Link, assistance animals and dangerous dog hearings. Nearly 70 attorneys attended.



Lenore Montanaro

## ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT

### Cross Reporting in CT

RECOGNIZING ANIMAL CRUELTY & STEPS TO MAKING AN ANIMAL CRUELTY REPORT

#### PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

- OBSERVED PHYSICAL ABUSE BY AN OWNER, CARETAKER, OR CHILD
- EXTREMELY THIN ANIMALS
- ANIMALS SHOWING EXTREME FEAR OF THEIR OWNER
- OPEN WOUNDS OR MULTIPLE HEALED WOUNDS
- OBSERVED LIMPING OR CAN'T WALK OR STAND
- OBSERVING A COLLAR EMBEDDED IN ANIMALS NECK OR SO TIGHT IT IS CAUSING A WOUND
- LOSS OF HAIR, SCALY SKIN, BUMPS OR RASHES
- SEVERELY MATTED FUR, OVERGROWN NAILS, OR FILTHY COAT
- HEAVY DISCHARGE FROM EYES OR NOSE
- VISIBLE SIGNS OF CONFUSION OR EXTREME DROWSINESS
- FLEA, TICK OR OTHER EXTERNAL PARASITE INFESTATION

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

- ANIMALS LIVING IN FILTHY CONDITIONS (FECES, GARBAGE, BROKEN GLASS, ETC.)
- KEPT OUTSIDE (CHAINED) FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME WITHOUT ADEQUATE FOOD, WATER OR SHELTER
- REGULARLY LEFT ALONE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER
- KEPT OUTSIDE IN INCLEMENT WEATHER WITHOUT ACCESS TO ADEQUATE SHELTER
- KEPT ONLY IN A CRATE AND NOT LET OUTSIDE
- HOME IS OVERCROWDED WITH ANIMALS IN CAGES/KENNELS
- KEPT IN CAGES THAT ARE TOO SMALL TO ALLOW THEM TO STAND OR TURN AROUND

REMEMBER: when there are signs of child maltreatment or IPV in the home, pets should be considered at risk for animal cruelty

#### STEPS TO MAKING AN ANIMAL CRUELTY REPORT

- CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER (ACO) - IF YOU HAVE REASONABLE SUSPICION TO BELIEVE THAT AN ANIMAL IS SUFFERING FROM HARM, ABUSE OR NEGLECT, FIRST CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER. IT IS VITAL TO MAKE A VERBAL REPORT FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION.
- FILE AN ELECTRONIC DCF 736 FORM AT: [HTTPS://PORTAL.CT.GOV/DCF/CHILD-ABUSE-AND-ANIMAL-CRUELTY/HOME](https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/CHILD-ABUSE-AND-ANIMAL-CRUELTY/HOME) THIS FORM WILL ASK YOU FOR DETAILS, THE OWNER'S INFORMATION, THE ANIMAL'S DESCRIPTION, THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HARM TO THE ANIMAL, HOW YOU LEARNED OF THE SUSPECTED CRUELTY, THE SUSPECTED PERPETRATOR, ANY REPORTED PREVIOUS HISTORY OF ANIMAL CRUELTY, AND YOUR DCF CONTACT INFORMATION.
- SUBMIT YOUR REPORT TO [AGR.ANIMALCONTROL@CT.GOV](mailto:AGR.ANIMALCONTROL@CT.GOV) WITHIN 48 HRS

WWW [HTTPS://PORTAL.CT.GOV/DCF/PAWSFORKIDS/HOME](https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/PAWSFORKIDS/HOME)

### Agency Creates Cross-Reporting Card for Caseworkers

The Connecticut Department of Children & Families, which is one of only a handful of state child protective services agencies where employees are mandated reporters of suspected animal abuse, has created a handy card that caseworkers can reference when they encounter situations that suggest animal maltreatment.

The attractive cards are laminated. The top of the cards features lists of the common physical and environmental signs of animal cruelty. The bottom of the card provides details of the procedures by which DCF employees are to contact their local animal control officer and file an electronic form with the Department of Agriculture.

The cards also note that “when there are signs of child maltreatment or IPV [intimate partner violence] in the home, pets should be considered at risk for animal cruelty.”

The cards could serve as a template for other state CPS agencies and could similarly be modified to help animal control and humane officers recognize and respond to suspected child abuse and neglect.

### Link Training in Connecticut



The National Link Coalition's Phil Arkow (left) was a featured speaker at a Connecticut DCF training on The Link. Joining Phil were DCF officials Jody Hill-Lily, Diane Rosell and Jackie Ford; Senior Asst. State's Attorney Tom O'Brien; UConn law professor Jessica Rubin; and Renee Dinino from I ♥ Radio.



## NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

### Link Pioneer Randy Lockwood Celebrated Upon His Retirement



Staff of the ASPCA salute Link pioneer and thought leader Randy Lockwood (third from left) at a retirement luncheon in New York City on June 18. Lockwood's unparalleled and inspirational contributions of research, writing and program development in animal abuse, animal fighting, veterinary forensics, animal behavior and numerous aspects of The Link over a 35-year period have laid the foundation for much of the field's

progress and many of its collaborative partnerships and initiatives. Lockwood is retiring from full-time work as the ASPCA's Senior Vice President for Animal Cruelty Special Projects but will remain active as a part-time Consultant to the ASPCA. He remains on the National Link Coalition's Steering Committee and reportedly has a few new books planned.

The ASPCA also honored Lila Miller, Stephanie LaFarge and Julie Morris who – along with Randy – had a combined 147 years of experience in The Link, shelter medicine, animal behavior, emergency response, and shelter operations. Congratulations, everyone!



Dr. Lila Miller



Dr. Stephanie LaFarge



Julie Morris

In recognition of their lifelong contributions to animal welfare, the ASPCA awarded donations of \$10,000 to each of four organizations: the Association of Shelter Veterinarians, the Colorado LINK Project, the Columbus Humane Society's Safe Haven program, and Emancipet.



### Link Italia Holds Link Conference

Participants from our Italian affiliate, Link Italia, conducted a Conference on The Link – Cruelty to Animals and Society -- on June 13 in San Marino. The event was organized by the Institute for Social Security and sponsored by the State Secretariat for Health and Social Security and the State Secretariat for Education and Culture.

## New Mexico Link Conference Announces Schedule



The [2019 New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) between Animal Abuse and Human Violence has announced its schedule for what promises to be a star-studded two-day training, Sept. 9-10 in Albuquerque. The lineup of world-renowned authorities who will be presenting includes:

- **Diane Balkin**
  - “Legal Standing of Animals”
- **Andrew Campbell**
  - “Stuck in the Middle with You: Risks of Harm for Children and Pets in Domestically Violent Homes”
  - “The Critical Role of Animal Control in Improving Prevention and Detection of Family Violence”
- **Judge Rosemary Cosgrove-Aguilar, Javier Argueta and Adam Manthei**
  - “Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court’s Pre-Adjudication Animal Welfare Court (PAW): A Program of Judicial Intervention, Treatment Services and Supervision”
- **Jenny Edwards**
  - “Sex, Lies and Videotape: What You Should Know About Bestiality”
- **Melinda Merck**
  - “Using Veterinary Forensics to Support Investigation and Prosecution Efforts”
- **Mary Lou Randour**
  - “Reporting Animal Cruelty Crimes”
  - “Treating Children Who Abuse Animals”
- **Adam Ricci**
  - “Investigating Crimes Against Animals”
- **John Thompson**
  - “Animals Make Us Human”
  - “Emotional Intelligence: Unlocking Your Potential and Keeping You Safe”
- **Michelle Welch**
  - “Innovative Animal Laws”
  - “How Do You Prosecute Animal Crime for the Best Outcomes?”

The 2019 conference will feature two tracks, one for legal and law enforcement personnel and one for social work and domestic violence workers. New Mexico’s Positive Links coalition was founded in 2002 and the biennial conference attracts over 150 participants. This year’s conference will again be held at the National Hispanic Cultural Center.



### What is The LINK?

**Legislation...**

**Intervention...**

**Networking...**

**Knowledge...**

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



## BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

### Banfield Safer Together™ Campaign Gains Considerable Publicity



Russel Wilson and “Naomi”

The Banfield Foundation’s \$1 million, four-year “[Safer Together](#)™” campaign to fund support services for the animal victims of domestic violence and to train veterinarians in responding to domestic violence issues ([See the March 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) is gaining widespread recognition with the production of a Public Service Announcement featuring the Seattle Seahawks’ star quarterback Russel Wilson.

The PSA features Wilson and “Naomi,” one of his three Great Danes. It will be placed into national distribution in September, in advance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, to draw attention to the need for domestic violence shelters to also provide care for the animal survivors. In advance of the distribution, a media campaign secured widespread coverage in [People Magazine](#), which was subsequently picked up by Yahoo, reddit, and the Bleacher Report among others. Wilson also generated extensive social media traffic on his Instagram and Twitter accounts.

“The reality is about half of domestic violence victims stay in abusive situations because they fear about the safety of their pet,” Wilson told *People Magazine*. “We want to help people through tough situations, to make sure they feel safe and can keep their family together.”

### Link Spotlighted in NACA’s New Magazine

The Link between animal abuse and human violence was featured prominently in the premier issue of the National Animal Care & Control Association’s quarterly flagship magazine. *Animal Care & Control Today* debuted this Spring to replace the *NACA News* which had been published since 1978.



Andrew M. Campbell’s article on “Following the Links” described the critical role of animal control agencies in improving detection and prevention of family violence by spotlighting overlaps between incidents of animal abuse and domestic violence ([see article elsewhere in this issue of The LINK-Letter.](#))

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow’s article on “Who Ya Gonna Call? Abuse Busters!” describes the coalition’s online directory of child, elder, domestic, and animal abuse reporting agencies in over 6,500 jurisdictions across the U.S. to facilitate cross-reporting between human and animal services and veterinary personnel.

Mary Lou Randour of the Animal Welfare Institute initiated a regular column, “The NIBRS Beat,” which will update animal care and control agencies with the rollout of the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System that now includes data collection on four types of animal abuse, with the ability to cross-index these incidents against other crimes.



Lisa Lunghofer

## Link Video Included in Human-Animal Studies Series

A concise three-minute video describing the highlights of Link research and its importance has been produced by the Animals & Society Institute as part of its ongoing Defining Human-Animal Studies series. “Defining the Link” features Lisa Lunghofer, Human Animal Programs Director for ASI, who describes how animal abuse is often Linked to other types of violence and antisocial behavior.

“There’s a growing body of evidence to suggest that perpetrators of domestic violence use animals as a tool to control their victims,” she notes, citing studies of the numbers of domestic violence survivors who report animal abuse was employed against them as coercive control.

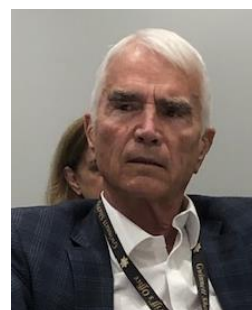
“Women who report domestic violence also report that their kids are affected,” she says, noting that childhood animal abuse can be a marker for maladaptive behavior.

“There is clear evidence that taking animal abuse seriously is important in order to make communities safer for people and animals alike,” she concludes.

## *THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR OFFENDERS & VICTIMS* **Georgia Jail Inmates and Death Row Dogs Get a Second Chance**

An innovative intervention program in the Gwinnett County, Ga., Jail is bringing the therapeutic power of abused and homeless pets into the cells of offenders who get a golden opportunity to rehabilitate the animals – and themselves.

[Operation Second Chance](#), or Jail Dogs, started in February 2010 as a partnership between the Sheriff’s Department and the Society of Humane Friends of Georgia. The program has taken over 500 dogs off death row at Gwinnett County Animal Welfare and Enforcement Center, trained them and made them available for adoption.



Sheriff Butch Conway

While similar programs are in place in prisons, where inmates are generally incarcerated for longer periods of time, the Gwinnett County program is unusual in that its inmates are usually serving short sentences and there is considerable turnover.

Sheriff Butch Conway told the National Sheriffs Association’s Animal Cruelty and Abuse Committee about the program. Jail staff provide the unit and supervision, screen and select inmates, and welcome potential adopters to see the dogs. The Society of Humane Friends provides all financial support, selects the dogs, handles the application and screening processes, and supports the volunteers’ training.

Over 15 dogs are housed at any given time. Each dog is assigned a primary inmate handler, in whose cell the dog sleeps, with one or two secondary handlers to provide continuity for the dog should an inmate be released. Trainers visit three times a week to teach inmates how to train basic obedience and care for the dogs. Groomers and vet techs also visit the program.

In 2013 the program added cats, which are housed with female inmates in a separate unit. The program recently began offering training for service dogs.

## Study Examines Impact of Courthouse Facility Dogs



Kayla Burd and Dawn McQuiston

Courthouse facility dogs are expertly trained canines that assist individuals with psychological, emotional, or physical difficulties in courtroom situations, particularly victims of child sexual abuse. Challenging the availability of these dogs to assist young witnesses in court, defense attorneys may claim that the sympathy elicited by the animals' presence would be prejudicial to their clients' interests. A new research study examines whether they are prejudicial to defendants or the witnesses they accompany during trial.

In two studies utilizing mock trial paradigms involving child witnesses, Kayla Burd and Dawn McQuiston explore the impact of courtroom accommodations (facility dog vs. teddy bear vs. no accommodation) on mock jurors' judgments about the defendant and child witness. Mock jurors' perceptions of the child witness were not influenced by courtroom accommodations. Evidence from the studies suggests that, contrary to various legal arguments concerning due process, facility dogs may not influence verdict, verdict confidence, or sentencing.

-- Burd, K. A., & McQuiston, D. E. (2019). Facility dogs in the courtroom: Comfort without prejudice?. [Criminal Justice Review](#).

## THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

### Link Bills We're Watching

The majority of the 2019 state legislative sessions have ended, but 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** adds animals to the tangible property whose disposition may be determined by courts 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 was signed into law by Gov. Chris Sununu.



**New Jersey A 5549** and **S 3886** would prohibit persons undergoing a divorce from surrendering a dog or cat to an animal shelter without the consent of the other party. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Environment & Energy Committees, respectively.



**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 Rules Committees.



**New York A 1097** and **S 6222** would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.



**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 their respective Judiciary Committees.



**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. The House and Senate sent the bills to the Governor.



**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** adds “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions of illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims can 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. **The measure was signed into law on June 14 and takes effect Sept. 1.**



**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 took 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. 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. **S 3415** passed the Senate and both measures are in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.



**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-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 Abuse and Other Crimes*



**Massachusetts S.1027** would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths for inflicting 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 Rules Committee.



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



**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 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree animal cruelty to possess a firearm. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

### *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 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 Appropriations 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 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 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 HB 7125** allows veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officers without notice to or authorization from the client unless the suspected violation occurs at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land. **The measure was signed into law.**



**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 both the Senate and 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.



**Michigan SB 352** would require Child Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be a crime, with escalating penalties based on whether the animal abuse is a misdemeanor or a felony.



**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 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** allows veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail will be able to collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. **The bill was signed into law by the Governor on May 28 and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2020.**



**Rhode Island S 82** would amend the law 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 pro bono attorneys or law student advocates to be court-appointed to represent the health or safety of a cat or dog in judicial proceedings. 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 has passed both the House and Senate.



**Michigan HB 4592** would allow courts to appoint advocates to represent the interests of animals in criminal prosecutions. 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 Agriculture Committee.



## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

### Evil-Smiling Dog Strangler Gets Four Years in Prison

A man who gave his girlfriend an “evil smile” as he choked her dog to death and informed her that she “was next” was sentenced to four years in prison after Marion County, Ore. Judge Mary Mertens James told him, “What you did is heinous, and it’s shocking to me that anyone would think otherwise.” Richard Lipps, 51, of Salem, Ore., was found guilty of aggravated animal abuse, domestic violence menacing, resisting arrest, attempted escape, and biting and head-butting a deputy sheriff. The [Salem Statesman-Journal](#) reported that Lipps was high on meth and used a shoelace and a metal coat hanger to kill a young pit bull named “Andrea” who had had an accident in an RV. Lipps has a decades-long criminal record of battery, sexual battery and drug charges. Lipps’ girlfriend said she began fearing for her life when the dog was dead and he dragged her by the hair and punched her in the head, but blamed his behavior on the drugs and said she would like to continue dating him.



Richard Lipps



Abdi-Issa and his attorney

### Cruelty Case Deemed Domestic Violence and Witness Trauma Gets Washington Man 6 Additional Months in Prison

A Washington State man who was jealous of the affection his girlfriend showed towards her dog was sentenced to 18 months in prison – 12 months for the dog’s death and an additional six months tacked on by the judge because of the trauma the vicious attack caused to a woman who witnessed the incident. Charmarke Abdi-Issa, 38, of Tukwila, Wash., had been dating a 41-year-old Seattle woman who had acquired “Mona,” a Chihuahua-dachshund mix, for emotional support during her mother’s end-of-life care and death.

According to the [Seattle Times](#), Abdi-Issa took Mona for a walk over his girlfriend’s protests; a woman witnessed him beating and kicking the dog, whose yelps could be heard more than a block away. King County Deputy Prosecutor Caroline Djamalov asked the court to impose additional prison time because the killing was “a tool of manipulation and control” over the girlfriend, and jurors designated the attack a crime of domestic violence. Court documents revealed that Abdi-Issa had threatened to kill Mona and the woman if she ever left him. Since 2017, 18 animal cruelty cases have been filed in King County, four of which were designated crimes of domestic violence. The witness said she still suffers flashbacks from the attack. The girlfriend testified that Mona “wasn’t just my animal, she was my companion dog. She helped me so much, and now she’s gone because of him.” Superior Court Judge Ken Schubert told the defendant, “You have taken away one of the members of her family in one of the most callous ways.”

### Man Charged with Shooting Cat to Show Daughter What He’s Capable Of



Peter K. Stern

Police in Madison, Wis. arrested Peter K. Stern, 51, on charges that he shot the family cat in order to show his daughter what he is capable of. The [Wisconsin State Journal](#) reported that the woman said Stern told her in graphic detail how he shot “Tinkerbell” while the cat was eating its food. She told police that he said he had done it because he knew it would be traumatic for her and as an intimidating threat to show what he was capable of. Stern was charged with animal abuse and disorderly conduct and ordered not to possess any weapons or have contact with his daughter.

## Man Gets Maximum Sentence for Beating Dog and Issuing Death Threats



Daman Holmes

Las Vegas, Nev. District Judge William Kephart said he wished he could have imposed an even longer sentence when he gave Daman Eugene Holmes, 36, a maximum 5-to-13-year prison term for filming himself repeatedly beating a dog and saying he would do the same and worse to women. Holmes had pled guilty but mentally ill to charges of aggravated stalking of his ex-girlfriend and her mother and cruelty to animals after sending them graphic death threats including videos of him beating the dog. [KVVU-TV](#) reported that the ex-girlfriend told FBI and Las Vegas police investigators that Holmes had threatened her and her family since 2016 and that she lived in fear of him.

Holmes tested positive for a variety of mental illnesses including ADHD, PTSD, paranoid delusions, and major depression and will be treated while he is behind bars.

## Peeping Tom Pleads Guilty – Again -- to Bestiality, Child Abuse, and Stealing Women's Underwear

An Australian man has pleaded guilty to 221 charges of bestiality, child pornography, and stealing women's and children's underwear in a string of offenses from 2011 to 2017. Britain's [Daily Mail](#) reported that Dean Sellenthin, 43, of Bangalow, N.S.W., will be sentenced for having sex 19 times with two dogs in his home. He also pleaded guilty to producing and possessing child abuse material, and assorted counts of indecent assault, stalking, breaking and entering, and theft for stealing women's and children's underwear and swimwear. [News media accounts](#) indicated Sellenthin pleaded guilty in 2006 to 87 counts of peeping into the bathroom windows of women and young girls, using a camera to spy on them without their knowledge, theft, and possessing child pornography. He was sentenced to two years in prison for those offenses.

## Seller of 28 Sick Puppies Charged with Animal Cruelty, Burglary and Theft



Gustavo Gonzales

A Downey, Calif. man under repeated investigations for allegedly selling sick puppies, some of whom died shortly after being taken home, was arrested on 52 charges of animal cruelty, burglary and theft. Gustavo Gonzalez, 26, was charged with selling 28 sick puppies to 25 families throughout southern California over a 14-month period, according to the [Los Angeles SPCA](#). The case is being tried by Los Angeles Deputy District Attorneys Kimberly Abourezk, Animal Cruelty Coordinator, and Duke Chau of the Consumer Protection Division. Bail was set at \$740,000 and Gonzalez faces up to 36 years in prison if convicted on all counts.

## Arizona Man Charged with Beheading Girlfriend's Dog

A woman who was packing her belongings and moving out of a residence she shared with her boyfriend, who was apparently angry because she owed his mother rent money, was appalled when he reportedly smiled and presented her with a box that contained the beheaded body of her dog. [KPHO/KTVK-TV](#) reported that Jose Vega Meza, 21, of Buckeye, Ariz., was arrested and charged with animal cruelty and assault after he allegedly attacked another prisoner. Court documents said Meza also admitted killing and torturing other animals in the neighborhood in the past, a claim that caused neighbors to worry about their missing animals' whereabouts.



Jose Vega Meza

## Couple Charged with Child and Animal Abuse in “House of Horrors”



Timothy and Martha Crouch

A Cedar Hill, N. Mex. couple were arrested on multiple counts of child and animal abuse after investigators found what the [Farmington Daily Times](#) called a “house of horrors.” Martha Crouch, 53, was charged with felony child abuse, extreme animal cruelty and obstruction of an investigation; Timothy Crouch, 57, was charged with obstructing an investigation of child abuse. San Juan County sheriff’s deputies said some of the couple’s 15 children accused the parents of abuse and neglect, routine beatings, shooting a family dog, and boiling puppies on the stove in the children’s presence. Investigators said the children who did not go to school did not get enough to eat and were ordered to hide from social workers.

## LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**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 11 (online):** Michelle Welch will conduct a [webinar on animal hoarding](#), “Drowning in Dogs, Cats, Horses...” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

**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 present 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Event.

**July 28 – Tokyo, Japan:** The Animal Literacy Research Institute will host Japan’s 1<sup>st</sup> [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 82<sup>nd</sup> 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 Tourou 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 30<sup>th</sup> [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. 19 (online):** Allie Phillips will conduct a [webinar](#) for Canadian humane and animal protection professionals about "Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T): A Life-Saving Initiative for Canada."

**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. 18-20 – Alpharetta, Ga.:** The [21<sup>st</sup> Annual Animal Protection Conference & Expo](#) will feature several presenters discussing Link topics including “Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Gangs, and the Link to Animal Abuse,” “Collateral Crimes and Animal Abuse,” and “Animal Cruelty Task Forces.”

**Oct. 24 – Plano, Texas:** Phil Arkow and Felicia Kerney will present at the 17<sup>th</sup> 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. 3 – Madison, Wisc.:** Melinda Merck will lecture on veterinary forensics and The Link at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory’s [veterinary forensics seminar](#).

**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.



**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.**





## 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  
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#### Lesley Ashworth

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Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network  
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#### Jane A. Hunt

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