



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



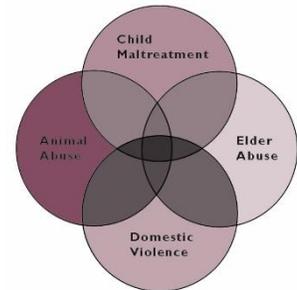
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

Juvenile & Family Court Judges Learn About The Link

The [National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges](#) recognized October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month by initiating its Fall series of Zoom-based webinars with a presentation on “The Link between Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence.” The series is designed to offer judges and other court personnel with practical information on what they can do, both on and off the bench, to make all members of families safer.



John Romero

The key, explained the Hon. John Romero, Jr., of Albuquerque’s Children’s Court, is to be aware of what he called the “furry family members” in the home that might be at risk or that the person in the courtroom has an attachment with. Judges can learn more by simply asking questions. Judges should know what, when and who to ask about animals in the home. Are there other animals or humans at risk? How can you better

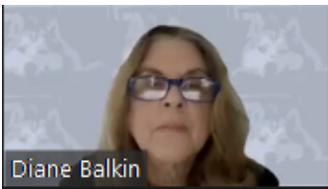
safeguard the people and animals in the household? And what are the relationships and attachments between the humans and their pets? Have any pets been harmed, or do they provide comfort? In adjudicating a juvenile charged with animal cruelty, for example, ask about what else might be going on in the home. Is the child a victim of child abuse?

Just asking if there is a pet in the house, who takes care of it, and when was the last time the child got to see it can seem like benign questions but they can trigger court officials to respond accordingly, Romero said. Such information can also impact child placement and child custody decisions.

Judges can convene meetings of relevant parties to have a broader understanding and more effective plan of action that considers both human and animal safety. They can include pets in protection orders, order humans and pets placed in safe environments, and order evaluations and treatment. Judges should be aware that witnessing animal abuse can be highly traumatizing for a child. And off the bench judges can educate others about The Link, collaborate with violence prevention agencies and assist in creating resources and strategies for further violence prevention.

Romero addressed the impact of COVID-19 on family violence. The increased isolation caused by being forced to stay at home became “a heaven-sent benefit” for abusers who manipulate and wield power

and control. Economic hardships imposed by layoffs, foreclosures and evictions are increasing risk factors. Elders’ pets are being neglected due to financial limitations. He asked how much child abuse is not being reported with virtual classrooms, telemedicine and virtual visits by social workers keeping critical reporters offline.



Diane Balkin of the [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#) emphasized that “what we know about The Link is that violence is violence and any violence under one roof is inextricably woven with others.” Because many government agencies respond to the same address we need to be educating our counterparts and cross-report violence against humans and animals.

“The Link is a matter of public safety and human welfare as well as animal welfare,” she said. Judges and any other professionals involved in the public’s safety should not minimize the danger of animal abuse. Meanwhile, the bond between an abused adult or child and his or her pet can be so strong that victims will not extricate themselves from abusive situations if they can’t take their pets as well.

Kathleen Wood of the ALDF noted that four states have statutes providing for enhanced penalties for animal abuse when it is committed in the presence of a child. She identified 13 states where animal cruelty is included in the definition of domestic violence (Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Nebraska, Tennessee, New Hampshire); stalking (Maine, Mississippi); domestic violence and stalking (Arizona, Texas); and coercion (Oregon).



29 Charged with Racketeering, Attempted Murder, Drugs and Gun Trafficking in Bust of N.J. Dogfighting Ring

An eight-month investigation led by the Monmouth County, N.J., Prosecutor’s Office uncovered a “vast criminal enterprise” involving a dogfighting ring and illegal drug and gun sales in four cities and resulted in 29 people being charged with racketeering, conspiracy, attempted murder, drug and gun trafficking, and dogfighting.

“Operation Golden State” probed ongoing acts of gang criminality and organized street crime, according to County Prosecutor Christopher J. Gramiccioni. Law enforcement officers recovered numerous firearms, a vehicle used in criminal activity, quantities of cocaine and marijuana, 12 canines used in the dogfighting operation, and other evidence related to that operation. The dogs are safe and currently being sheltered in an Ocean County animal facility.

Of the 29 people charged, nine are facing counts of racketeering, five of conspiracy to commit murder, two as a leader of a dogfighting network, and four are facing dogfighting charges.



Christopher Gramiccioni

A [news release](#) from the prosecutor’s office described the operation as an alleged power grab by a Bloods gang leader, Xavier Reed, 30, of Jackson Township, to consolidate his command of the gang’s

criminal activities through violence and intimidation. Reed allegedly assembled a gang alliance of several Bloods and Crips gangs to consolidate unitary control of most illegal activity in Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Reed was said to be responsible for administering punishment, controlling the channels for generating revenue from various sales of heroin, cocaine, prescription pills, and marijuana and the administration of the dogfighting ring, where thousands of dollars were typically earned during a single dogfight.

Individuals who were disloyal to him were said to be intimidated or subjected to violent retaliation, including attempted murder. The criminal enterprise allegedly sold weapons and were responsible for more than a dozen shooting incidents.

The dogfighting part of the enterprise worked in cooperation with out-of-state breeding facilities that focused on training dogs to kill and engaged in interstate dogfighting events. Reed lost \$5,000 on one of his own dogs in a dogfight in Philadelphia and bragged about maintaining his fighting dogs by feeding them chickens and rabbits, remarking how much the dogs loved killing the animals, the release said.

The network of others charged in the investigation include:

Rashad "C-Devine" Anderson, 39	Tyree "Ree" Kirkpatrick, 32, of Asbury Park
Kaniesha Bacon, 30, of Jackson	Zion "Too Brazy" Langhorne, 19
Itayasia "TayTay" Berry, 21, of Neptune	Marcella Mallory, 57, of Red Bank
Jawaun "Jig" Boggs, 24, of Asbury Park	Mark "Noodle" McMillian, 43, of Asbury Park
King "Pay" Brent, 25, of Asbury Park	Julissa Miles, 32, of Asbury Park
Alahji "Stash" Conteh, 25, of Asbury Park	Jose "Brazy" Mosely, 33, of Manchester
Thomas Cutillo, Jr., 25, of Avon-by-the-Sea	Jamar Ousley, 37, of Freehold
Sammy Davis, 55, of Neptune	Daishon "Beefy" or "Atkins Ave," 29, of Asbury Park
Nakee "Squad" Davis-Ruffin, 21, of Asbury Park	Rufus "Ru" Squarewell, 38
Jahquan "Capo" and "Trey" Fenn, 30, of Freehold	Jimmy Tran, of Freehold
Dale "Budda" Ghee, 23, of Asbury Park	Melanie Tucker, 36, of Neptune
Marciyah Gill, 25, of Freehold	Marcus "Mo Shine" Washington, 25, of Neptune
Richard Ivery, 35, of Wall	Shakon "Stick-Up" or "Wise" Winslow, 26, of Neptune
Jy'Zaire "Ceemo" Jones, 25, of Ocean Township	Also an unidentified juvenile from Asbury Park

Thirty federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and the Monmouth County SPCA assisted in the investigation.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

Canadian Law Enforcement Gaining Link Awareness In Wake of Provincial Mandate for Link Training

Recognition by Canadian law enforcement officers of The Link is gaining momentum thanks to several new initiatives which are bringing increased attention to the co-occurrence of animal abuse with domestic violence.



In March 2016, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police's Crime Prevention and Community Safety and Well-Being Committee endorsed the National Framework for Collaborative Police Action on Intimate Partner Violence. [This document](#) recognizes threats to harm pets, children and family members as intimate partner violence.

The CACP's endorsement was cited in a [report](#) by our counterpart, the Canadian Violence Link Coalition, a program of Humane Canada, describing strategies to incorporate The Link into social work and violence against women shelters. That report includes extensive research on the impact of animal abuse on abused women and children. It adds, "Incorporating the violence link into your daily work can save lives. Knowing that animal abuse is often an early predictor of further violent crimes against humans can help your clients get out faster."



The Canadian Violence Link Coalition is providing Violence Link training to police officers across the country. Such training is now required for all enforcement officers in Ontario, following an act by the Ontario legislature on Oct. 22 mandating such training. Teena Stoddart of the Ottawa Police Department and Carolyn Fraser of the Ontario Ministry of Public Safety tell *The LINK-Letter* that plans are under way to develop a Violence Link training curriculum as part of the domestic violence and human trafficking courses taught at the Ontario Police College, as well as at Atlantic Police Academy on Prince Edward Island. A college in British Columbia may also include the training program.



The Coalition is also providing training for the [National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty](#). The Centre is a community of Crown Prosecutors and allied professionals from across Canada who are working together in the service of the public interest to ensure that crimes against animals are prosecuted effectively and efficiently. NCPAC includes representative Crown Prosecutors from the majority of Canadian provinces plus other professionals from organizations such as Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), humane societies and members of the veterinary community.

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK Study Explores Cultural and Social Contexts of Bestiality

Sexual relations between humans and animals have been fundamentally approached as a pathology within the fields of health science and biomedical science. Such research has not taken into account the contextual, cultural and symbolic nature of what its advocates call zoophilia; few studies have analyzed zoophilia from the perspective of the social sciences due to taboos surrounding discussing these practices. This paper examines how this phenomenon has been tackled in anthropology, sociology and history, leading to greater understanding of the different meanings and significances of zoophilia depending on historical and cultural contexts.

-- Valcuende del Rio, J.M., & Caceres-Feria, R. (2020, Oct. 1). Social scientific analysis of human-animal sexual interactions. *Animals*, 10(10), 1780. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10101780>

SOCIAL WORK...and THE LINK ***Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*** **Dedicated to Human-Animal Interactions**

The special issue of the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* dedicated to encouraging social workers to pay heed to both positive and adverse human-animal relationships ([See the October 2020 LINK-Letter](#)) has been published online. Nine

articles delve into topics covering career opportunities beyond the Veterinary Social Work field; social work applications with abused and troubled youth that incorporate therapy animals; the impact of pet companionship among adolescents; animal-assisted education; and the effect of animal cruelty on moderating youths' external behavioral problems upon exposure to intimate partner violence.



Mary Rauktis (left) & Janet Hoy-Gerlach

Social work professors Mary E. Rauktis, of the University of Pittsburgh and Janet Hoy-Gerlach, of the University of Toledo, who curated the special issue, introduce the articles. They describe an emerging base of empirical support pointing to substantive emotional, physical, psychological, and social benefits that people experience through having pets, who are widely prevalent in clients' ecosystems. These pets, however, are often ignored by social workers despite their potential for being significant strengths and possible stressors

They argue that the need to address human-animal interactions within social work is broad, cutting across practice areas and populations, and should not be considered a "niche" specialty confined to social workers who self-define as "animal people."



Linda Charmaraman

Continuing in the vein of considering pets within the client ecosystem, two articles explore pets in the home. Linda Charmaraman, Megan Mueller and Amanda Richer investigate the role of pet companionship in online and offline adolescent interactions. They reported that adolescents with dog companions are more likely to check social media more frequently, give and receive online social support, and feel less social isolation. The more time spent with a pet, the more likely an adolescent plays online games for leisure and browses the Internet about animals. They found that the more attached one is to a pet companion, the more likely an adolescent provides and receives online social support.

Angela Matijczak and Shelby McDonald and colleagues then explore the relationships between children's exposure to animal cruelty and their positive relationships with pets in homes marked by intimate partner violence. While prior research has found that co-occurring forms of family violence exacerbate the effect of intimate partner violence exposure on children's externalizing behaviors, and that exposure to animal cruelty is prevalent among children living in such households, this is the first study to test whether and to what extent animal cruelty might moderate the relationship between intimate partner violence exposure and externalizing behaviors. They did not find evidence that either positive engagement with pets or exposure to animal cruelty moderated this association.



Angela Matijczak

Animal-assisted and equine therapy and animal-assisted education are explored in a series of five articles. Aviva Vincent, Masahiro Heima and Kathleen Farkas describe how therapy dogs can positively impact anticipatory anxiety and situational fear among children going to a dentist and potentially reduce children's avoiding dental care. They report that canine support in pediatric dentistry is a feasible intervention that also provides a model generalizable to other medical environments and experiences that may provoke similar anxiety and fear in children.



Aviva Vincent



Elizabeth Craig

Three papers describe equine therapies with troubled youth and adolescents. Elizabeth Craig focuses on how working with horses helps youths with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) to develop skills in emotional regulation and expression. Carole Harvey, Holly Jedlicka and Sandra Martinez evaluate equine therapy programs and troubled youths. Obtaining funding for equine-focused interventions, however, is challenging and Isabel Ballard, Aviva Vincent and Cyleste Collins provide an analysis of policies and critique current funding. The special issue concludes with a submission from the Czech Republic focusing on the relevance of human-animal interactions for children with ADHD in education settings.

- Rauktis, M.E., & Hoy-Gerlach, J. (2020, Oct. 14). Human–animal interaction knowledge is not just for the “animal people” in social work. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00717-w>
- Charmaraman, L., Murrler, M.K., & Richer, A.M. (2020, Sept. 14). The role of pet companionship in online and offline social interactions in adolescence. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00707-y>
- Matijczak, A., McDonald, S.E., O'Connor, K.E., George, N., & Tomlinson, C.A., et al. (2020, Sept. 8). Do animal cruelty exposure and positive engagement with pets moderate associations between children's exposure to intimate partner violence and externalizing behavior problems? *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00702-3>
- Vincent, A., Heima, M., & Farkas, K.J. (2020, Sept. 15). Therapy dog support in pediatric dentistry: A social welfare intervention for reducing anticipatory anxiety and situational fear in children. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00701-4>
- Craig, E.A. (2020, Aug. 26). Equine-assisted psychotherapy among adolescents with ACEs: Cultivating altercentrism, expressiveness, communication composure, and interaction management. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00694-0>
 - Harvey, C., Jedlicka, H., & Martinez, S. (2020, Sept. 12). A program evaluation: Equine-assisted psychotherapy outcomes for children and adolescents. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00705-0>
- Ballard, I., Vincent, A., & Collins, C. (2020, Sept. 30). Equine facilitated psychotherapy with young people: Why insurance coverage matters. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00712-1>
- Jurickova, V., Bozdechova, A., Machova, K., & Vadronova (2020, Oct. 19). Effect of animal assisted education with a dog within children with ADHD in the classroom: A case study. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00716-x>
 - Arkow, P. (2020, Sept. 5). Human-animal relationships and social work: Opportunities beyond the veterinary environment. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00697-x>

ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK

Judges Explore Links Between Elder and Animal Abuse

What are the responsibilities of judges when it comes to knowing about possible Links between elder abuse and animal abuse?

This was the topic for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' second Fall webinar on what judges need to know about animal abuse and other family violence. The Nov. 2 webinar, attended by 55 individuals, was presented by the Hon. Rosa Figarola, of Florida's 11th Judicial Circuit in Miami, and Diane Balkin of the Animal Legal Defense Fund.



Rosa Figarola

Figarola said animal welfare issues this might come up in civil and criminal cases, guardianship issues, domestic violence or mental health determinations, and in family law courts involving juveniles, divorce settlements or custody. Welfare of animals might be a concern in considering environmental or nursing home licensures. Asking about animals and their welfare, or if the elder is frustrated with caring for the pet, gives you a snapshot and greater insight into the welfare of everyone in the family.

Balkin noted that while there is much recognition that animal care and control, child abuse and domestic violence workers should recognize and respond to each discipline's forms of abuse, elder abuse often gets forgotten. Mandatory reporting of elder abuse is not as widespread as child abuse. "Multiple government agencies might be responding to the same house. Sometimes we don't pay enough attention to whether there might be an elder involved as well," she said. "Violence is violence, and we' can't let the elders be a forgotten part of this equation."



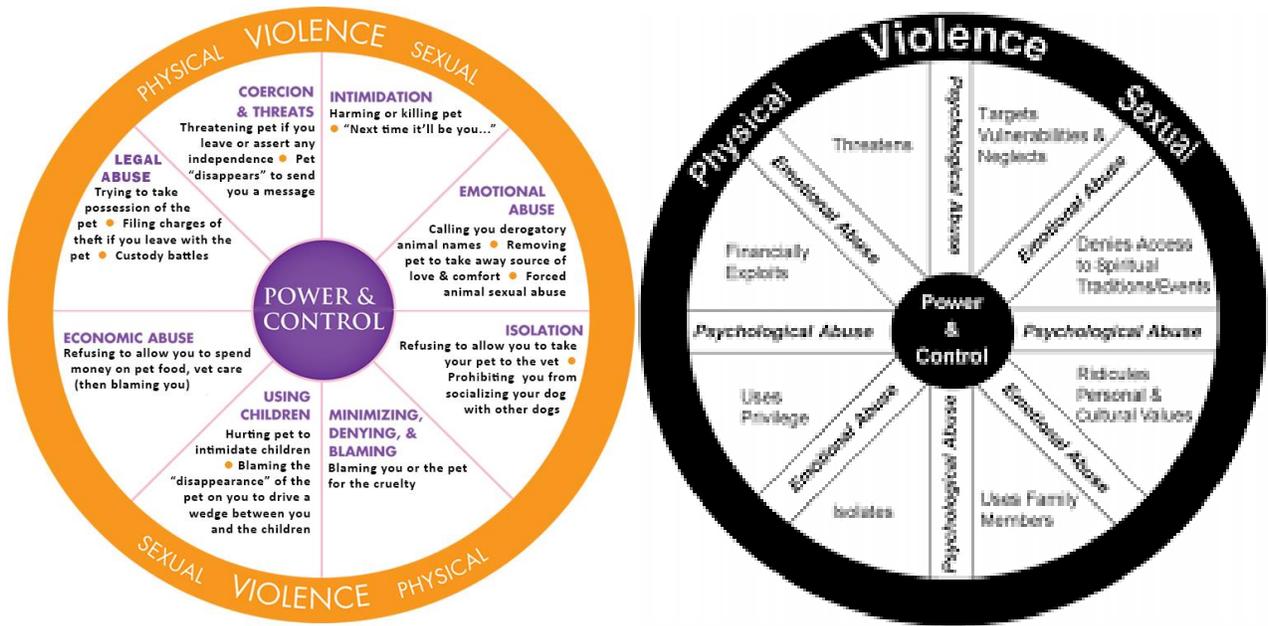
Diane Balkin

Balkin noted similarities between the domestic violence Power & Control Wheel as it's been modified by the National Link Coalition and the National Center for Abuse in Later Life, respectively. Elder abusers use physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse, and financial exploitation. They may humiliate them or ridicule their personal and cultural values and deny them access to spiritual and traditional events. They may deny elders access to food, heat, the telephone, mail, other aspects of daily living, and the emotional comfort their pets provide. They may deny them money to take their pets to the vet.

"The elder is dependent on the abuser which gives them greater power to do harm," she said. "Often, the bond between people and their pet is the only thing that keeps them going."

Figarola noted how pets can benefit elders by giving them something to care about, a sense of comfort and security, help in dealing with loss, and greater life satisfaction. Conversely, signs of animal neglect can be an indicator of deteriorating conditions for the elder.

Against this backdrop, response to elder abuse has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the stresses of isolation increase elders' vulnerability, and there are difficulties in investigating cases and finding safe places for relocation. Children are not seeing their elderly family members and elders are not doing to their doctors or adult day care so others may not know what's going on. Patients are staying longer in hospitals rather than go into long-term care facilities. Additional stressors on caregivers are leading to increase risks of emotional and financial abuse.



The Power and Control Wheels for animal abuse (left) and elder abuse.

Judges should ask about elders’ pets, the level of attachments, how they are cared for, and whether the person has a veterinarian: people are more likely to talk about their pets’ issues than expose their own vulnerabilities. Safety of the person and the pet, and transitions into other living situations that include the animals, should be factored into decisions. Pets can be included in protection orders. Courts can request home visits to identify risks which might be reduced and how the person’s independence might be maintained.

Judges are in a unique position to promote collaborations. These can be between the courts and animal control, adult protection, child welfare, and social services agencies, plus animal-assisted therapy services, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and domestic violence professionals. But they can also promote collaborations within the judicial system, breaking down silo boundaries among civil, criminal, municipal, code enforcement, magistrates’, superior, and trial courts. The need for this involvement will only increase, Figarola said, noting demographic changes of how the U.S. population is steadily aging and will be an increasingly larger percentage of the population.

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For Additional Information

Just click on the blue underlined hyperlinks in these articles and it will take you to other websites with additional information about that topic.

VETERINARY MEDICINE...and THE LINK **ASPCA Survey to Measure Veterinary Practices’ Experiences with and Responses to Animal Abuse**



The ASPCA is launching the most comprehensive national survey ever taken of veterinarians to help us learn more about how veterinary practices are experiencing and responding to animal cruelty. The survey is aimed at reaching people in all roles—veterinarians, veterinary technicians, assistants, administrative/client services staff—and is hoping to get responses from a mix of practice settings (such as small clinics, corporate-owned, shelters, clinical academia). Here's the call for responses; please take the survey and share it with your colleagues to get as large and representative a collection of responses as possible:

Do you work in a veterinary practice (in any role)? We're asking you and your coworkers to take 20 minutes to fill out an ASPCA [survey](#) about your practice's experiences with animal welfare issues. The information you provide will be completely anonymous and will help the animal welfare field provide veterinary practices with the tools they need to support animals in their communities — the ASPCA will share what we learn from the survey with you to help you in your work.

As a bonus, anyone completing the survey will be entered into a random drawing to receive one of ten available \$100 Amazon Gift Cards. Please complete the survey by November 20, 2020 to qualify. Please forward or share this survey with your colleagues using the hashtag #VetSurvey2020.

Any questions? Email emily.patterson-kane@aspca.org.

Survey link: http://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_38BAJxSW0fRj00t

COVID-19... AND THE LINK

Lifting COVID-19 Restrictions Surges Domestic Violence Cases

Authorities in the Denver, Colo. metro area are reporting a disturbing increase in domestic violence cases and fatalities as a result of COVID-19 restrictions being lifted. After a concerning drop in reports during the first weeks of the pandemic last Spring, reports of domestic violence skyrocketed as a shortage of shelter beds meant hundreds of victims seeking help were turned away.

The [Denver Post](#) reported that police in Denver, Boulder and Longmont have recorded a surge in serious domestic violence assaults since May. Requests for counseling and shelter in Aurora have swelled as well. Denver police recorded 775 domestic violence stabbings, non-fatal shootings and physical assaults in the past nine months, a 46% increase over previous years. At least two people have been killed. Overall reports of domestic violence have increased 7% in Denver and 31% in Boulder.

The Post noted increased isolation, growing financial instability, overwhelming stress, and greater difficulty in providing victims needed services as outcomes from COVID-19 that are creating dangerous conditions for domestic violence victims. Shelters have had to restrict their capacity and those in shelters are staying longer, tying up those beds, because they can't find child care, employment and affordable housing. "Domestic violence was already an epidemic, and now we have this epidemic inside of a pandemic," said James Gillespie of Aurora's Gateway Domestic Violence Services.

Study Explores Impact of Lockdowns on Pet Care and Welfare

In several recent issues of *The LINK-Letter*, we've described how the emotional, financial and logistical stressors necessitated by COVID-19 quarantines and lockdowns have impacted rates of animal, child, domestic, and elder abuse. A new research article describes in more detail the concerns, difficulties and stressors of caring for pets during the pandemic.

Pet ownership can be beneficial to the health and well-being of their owners in certain circumstances, write the authors.

However, there is also

evidence that negative or ambivalent relationships between owners and pets can be a detriment to owner well-being, as well as a risk for owners surrendering their pets to an animal shelter. This risk may be magnified during the pandemic and should be addressed through social service collaborations in order to prevent relinquishment to shelters.



Jennifer Applebaum, Carrie Tomlinson, Angela Matijczak, Shelby McDonald, & Barbara Zsembik

Jennifer Applebaum and Barbara Zsembik, of the University of Florida's Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law, and Carrie Tomlinson, Angela Matijczak and Shelby McDonald, of Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work, surveyed 2,254 pet owners to assess how their relationships with pets impacted life during COVID-19. They found, for example, that:

- As many Americans continue to work from home to mitigate the spread of the virus, pets may be a distraction, particularly in the case of a barking dog.
- Pets may show new behavioral issues as their schedules and routines change, particularly when owners return to working outside of the home.
- Many pet-related services have changed or are inaccessible due to the risk of disease spread, so mitigating problematic behaviors can become more challenging.
- Perhaps most pressing is the looming eviction crisis that could displace 30–40 million people from their homes.

56% of respondents mentioned at least one difficulty or stressor related to caring for and living with pets during the pandemic. The most frequently mentioned sub-theme were issues related to meeting pets' social and behavioral needs due to such changes in everyday life as closures of parks, problems with typical dog walking routes, and pets going "stir crazy" from not getting enough stimulation or enrichment due to being confined to the home.

Other major concerns included difficulties in getting veterinary care, pet training sessions and pet supplies. Fear for pets' welfare if the owner should become unemployed, sick or die was a frequent concern.

"Communities can support families and individuals with pets by forming partnerships between human and animal social services in order to meet the needs of the holistic family unit; hence, pet relinquishment prevention is in service of healthy communities," they concluded.

-- Applebaum, J.W., Tomlinson, C.A., Matijczak, A., McDonald, S.E., & Zsembik, B.A. (2020, Oct. 15). *The concerns, difficulties, and stressors of caring for pets during COVID-19: Results from a large survey of U.S. pet owners. Animals, 10(10), 1882.* <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani10101882>

Pandemic's Impact on Farm Animal Welfare Described

While previous issues of *The LINK-Letter* have extensively covered the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on companion animal welfare and other family violence, little has been written about the coronavirus' impact on livestock welfare and the people engaged in agribusiness. A new article in *Frontiers of Veterinary Science* looks at this impact from a One Welfare perspective, which is the medical community's parallel to our Link view.



Laura Boyle and Jeremy Marchant-Forde

Jeremy Marchant-Forde of the USDA, and Laura Boyle of an Irish agricultural research and innovation center, note that while decades of modeling pandemics predicted many potential consequences, COVID-19's impact on the food supply chain in general, and livestock production in particular, was unexpected. Clusters of cases among workers in meat processing plants evolved quickly to affect human, animal, and environmental welfare in several countries.

In processing plants, the hygiene focus is typically on product quality and food safety. But because of their close proximity to one another, COVID-19 spread rapidly between workers and the lack of sick leave and health insurance likely resulted in workers continuing to work when infectious. Many U.S. processing plants shut down when they identified major outbreaks, putting pressure especially on pig and poultry industries. At one point, a 45% reduction in pig processing capacity resulted in 250,000 pigs per day not being slaughtered.

“This resulted in longer transport distances to plants in operation with extra capacity, but also to crowding of animals on farms. Producers were encouraged to slow growth rates, but some had to cull animals in ways that likely included suffering and caused considerable upset to owners and workers,” they write.

Meanwhile, carcass disposal was also associated with potential biosecurity risks and detrimental effects on the environment. The result has been a One Welfare issue, affecting human, animal, and environmental welfare and highlighting the fragility of intensive livestock production systems. The authors argue that this model needs to be re-shaped to include the animal, human, and environmental elements across the farm-to-fork chain. Such a One Welfare approach will ensure that food production systems are resilient, flexible, and fair in the face of future challenges.

-- Marchant-Forde, J.M., & Boyle, L.A. (2020, Sept. 30). COVID-19 effects on livestock production: A One Welfare issue. [Frontiers in Veterinary Science](#).

DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

PetSmart Charities Committing \$2,100,000 for Pet-Support Programs



In recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the COVID-19 pandemic which has exacerbated the impact of coercive animal abuse in homes marked by intimate partner violence, [PetSmart Charities](#) on Oct. 12 announced it is committing \$2.1 million to U.S. and Canadian programs serving at-risk pet parents experiencing domestic abuse and other crises heightened by COVID-19. Funding will support pet-friendly domestic violence shelters, pet deposits for pet-friendly housing, emergency pet boarding, and other initiatives to ensure that pets and people remain together during uncertain times.

“Not only are pets a common reason why victims delay leaving their abusers, animal abuse is often the first indicator of domestic violence within a household,” said Aimee Gilbreath, president of PetSmart Charities. “We’re proud to support communities across the U.S. and Canada to provide resources that bridge the gap to a safer environment for both people and pets – especially during the pandemic.”

Grants are going to animal welfare and social services agencies for people fleeing domestic abuse, precariously housed people, those too ill to care for their pets, and LGBTQ+ youth facing housing instability. Organizations who have received grants include:

[Urban Resource Institute](#) in New York City, which transforms the lives of domestic violence survivors and homeless families, with a focus on communities of color and other vulnerable populations. Its \$100,000 grant will expand the People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program into two new shelters to serve an additional 140 clients and their pets annually, ensuring pets and families remain together.

[Street Outreach Animal Response](#) in Indianapolis is using its \$65,000 grant to support the Crisis Response Program to provide emergency placement and services for approximately 670 pets of people experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, medical or mental health crisis and other displacements.

[The City of Chicago](#) received a \$50,000 grant to launch the Chicago Emergency Pet Preservation Program to support the pets of people experiencing domestic violence or homelessness by working with the 24/7 Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline and Family and Support Services Community Service Centers. The pilot program will help people keep and care for their pets during crisis by providing information, services and supplies with a goal of serving an estimated 550 pets for 445 clients.

[Harbor House](#) in Orlando is Florida’s only state-certified domestic violence center in Orange County and one of the only shelters in the state with both a licensed daycare and kennel on site. The organization is using its \$20,000 grant to support the Paws for Peace Kennel Program which provides on-site sheltering and veterinary care for pets of people experiencing domestic violence.

[Arizona Coalition to End Sexual + Domestic Violence](#) in Phoenix is using its \$25,000 grant to support its BaRC program, which provides pet boarding and financial support for pets of people at risk of or experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault.

[Nellie’s Women’s Shelter](#) in Toronto is undergoing renovation to become a pet-friendly, co-sheltering shelter. Its \$50,000 grant is supporting Nellie’s Pet Friendly Program, which provides case management, services and supplies to people and pets fleeing domestic abuse.

Animal Welfare Institute Updates Pet Safekeeping Directory

The Animal Welfare Institute took the opportunity of October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month to launch a new [Safe Havens Mapping Project](#) website (*See the [March 2014 LINK-Letter](#)*) to provide a database of “safe havens for pets,” or sheltering services that can assist individuals experiencing domestic violence by placing their companion animals out of harm’s way while they seek safety for themselves.



Since 2011, AWI has offered such a resource which allows users to access this important information within a matter of seconds, regardless of where in the U.S. they are or where they wish to relocate and seek temporary safe shelter for their pets.

Unlike the older site, the new Mapping Project allows users to filter for only those domestic violence shelters that are pet-friendly and allow pets to be co-sheltered on site, rather than off-site in foster care.

It is not clear how current or comprehensive the database is, as the listings differ from other online databases, such as the [Sheltering Animals and Families Together \(SAF-T\)](#)TM website listing pet-friendly co-sheltering options, RedRover’s [Safe Place for Pets](#) search feature for on- and off-site housing for pets, and the Theresa’s Fund website at [domesticshelters.org](#).

The National Link Coalition has long recognized the fluidity with which information about pet-friendly shelters changes, and the inherent difficulties in defining criteria and maintaining such a list (*See the [June 2013 LINK-Letter](#)*). We published [guidelines](#) for these online directories in an effort to consolidate these databases into a single uniform portal for people in crisis.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Michigan Attorneys Review 25 Years of Link Progress

As part of its year-long commemoration of its 25th Anniversary, the Michigan Attorneys for Animals organization interviewed National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow to review changes in awareness and new developments in The Link between animal abuse and human violence since 1995. The interview was [published in a blog](#) that is part of a series entitled “25 Years, 7 Questions.”



Arkow’s seven questions involved his work and what he was doing in 1995; the major issues that were current at the time; positive legislative, policy, animal law, and welfare developments over the past 25 years; negative outcomes and ongoing challenges over that period; lessons learned; and goals for the future.

Attorneys for Animals is a Michigan nonprofit for legal professionals and animal advocates that provides advocacy and resources, fosters creative projects, and supports and educates attorneys who work on behalf of animals.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

New Link Coalition Launched, Cruelty Task Force Expanded in Southeast Texas



A new Link coalition has been formed in the Houston, Texas area, where the new [Southeast Texas LINK Coalition](#) is coordinating interdisciplinary collaborations through an efficient and cohesive network in the nation's 4th-largest city and eight surrounding counties in a sprawling metropolitan area with more than 6,400,000 people.



The coalition was officially launched on Oct. 27 with an announcement at a 20-minute [press conference](#) that was covered by [KPRC-TV](#) and that included all founding agencies. The effort was coordinated by the Houston Humane Society with other founding members including the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Fort Bend Women's Center, Fort Bend County District Attorney/Fort Bend Crime Victims Response Team, Fort Bend Juvenile Probation, and the Children's Assessment Center. Membership will be opened in 2021 to other agencies and individuals who wish to participate.

The coalition will cover eight counties surrounding Houston: Harris, Fort Bend, Waller, Brazoria, Galveston, Liberty, Austin, and Chambers. Monthly meetings are planned to address the urgent situation of the region's communities with the combined power of multiple perspectives. Such coordination will offer more effective delivery of services, reduce duplication of efforts, pool scarce community resources, increase communication and break down misinformation, and create long-term change to help people and animals.



"Research has shown significant correlations between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse, and other forms of violence. Mistreating animals is no longer seen as an isolated incident that can be ignored. It is often an indicator or predictor of crimes and that other family members in the household may be at risk. Our Southeast Texas Link Coalition will address the overlap between animal violence and human violence," said Katie Fine of the Houston Humane Society.

Tony Malone, Medical Director at the humane society, said that the shelter's clinic sees hundreds of cases of animal cruelty accompanied by confirmed cases of human violence and said the coalition will help prevent and combat multiple forms of family violence and educate the public about The Link.



"I can tell you that we're excited and enthusiastic about this new coalition," said Fort Bend County DA Brian Middleton. "Our top priority is to protect women, children and animals in our community because most often they're not able to speak for themselves. We'll be a voice for those victims."

Concurrently, the Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce ([See the March 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) has also expanded. It is now called the South East Texas Animal Cruelty Taskforce (SETACT). It now covers Harris County, Fort Bend County, and Waller County.

U.K. Link Members Honored for Accomplishments

Two active members of Link programs in the United Kingdom have been recognized by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for their extensive work in protecting people and animals from abuse and neglect.



Paula Boyden (left) & Freda Scott-Park
Government.

Dr. Freda Scott-Park, MRCVS, was presented with the Inspiration Award, which recognizes veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses for their ability to inspire and enthuse others consistently throughout their careers. Scott-Park is a former president of both the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association as well as the current coordinator of the Highlands & Islands Veterinary Services Scheme and a campaigner for identifying the Links between animal and other forms of abuse through The Links Group.

Her nominator, Dr. Paula Boyden MRCVS, wrote: "Freda's dedication to areas that are important to her has been exemplary; without her tenacity and perseverance, awareness and acknowledgement of the Link between violence to animals and violence to people would not be where it is. This awareness extends both within and beyond the veterinary profession, including the RCVS, Crimestoppers and the Welsh

"Freda has spoken widely and internationally on the subject, encouraging others to start their own programs, achieved by providing initial training that groups can then develop as their own. She has been the driving force behind the Links guidance document *Recognising Abuse in Animals and Humans*, something that was not easy to draft, not least of all due to the subject matter. Furthermore, Freda's chairmanship of The Links Group has developed a group of dedicated individuals from many different professions. As a result, the Group is ready to take the next step."

The RCVS also bestowed an Honorary Associateship on Mike Flynn, Chief Superintendent of the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for his collaborative work with the veterinary profession in areas such as the illegal puppy trade and the Links Group. Honorary Associateships are given to those who are not veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses but who are making a considerable impact in the veterinary sphere.



Mike Flynn

Flynn was recognized for being a tireless supporter of the veterinary profession throughout his career, which began in 1987, and for supporting the work of veterinarians both in assisting with the judicial process and as front-line educators and guardians of animal welfare.

THE LINK... in the LITERATURE

Study Examines Animal/Domestic Violence in LGBTQ Households

Domestic, family and intimate partner violence are major and devastating problems in Australia. This is especially true for cisgender women, people who are gender and/or sexuality diverse and children. Less recognized is that these types of interpersonal violence are also a major problem for many animals. 61% of Australian households are multispecies. Recent research has shown just how much diverse groups of humans value the relationships they have with animal companions—particularly among those who are more vulnerable to oppression, such as cisgender heterosexual women and LGBTQ people. Such relationships put animal companions at significant risk of violence within the home, as they may be targets of violence and are often used as ‘coercive devices’ (i.e., used by an abuser to make the victim/survivor behave in a certain way) within violent intimate partner and family dynamics. The authors argue that this requires consideration of a multispecies, intersectional analysis that fosters an inclusive understanding of the importance of animals in multispecies households, including their own experiences of violence.

-- Fraser, H., Taylor, N., & Riggs, D.W. (2020, August). *Victims/survivors of family and domestic violence in diverse, multispecies households. QUT Centre for Justice Briefing Paper, August(7).*

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many state legislatures to abruptly cancel or temporarily suspend their legislative sessions. Nevertheless, we're keeping an eye on **an amazing 119 bills** that have been introduced into the 2020 legislative sessions. Please let us know if you hear of other measures not included here:

Animal Hoarding



New Hampshire HB1449 defines animal hoarding and sets forth a provision for a person charged with animal hoarding to be given a psychiatric evaluation. The bill passed the House and was laid on the table by the Senate.



New Jersey S 1760 establishes the animal cruelty crime of animal hoarding and requires mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders, including animal hoarders. The bill is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee.



New York A 261, creating the crime of companion animal hoarding, and **A4569**, creating a crime of aggravated neglect of a companion animal, are in the Agriculture Committee.



West Virginia H 4880 would have declared animal hoarding to be a misdemeanor and require the animals to be turned over to an animal shelter for proper care and relocation. The provision, part of a much larger increase in protections for the welfare of domestic animals, **died in the House Judiciary Committee.**

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



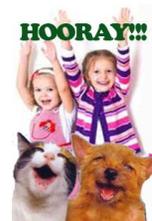
Arizona HB 2321 would have allowed courts to issue “severe threat orders of protection”, which would prohibit respondents from possessing firearms based upon a credible threat of death or serious injury, against individuals who committed or attempted to commit acts of violence including cruelty to animals involving torture, serious injury or protracted suffering within the previous six months. **The bill was in the Rules Committee when the legislature adjourned.**



Connecticut Raised Bill 107 would have established a task force to address various issues at shelters for the homeless, many of whom are survivors of domestic violence, including accommodating homeless persons who have pets and service animals. **The bill was in the Joint Committee on Housing when the General Assembly adjourned.**



Florida HB 705 requires every county in the state that maintains shelters for evacuation during an emergency to designate at least one emergency shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. Such shelters will have to comply with FEMA Disaster Assistance Policies and Procedures and with local and state emergency management plans’ safety procedures regarding the sheltering of pets. **HB 705** was approved by the House and Senate 39-0 and was signed by the Governor on June 29. **It took effect July 1.**



Florida SB 1082 allows courts to award temporary exclusive custody and care of non-agricultural animals to petitioners and to order defendants to temporarily have no contact with the animal and to not harm or take the animal away. **SB 1082 was signed into law on June 18 by Gov. Ron DeSantis.**



Georgia HB 582 would have allowed courts to create a pet animal care plan in marriage dissolution proceedings that would include the prevention of cruelty to animals and the provision of food, water, shelter, and veterinary care. Courts would have had to determine whether the parties have joint ownership of the animals and recognize that a close and continuing owner-pet relationship and continuity in the pet’s life will be in the pet’s best interest. **The bill was in the House of Representatives when the Legislature adjourned.**



Illinois HB 4768 would establish a grant program from the Department of Human Services to provide capital funds, and to search for third-party funding and services, to support domestic violence shelters in counties with a population of 200,000 or more to become pet-friendly. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



Indiana HB 1423 would have excluded a party’s service animals from a court’s division of property in any actions for a dissolution of marriage. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



Kentucky HB 216 would have included violence against a domestic animal used as coercive conduct within the definitions of “domestic violence and abuse” and “dating violence and abuse” and would have allowed judges to award possession of a domestic animal to the petitioner in a protection-from-abuse procedure. The bill passed the House 81-3 and was in the Senate Judiciary Committee when the General Assembly adjourned. **The measure has been pre-filed for the 2021 legislative session as Bill Request BR 243.**

 **Massachusetts H.3833** would cause individuals convicted of animal cruelty to be civilly liable to another individual for the infliction of emotional distress if the person knew, or should have known, that the conduct was extreme and outrageous and would cause severe emotional distress. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Michigan HB 4498** would enjoin respondents served with protection orders, which include protection of pets, from possessing, using, transporting, selling, purchasing, carrying, shipping, receiving, or distributing a firearm or ammunition. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Minnesota HF 9** would have allowed courts to include a conviction for animal cruelty in determining whether an individual should be prohibited from possessing firearms in the issuance of an Extreme Risk Protection Order. The bill passed the House but died in the Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Finance & Policy Committee **when the legislature adjourned**.

 **Mississippi SB 2299**, which would have authorized courts to include pets in orders of protection from domestic abuse, **died in the Judiciary Committee**.

 **Missouri HB 2626** and **SB 959** would have allowed courts, in issuing adult protection and child protection orders, to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening to commit abuse against a pet, to include an order of custody of the pet, and to pay for the medical costs of treating the pet abuse. The bills were in the Judiciary Committees **when the legislature adjourned**.

 **New Jersey A 4880** and **S 3168** would expand the statutory definition of domestic violence to include acts of animal cruelty against animals owned or possessed by the persons affected by these types of abuse. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees. *The bills also address child abuse and elder abuse and cross-reporting.*

 **New Jersey S 930** would allow courts to designate ownership or custody or court-ordered protective custody for a pet involved in an animal cruelty violation, domestic violence, matrimonial action, action for dissolution of a civil union, or judgment of divorce or dissolution or maintenance giving primary consideration to the well-being of the animal. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **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, A10333** and **S 6222** would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. **S 6222** passed the Senate. All three bills are all in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

 **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.

 **Pennsylvania HB 1432** would recognize that “companion animals are living beings that are generally regarded as cherished family members that offer their owners companionship, security and assistance,” and as a “special category of personal property” need to be granted special consideration in the division of property during marriage dissolution. Parties could enter into an enforceable agreement regarding the care and possession of companion animals, and the court shall consider all relevant factors. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **Rhode Island H 7130** would authorize courts to award sole possession of a domestic companion animal in a divorce or separation proceeding by considering the best interests of the animal, including: how, when and by whom the animal was acquired; who has assumed most of the animal’s care; who spends the most time with the animal; which living arrangement would be best; and whether it would be in the best interests of the children to keep the animal in their domicile for care and affection. Joint custody decisions would include: length of the animal’s stay with each party; costs of veterinary visits, daycare and the pet’s other needs; and additional criteria the court deems important. The bill is being held for further study by the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse

 **Maryland HB 33**, which would have added “the destruction of or harm to an animal” belonging to a vulnerable adult to the definition of severe emotional distress prohibited against a vulnerable adult, became law on May 8 **but the key provision about animal abuse was deleted**. The new law merely makes it illegal to intentionally and maliciously inflict severe emotional distress on a vulnerable adult without defining the term.

 **New Jersey A 4880** and **S 3168** would expand the statutory definition of elder abuse and abuse of the developmentally disabled to include acts of animal cruelty against animals owned or possessed by the persons affected by these types of abuse. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees. *The bills also address child abuse and cross-reporting.*

 **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.

 **Pennsylvania SB 819** would extensively revise the Older Adults Protective Services Act and would impose a 25-year ban on individuals convicted of having sexual intercourse with animals from working in long-term care nursing facilities, personal care homes, home health care agencies, and adult daily living centers. The bill passed the Senate and is in the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



H.R. 2808, the Child & Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) to include data on animal abuse in the National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The bill was introduced by Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D – N.H.) and John Katko (R – N.Y.), has 33 co-sponsors and is in the House Education and Labor Committee.



Maryland SB 101 and **HB 311** establish the Court Dog and Child Witness Program in the state’s circuit courts allowing “facility dogs” and “therapy dogs” to provide emotional support to child witnesses in courtrooms, meetings, interviews, and other court processes. **The bills became law** and took effect on Oct. 1.



Massachusetts S.1027 would allow juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 to be prosecuted if the criminal offense involved the infliction or threat of serious bodily harm to a person or an animal. The bill was referred in a Study Order to the Senate Judiciary Committee to review numerous bills relative to judicial issues and was discharged to the Senate Rules Committee.



Missouri HB 2626 and **SB 959** would have allowed courts, in issuing adult protection and child protection orders, to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening to commit abuse against a pet, to include an order of custody of the pet, and to pay for the medical costs of treating the pet abuse. The bills were in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees **when the legislature adjourned**.



New Jersey A 4880 and **S 3168** would expand the statutory definition of child abuse to include acts of animal cruelty against animals owned or possessed by the persons affected by these types of abuse. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees. *The bills also address elder abuse and cross-reporting.*



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



New York A 955 would make it a misdemeanor 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-A and **S 3415-A** would permit mandated reporters of suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding confidentiality provisions, 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) could also report suspected animal cruelty. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. **A 1211-A** is in the Children and Families Committee. **S 3415-A** passed the Senate and was referred to the Assembly Children and 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.

 **North Carolina H 507** would have made it a felony to bring a minor to a dog- or cockfight. The bill was in the Senate Rules & Operations Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**

 **Rhode Island H 7030** would allow parents, guardians and DCYF requesting a protective order for a child who is suffering from domestic abuse or sexual exploitation to award the plaintiff custody of the household pets. The bill is held for further study by the Judiciary Committee.

 **Rhode Island H 7740** and **S 2828** would increase penalties for animal cruelty if the act is committed in the presence of a minor child. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.

 **South Carolina S 908** would have allowed individuals to remove a minor or an animal from a motor vehicle if either is experiencing a life- or extreme health-threatening situation. **The bill was in the Senate Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**

Animal Sexual Abuse

 **Hawai'i HB 1618/SB 2718** would have prohibited subjecting an animal to sexual contact, permitting such activity to occur, or obtaining or organizing an event with the intent of subjecting an animal to sexual contact. Offenses would have been a Class C felony or a Class B felony if a minor were exposed to the crime. Convicted offenders would have been required to: surrender all animals in their custody; reimburse animal services agencies for the costs of the animals' care; undergo psychological or psychiatric treatment; make restitution to the animals' owners; and be barred from being around animals for at least five years. **SB 2718** had passed the Senate unanimously and both bills were in the House Judiciary and Agriculture Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **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 was referred in a Study Order to the Senate Judiciary Committee to review numerous bills relative to judicial issues and was discharged to the Senate Rules Committee.

 **New York A 8744** would establish the crimes of sexual conduct with an animal, a Class A misdemeanor, and sexual conduct with an animal resulting in injury or death, a Class E felony. The bill is in the Agriculture 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.

 **Virginia HB 1065** would have made it a felony to create, record, distribute, sell, advertise, or appear in non-evidentiary video or still image of animal cruelty **was stricken from the docket of the Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources.**

 **Wisconsin SB 139 became law on March 4.** It increases 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 are further enhanced if a child is involved. Offenders must register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration.



“CASA for Animals”



California AB 2645 would have allowed courts to appoint an attorney or law student advocate to represent the interests of an animal that is the subject of criminal abuse or neglect proceedings. **It had not been referred to a committee when the Assembly adjourned.**



Florida SB 1048 would have provided for the appointing of an advocate for the interests of an animal in certain court proceedings, at the court’s discretion, and require the Florida Bar Association’s Animal Law section to maintain a list of attorneys and certified legal interns who meet specified requirements to be appointed as advocates. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



Illinois HB 3995 and **HB 5530** would permit courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student as a special advocate to represent the interests of a cat or dog in cases involving the injury, health or safety of the animal. The bills are in the House Rules Committee.



Maine LD 1442 allows 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 can monitor the proceedings, consult with individuals and records relevant to the case, and present appropriate information and recommendations. **The bill became law** on Jan. 12 without the signature of the Governor.



Michigan HB 4592 would allow courts to appoint pro bono lawyers or law students as advocates to represent the interests of animals in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Hampshire HB 1164 would have created a special advocate for cats and dogs that are neglected or otherwise treated cruelly. **The bill was considered “inexpedient to legislate.”**



New Jersey A 4533 and **S 2868** would allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the interests of animals in cruelty or dogfighting criminal cases. 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.



Rhode Island S 2698 and **H 7912** would authorize courts to appoint pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to serve as animal advocates in animal cruelty and abuse cases, to serve the interests of justice. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.

Cross-Reporting



Alabama SB 196 would have made it a Class C misdemeanor to submit a “frivolous” complaint alleging that an “animal enterprise” has engaged in animal cruelty. The bill died in the Senate Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committee **when the Legislature adjourned**.



Connecticut RB 415 would have required veterinarians who treat a dog that they believe was injured or killed as a result of animal fighting to report the incident, with immunity from civil liability, to local law enforcement. **The bill died in the Joint Committee on the Environment**.



Florida S 7000 would have declared that “early identification of animal abuse is another important tool in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, providing needed support to families, and protecting animals.” It would have required child protective investigators to report suspected animal abuse to a local animal control agency. Reporters would have been presumed to have acted in good faith and be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative penalties. Animal control officers would have had to report suspect child abuse to the central hotline. Failure to cross-report would have been a second-degree misdemeanor for child protective workers and a third-degree felony for animal control officers. The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Florida Animal Control Association, would have had to develop a one-hour training curriculum for both fields. **The bill was approved by the Senate 38-0 but died in the House**.



Florida HB 621/SB 1044 (“Allie’s Law”) would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to a dog or cat with immunity from civil and criminal liability and specify that failure to report is grounds for disciplinary action. **The bills died in the House Business & Professions Subcommittee and the Senate Rules Committee**.



Hawai’i SB 2985/HB 2528, HB 2130 and HB 2453 would have required veterinarians who suspect that an animal has been killed or injured in a staged animal fight or has been a victim of animal abuse or cruelty to promptly report the case to an appropriate law enforcement authority, with immunity from civil liability. **All the bills died when the Legislature adjourned**.



Iowa SF 2029 and HF 2374 would have granted veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil and criminal liability for assisting in the investigation or prosecution of animal abuse, neglect, torture, fighting, or bestiality. **HF 2374** passed the House 97-0. **SF 3** would have required veterinarians who conclude that an animal is being subjected to cruelty to report the incident to the local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability and administrative disciplinary action for reporting in good faith; the law enforcement agency would have had to report to the Department of Human Services if the investigation of suspected animal abuse indicated a minor child witnessed the incident. **All of the bills died when the Legislature adjourned on June 14**.



Kentucky SB 21, which would have required veterinarians to report suspected abuse and provide immunity for a good-faith report, was amended to merely permit veterinarians to report and to delete the provision granting immunity from liability. The amended bill passed the Senate 35-0 and was sent to the House, where it was approved 78-7, and **was signed into law on April 24**.





Kentucky HB 60 would have required veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to an animal control officer. **HB 108** would have provided civil and criminal immunity to veterinarians who, in good faith, report suspected animal abuse to animal control or peace officers, provide records relating to such reports, and testify in any judicial proceedings relating from such reports. **The bills were in committees when the General Assembly adjourned.**



Michigan SB 352 would require Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with confidentiality and 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. The bill passed the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee and is in the full Senate.



Michigan SB 429 would permit veterinarians to report suspected abuse or neglect of a companion animal to an animal control shelter or law enforcement agency. The bill was approved by the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety and is in the full Senate.



Michigan SB 780 would require animal control officers to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The bill is in the Committee on Families, Seniors & Veterans.



Minnesota HF 1530 and **SF 1517**, which grant veterinarians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting suspected animal cruelty in good faith and in the normal course of business, were subsumed into the Joint House and Senate Agriculture Omnibus Policy bill and **was signed into law on May 17.**



Missouri HB 1320 would have granted immunity from civil liability to veterinarians, teachers, school personnel, and others who report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement agencies. *The bill also addressed psychological evaluation and treatment. It died in the Judiciary Committee.*



New Jersey A 2734 would require employees of the Department of Children & Families to report suspected abuse of a companion animal to the Chief County Humane Law Enforcement Officer or State Police, and of a livestock animal to the Chief County Humane Law Enforcement Officer and the Department of Agriculture. The bill is in the Assembly Women and Children Committee.



New Jersey A 2426/S 1980 would allow certified animal control officers to enforce municipal animal control ordinances and require them to report suspected animal cruelty to notify the municipal humane law enforcement officer. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



New Jersey A 4880 and **S 3168** would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, investigators of domestic violence and abuse, employees of the Department of Children and Families and Divisions of Aging and Developmental Disabilities, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities, police officers, or any person who has reasonable cause to believe an animal has been subjected to an act of animal cruelty to report the suspected violation to the appropriate law enforcement officer, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees. *The bills also address domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse.*

 **New York S 3415** and **A 1211** would require animal cruelty investigators to report suspected child maltreatment, and child abuse investigators to report suspected animal cruelty. **S 3415** passed the Senate and joined **A 1211** in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.

 **New York A 1170** and **S 7815** would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a pet 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 bills are in their respective Committees on Higher Education.

 **New York A 9948** (“Bella’s Law”) would require law enforcement authorities statewide who investigate suspected cases of animal abuse to inform the state Office of Children and Family Services to further investigate and determine if the accused individual has any history of family or domestic violence. The bill is in the Committee on Children and Families.

 **New York A 9734** would require the Attorney General to establish a 24-hour hotline for the public to report animal abuse and to make reasonable efforts to inform the public of its availability. The bill is in the Governmental Operations Committee.

 **Ohio HB 33** would require veterinarians, social services professionals, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected companion animal abuse. Dog wardens and deputy dog wardens would be required to report violations concerning companion animals to appropriate social services professionals in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator and where the animal abuse has an impact on the child or older adult. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The measure passed the House by a vote of 89-2 and was sent to the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes

 **H.R. 8052**, the bipartisan Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act, would establish a dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes Division at the U.S. Department of Justice to aid in the investigation, enforcement, and prosecution of felony animal cruelty crimes. The measure is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Guam Bill No. 185-35** would ban bestiality, enact pet protection orders, mandate reporting of animal abuse, impose post-conviction mental health evaluation and treatment, and increase penalties for offenses committed in the presence of a child or by persons with histories of family or sexual violence. The bill is in the Committee on Health, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Land, and Justice.

 **Mississippi HB 272** would have required law enforcement agencies investigating crimes against animals to use forms consistent with the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System and to label such crimes as animal abuse. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



New Jersey A 1572/S 746 would add offenders who are convicted of animal cruelty to the list of other offenders, including sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child, from possessing a firearm. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



New York A 1834 and **S 186**, “Kirby and Quigley’s Law,” would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a pet during the commission of a felony. **A 1834** is in the Assembly Agriculture and **S 186** is in the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.



New York A 2509 and **S 609** would add animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption. **A 2509** is in the Assembly Codes Committee; **S 609** passed the Senate but died in the Assembly and was referred back to the Senate Codes Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 1071 (“Cash’s Law”) would allow the state’s sentencing guidelines to provide an enhancement in cases where a domestic animal is harmed or killed during the course of a criminal trespass or burglary. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



California SB 580 would amend procedures requiring animal abuse offenders on probation to undergo a mental health evaluation by a court-named evaluator and to complete mandatory counseling if the mental health professional deems it necessary, at the defendant’s expense. The bill passed the Senate 38-0 and was in the Assembly Appropriations Committee **when the legislature adjourned**.



Iowa HF 737, which redefined animal cruelty, neglect and torture and their penalties, added a provision allowing courts to order a psychological or psychiatric examination and treatment for adults convicted of animal mistreatment. Such provisions are mandatory if the offender is a juvenile or committed aggravated or felony animal mistreatment or torture. **The bill was signed into law on June 29.**



Missouri HB 1320 would have allowed courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment upon animal cruelty offenders as a condition of probation; evaluation or treatment would have been mandatory upon second or subsequent offenses or if the crime involved animal torture or mutilation. *The bill also addressed cross-reporting.* **It died in the Judiciary Committee.**



New Hampshire HB 1449 would have allowed courts to order an animal hoarder to undergo a psychological or psychiatric evaluation and to undergo appropriate treatment. If the person were found to be not competent to stand trial, the court could have ordered custody of the seized animals to be given to another person, shelter or rescue organization. The bill was approved by the full House **but laid on the table by the Senate.**



New Jersey S 1760 establishes the animal cruelty crime of animal hoarding and requires mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders, including animal hoarders. The bill is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee. **S 2179 (“Shyanne’s Law”)** would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders; that bill is in the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens 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.

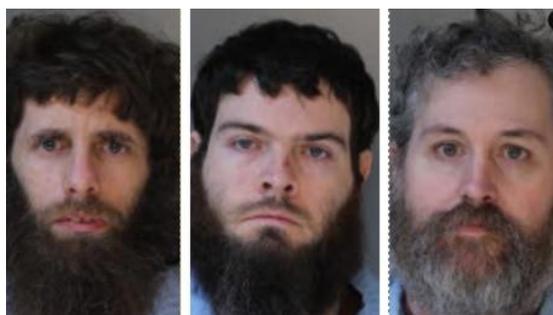
S 384 would require juvenile offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate bills are in the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.



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.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Judge Denies Appeal of Trio Who Got 20-to-41 Years for 1,460 counts of Animal Sexual Abuse and Animal Cruelty



Marc Measnikoff (left), Matthew Brubaker & Terry Wallace

Three Pennsylvania men who had each pleaded guilty to 1,460 counts of animal sexual abuse and animal cruelty plus charges of corrupting a minor for recruiting him to help rape farm animals (*See the [June 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*) are going to stay in prison for a long time. Superior Court Judge Emeritus John Bender upheld the 20-to-41-year sentences of Matthew Brubaker, 32, Marc Measnikoff, 36, and Terry Wallace, 42, according to [media reports](#). The trio had tried to appeal their

sentences, saying the terms were too harsh and did not allow for rehab. The men had had sex with nine horses, a goat, a cow, and an unspecified number of dogs and videotaped their activities when the 16-year-old called authorities in 2018. The boy was taken into protective custody.

Teen Who Shot Police K-9 After Armed Robbery and Carjacking Gets 25 Years in Prison

A Jacksonville, Fla. teen who fatally shot a Sheriff’s Office K-9 named “Fang” two years ago was sentenced to 25 years in prison followed by 10 years probation. The defense attorney for Jhamel Malik Paskel, now 19, asked the court for leniency saying his client was now a man ready to take responsibility for mistakes he made as



Jhamel Paskel

a child, the [Florida Times-Union](#) reported. Paskel had pled guilty to killing the police dog, possession of a gun by a juvenile delinquent, and armed robbery and kidnapping for carjacking two women that preceded a 120-mph high-speed chase and the dog’s death. “We are glad to bring this case to resolution,” State Attorney Melissa Nelson told [WOKV](#) radio. “His senseless killing underscores the dangers law enforcement face every day and it sparked changes in state law. This outcome finally achieves justice to Fang’s memory.”

Elderly Parents, Family Dog Found Dead

The Johnston County, N.C. Sheriff's Office is reportedly planning to file homicide charges against Stephen Michael Boggs, Jr., 53, of Selma after his parents and the family dog were found dead inside their home. The [Johnstonian News](#) reported that the younger Boggs was apprehended at a hotel in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and would be charged upon his extradition back to North Carolina. Deputies discovered the bodies of Brenda McFatter Boggs, 71, and Michael Boggs, Sr., 72 after neighbors told authorities they had not seen the couple for nearly two months. Authorities said both victims appeared to have been dead for a considerable period of time. It was not immediately clear if charges of animal cruelty would also be filed.



Stephen Boggs, Jr.

Two Family Members and Two Dogs Shot in Double Homicide and Suicide



James & Brandy Olivares

Police in Irving, Texas are investigating an apparent double homicide and suicide that also claimed the family's two dogs and that authorities said may have been a domestic violence incident fueled by the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Dallas Morning News](#) reported the shooter, who took his own life, was James Benjamin Olivares, 45; the victims were his wife, Brandy Evett Olivares, 45, his stepdaughter, Sicilian Italease Ire Williams, 18, and the two dogs. Media reports said that someone in the house had called 911 and that James Olivares had posted on Facebook that he was "sorry." As police arrived at the house, he apparently called for a negotiator, then ran back into the house and took his own life. Police spokesman Robert Reeves said that during the pandemic tensions are likely to run high as people continue to stay at home. Reeves noted that October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month and encouraged anyone experiencing domestic violence to contact the family advocacy center.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NOTE: The pandemic has caused many meetings to be canceled, rescheduled or converted into virtual formats. Click on the underlined hyperlinks for more detailed information.

Nov. 16 – Reno, Nev. (online): Emily Lewis, Catherine Miller and Kathleen Wood will conduct a free webinar on "Animal Hoarding: Issues in Family Law Cases" in a [three-part series](#) about Animal Cruelty Issues in Family Law Cases for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Jan. 7, 2021 – Honolulu, Hawai'i (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a training on "The Link between Animal Sexual Abuse and Human Violence" for the [Hawaiian Humane Society](#).

Jan. 27, 2021 – Phoenix, Ariz. (online): Phil Arkow will speak on The Link and Domestic Violence for the [Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence's](#) virtual summit.

Feb. 10, 2021 – Ithaca, N.Y. (online): Phil Arkow will speak on “The Cruelty Connection: Practical Guidance for the Effective Recognition and Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence” to the Class of 2024 at [Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

Feb. 11-12, 2021 – Columbus, Ohio: Phil Arkow will present on “Responding to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” at the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).

March 10, 2021 – Tallahassee, Fla. (online): Phil Arkow will present on “The Link between Interpersonal Violence and Violence Against Animals” to the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association’s Virtual Veterinary Forensics Rounds.

April 28, 2021 – Pullman, Wash. & Ft. Collins, Colo. (online): Phil Arkow will lecture on animal abuse’s Link to human violence for the [Human Animal Interaction Research course](#) co-taught by Washington State and Colorado State Universities.

July 15, 2021 (online): Emily Lewis of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present a [webinar](#) on “Preserving the Bond and Preventing Cruelty: The Veterinarian’s Role” for the Justice Clearinghouse.



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.*



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multidisciplinary 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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