



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 14, No. 3 March 2021**

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



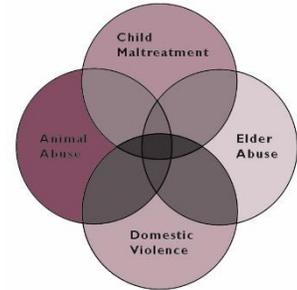
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



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

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

### Day-Long Pet Summit Builds Safer Communities in Arizona



Nearly 80 domestic violence advocates were treated to an all-day webinar on The Link by the [Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence](#). The pet summit, “Healing Together: Building Safe Communities for Survivors and Their Pets,” brought together national, state and local experts and featured ASL and Spanish-language translations.

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow kicked off the day with an overview on animal abuse’s interfaces with domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse, emphasizing that when animals are abused people are at risk, and when people are abused animals are at risk.

### SHELTERING ANIMALS AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

Allie Phillips, founder and CEO of [Sheltering Animals and Families Together](#), called SAF-T™ “a crazy idea that started about 20 years ago and has grown into a life-saving program.” There are now some 250 pet-friendly shelters in all states except Delaware, Hawai’i, Maine, Nebraska, Maine, and the District of Columbia, and she is working to expand the concept into the U.K. in addition to other foreign venues.



**Allie Phillips**

She listed how co-sheltering pets with escaping survivors meets three needs: the emotional needs of survivors escaping trauma; the physical needs of families who need safe housing and do not want to leave their pets behind; and the community’s need by offering a solution to families who have been waiting. “I find that communities embrace this idea and are supporting the shelters,” she said.

Phillips described additional barriers for rural residents needing to escape with their pets, and clarified misconceptions about COVID-19 and pets and different procedures for service animals and emotional support animals. She noted that pet housing must also extend into transitional housing. “You never want to have a break in the chain of the continuum of care,” she cautioned. “Any time there’s a break in the care the survivor might go back to her abuser.”

Co-sheltering pets “is a solution to Link crimes. This gets the family to safety and breaks the cycle of violence and helps the children from being in the environment where they could replicate the abuse.”

Phillips reviewed the implementation stages and various design concepts for creating, building and sustaining on-site sheltering for pets. The ideas are based on the [SAF-T Start-Up Manual](#) which is available as a free download for shelters.

## PETSMART CHARITIES GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



**Aimee Gilbreath**

Aimee Gilbreath, the recently-named President of [PetSmart Charities](#), announced an emerging focus for the Phoenix-based philanthropy and a new grant program being launched in March. The philanthropy awarded over \$800,000 in grants for pet-friendly shelter housing, pet care and emergency relief in 2020.

Gilbreath described how the Charities’ established support of animal shelters and adoptions is evolving. Because shelter intakes and adoptions have decreased significantly, a trend that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, PetSmart Charities is putting more focus on the support of organizations that support the human-animal bond in the community in order to have a greater impact on pets and people. The new focus includes efforts to achieve long-term change by preserving families’ bonds with pets, creating cooperative programs between human services and animal organizations, and training veterinary students to deliver a spectrum-of-care model.

Gilbreath estimated that some 2.7 million pets are at risk, living in families with domestic violence, plus additional others living with families experiencing housing and food insecurity. Creating pet-friendly shelters “is becoming something that you just have to do. The population we’re serving needs it and we just have to figure it out,” she said.

She identified four major challenges that domestic violence shelters face when considering whether to become pet-friendly:

- **Getting started** – the initial fears can be overwhelming.
- **Costs of construction** – which can be supported by grants and community donations.
- **Systems change** – integrating animals not only into the facility but also into case management from intake through recovery.
- **Sustainable funding** – including pet deposits and pet-friendly long-term housing for the next step of survivors’ journey to recovery.

Gilbreath announced a new funding initiative, [Preserving Families](#), that will launch on March 17. Grants will support programs that keep people and pets together through times of crisis, particularly domestic violence and homeless shelters and hospices.

Organizations seeking funding will be asked to submit a Letter of Intent between March 17-31. After review, selected organizations will be invited to submit a more extensive grant application by April 28. PetSmart Charities will be looking for programs that: lead to long-term integration of pets in their families through a One Health focus that views pets as facilitators for better human outcomes; demonstrate formal collaborations between social services, government entities and/or animal welfare organizations; demonstrate positive case outcomes for pets and people through data and reports; and exhibit funding from multiple sources that support sustainability.

## REDROVER AND RESCUE REBUILD GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Katie Campbell, Outreach Manager for [RedRover](#), and Bryna Donnelly, Director of [Rescue Rebuild](#) for Greater Good Charities, described their program, “Don’t Forget the Pets,” to support and build co-sheltering models in domestic violence shelters. They presented a variety of safe haven options for pet-friendly housing for at-risk people in emergency and transitional housing, homeless shelters, and veterans’ housing. Rescue Rebuild not only offers grant funding but also does the actual design and construction work.



Bryna Donnelly (left) and Katie Campbell

They described the details, design, materials, and legal considerations for renovating individual living units and communal spaces, converting existing spaces into dog kennels and cat rooms, and building shed-like structures.

“One of the most successful components of pet housing programs is collaboration,” said Campbell, whose Safe Housing and Safe Escape grants bring animals from crisis to care and strengthen the human-animal bond. “Human service agencies need to ask about pets, veterinarians need to know the signs of abuse and respond, and animal organizations need to ask about domestic violence.”

The event concluded with five area program leaders describing the processes by which shelters can incorporate pets and the human-animal bond into their services. [Chicanos Por La Causa – De Colores](#) explored why the organization decided to start the journey to be pet-inclusive. [Colorado River Regional Crisis Services](#) reviewed the steps they have taken and plan to take to become pet-inclusive. The [Sojourner Center](#) outlined strategies to build relationships with area pet welfare agencies, boarding facilities and veterinarians. [PetSmart Charities](#) discussed the importance of cross-training domestic violence programs, pet welfare agencies, boarding facilities, and veterinarians. A survivor described her first-hand experiences with The Link.



Danielle Wright, Victim Servicers Manager for the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, reviewed ACESDV’s [Survivor Emergency Relief Fund](#) which helps survivors with the costs of accessing safety and healing. The pet summit was part of the coalition’s BaRC – Barrier Reduction Collaborative – to increase awareness of the importance of pets for domestic violence survivors.



### What is The LINK?

- L**egislation...
- I**ntervention...
- N**etworking...
- K**nowledge...

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



## **USA TODAY Spotlights Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Link in the Midst of the Pandemic**

The tragic consequences of beloved pets targeted as collateral damage in domestic violence cases, and how these incidents have escalated during the lockdowns necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic, were featured in an extensive Feb. 26 article in [USA TODAY](#). Local and national agencies, including the National Link Coalition, were interviewed to detail the story.

The article described how Sarah Manos, 27, a suburban Chicago high school Spanish teacher who lived alone with her two dogs and was distanced from her parents due to COVID-19, met a man who made her feel less lonely.

### **Sarah Manos**

But two months later, after he tried to cut her off from friends and family and allegedly killed her two dogs, she discreetly packed her bags, fled to her parents' house and called the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), according to a civil suit Manos filed in Cook County Circuit Court. County prosecutors did not charge the man, so Manos said she filed the lawsuit because she didn't "want anyone else to suffer through what I went through. No matter how alone they make you feel, you truly are not alone."

The loneliness was exacerbated by quarantine restrictions. "It's been a real challenge for advocates and survivors," said Ruth Glenn, president of the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#). "Not only have they had barriers they've had to navigate to seek safety when they're ready, but they now have an added barrier of a pandemic. It becomes a tool for the person that's causing harm – another tool to further control and exert power."

Domestic violence incidents in the U.S. have increased by 8.1% since the beginning of the pandemic, according to estimates by the [National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice](#). The National Domestic Violence Hotline said that more than 23,000 people have called since mid-March mentioning COVID-19 as a factor in what they are experiencing. Calls to hotlines have surged in different parts of the country at different times over the past year.

"After a year, people are finding their choice between a rock and a hard place ... completely untenable," said Hotline executive director Sarah Prout Rennie.

For Manos, the abuse began quickly. In April, as the U.S. was beginning to institute stay-at-home orders, Manos wasn't seeing her parents because they didn't want to risk contracting or transmitting COVID-19, she said.

Over the course of their relationship, Manos alleges the man repeatedly threatened her life and the lives of her parents. She claims he tortured and killed her two Bichon-mix dogs, "Kirby and "Daisy."

"I started to disassociate a little bit, where you do what you have to to survive," Manos said. "You look at this and you're like, this cannot be happening. This cannot be reality. This isn't real. This isn't me." The man denied the allegations to *USA TODAY*. Police concluded animal abuse was the cause of the dogs' deaths, but the Cook County State's Attorney's Office found the evidence against the man insufficient to meet the burden of proof to file animal cruelty charges. However, the man was convicted for violating Manos' order of protection.

## “My dogs matter.”

“I knew the system had failed me and that I needed to get justice for myself,” Manos said. “It’s not about the money. It’s the principle. I matter, and my dogs matter.”

Abusers targeting pets is “unfortunately not at all unusual,” said Phil Arkow, coordinator of the National Link Coalition. Arkow cited Link statistics and noted that during times of crisis, such as the coronavirus pandemic, the bond between humans and animals intensifies, and abusers will exploit that bond to control a victim’s behavior and to intimidate and inflict trauma on the victim. He described the increase in pet-friendly domestic violence shelters nationwide, the 35 states that allow pets to be included in protection orders, and the federal Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act.

“Domestic violence is about power and control, so animals and things a survivor cares about become a target for the abuse because it’s a way to hurt the person, and it’s also a way to control them,” said Neha Gill, executive director of [Apna Ghar](#), a Chicago-based human rights organization working to end gender violence.

“That may be a reason [survivors] feel like they can’t leave – because they don’t have somewhere to go with their animal,” said Gill, whose agency also operates a shelter. “But still make the call. Still ask because there are options.”

Manos said it was frightening but “empowering” planning out her escape. She eventually fled to her parents’ house at the end of June, after the man allegedly killed her second dog.

“Going through this and recovering from it is a roller coaster,” Manos said. “Right now I’m doing OK, but I do have PTSD from this. This is a lot for any one person to deal with.” Manos has moved to a new home, has continued to go work and has been working with a trauma-specialized therapist.

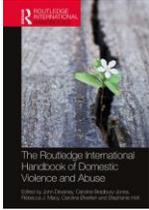
The NCADV’s Glenn said that animal abuse is a “true indication” that the violence is beginning to escalate.

## Webinar Helps Animal Shelters Partner with Domestic Violence Shelters

Devon Krusko, Field Services & Outreach Coordinator for RedRover, and Shelbi Waters, Executive Director of the Souris Valley Humane Society, conducted a webinar for American Pets Alive on Feb. 16 on “Partnering with Your Local Domestic



Violence Shelter to Support People and Pets.” They described how [Devon Krusko \(left\) & Shelbi Waters](#) animal shelters are under-recognized resources for their communities. Animal sheltering is very much a social service that is expanding to meet the different needs of the public. Krusko and Waters offered tools, tips, and ideas for how animal shelters can support local domestic violence shelters, create life-saving partnerships, and support people and their animals. They focused on creating strong community relationships and how to get creative with shelter space to accommodate the most vulnerable of pets. The webinar will be archived and available from [American Pets Alive](#).



## Link Featured in International Domestic Violence Handbook

Amy Fitzgerald at the University of Windsor and a recognized Link authority is the lead author in a chapter, “Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse,” to be published on March 18 in *The Routledge International Handbook of Domestic Violence and Abuse*.

The chapter offers: an overview of the literature about animal abuse and domestic violence; documenting rates of animal abuse within domestic violence; the predictive power of animal maltreatment as a controlling behavior; traits of perpetrators; and the consequences of these co-occurring forms of victimization for adult and child victims/survivors of domestic violence.

The chapter is one of 50 in the 834-page book addressing a wide range of issues in multiple countries, including domestic violence’s impact on infant mental health, children and youth, older victim/survivors, same-sex relationships, transnational marriages, and women in forced migration.

-- Fitzgerald, A.J., Barrett, B.J., Stevenson, R., & Fritz, P.A.T. (2021). Domestic violence and animal abuse. In J. Devaney, C. Bradbury-Jones, R.J. Macy, C. Øverlien, & S. Holt (Eds.). *The Routledge International Handbook of Domestic Violence and Abuse* (pp.325-339). New York: Routledge.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK



### Legislative and Legal Experts Consider Court-Appointed Advocates for Animals

The New York City chapter of the National Lawyers Guild’s Animal Rights Committee convened an extensive virtual panel on Feb. 24 to consider legislation for New York State and New Jersey, modeled after similar laws in Connecticut and Maine, that would allow courts to appoint special advocates for animals in animal welfare and custody proceedings similar to provisions for court-appointed special advocates for children (CASA).

The hour-long webinar featured 13 state senators and representatives, prosecutors, professors, and legal experts, each of whom had only 2-1/2 or 5 minutes to speak, describing how the New York and New Jersey bills were framed, the Connecticut experience, and the legislative processes and challenges in New York and New Jersey.

**New York S 3525/A 5315** would create court-appointed volunteer lawyer and law student advocates for animals in animal welfare proceedings. The advocates could: represent the interests of justice and monitor cases; attend hearings; consult with individuals to obtain information and records that could aid the judge or other fact-finders; and present such relevant information and recommendations to the court. The bills are in the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees.

**New Jersey A 4533/S 2868** would allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the best interests of and justice for animals in cruelty cases. Advocates could: monitor cases; attend hearings; share with prosecutors and defendants’ attorneys any information new to the case; have access to and review relevant records concerning the animals’ condition and the defendant’s actions; and present information or recommendations to the court that relate to the best interests of, and justice for, the animal, including placement. **S 2868** passed the Senate 34-0; **A 4533** is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

## Colorado Springs DA Creating Link-Informed Animal Cruelty Unit



DA Michael J. Allen

Noting that their office fields more calls from the public on animal cruelty cases than any other type aside from high-profile murder trials, Colorado's 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney is creating a large animal cruelty unit. The [Colorado Springs Indy](#) reported that Assistant District Attorney Martha McKinney will oversee the unit which will be composed of five to 10 prosecutors.

"It's indisputable that there's a connection between people that are willing to commit crimes of violence against animals — they're also willing to commit crimes of violence against people," District Attorney Michael Allen said. "So this is a way to hopefully curtail further criminal involvement by addressing it earlier in the process... and getting those folks the treatment they need, so they don't re-offend, but also protecting our furry friends and victims of domestic violence."

The unit will conduct trainings with partnering law enforcement agencies in El Paso and Teller Counties, and will collaborate with the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region's animal law enforcement division and the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. Cases will be assigned to courts on a rotating, random basis the way all criminal cases are assigned.

Allen said the goals for the unit include providing uniformity in training approaches to animal cruelty cases, making these investigations a greater priority, and achieving consistent, evidence-based results utilizing subject matter experts.

## Kentucky Considers Mandatory Link Training for Police Officers



Rep. Bojanowski

A bill introduced on Feb. 10 in the Kentucky General Assembly would take a step believed to be unique in the U.S. by requiring law enforcement officers to receive training on The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence.

**HB 486**, sponsored by Rep. Tina Bojanowski (D-Jefferson County) would amend KRS 15.334 to expand the list of mandatory training subjects to be taught to all students attending law enforcement basic training courses. It would add "identification and investigation of, responding to, and reporting of animal abuse violations, including but not limited to The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence."

It would also direct the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet to provide training on domestic violence, abuse, and The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, to all certified peace officers at least once every two years.

It is not believed that any other state in the U.S. has enacted similar legislation. In Canada, the Province of Ontario enacted a similar law mandating Link training for law enforcement officers ([See the following article and the November 2020 LINK-Letter](#)).

## Ontario Police Receive Mandatory Training on the Violence Link

Responding to legislation enacted unanimously last October by the Ontario provincial legislature in Canada requiring all law enforcement officers to receive Violence Link training, the [Ottawa Police Service](#), in cooperation with the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association's [SafePet Ontario](#) program, conducted two webinar trainings in February. Each attracted over 100 participants.



Sgt. Teena Stoddart

Subject Matter Expert Sgt. Teena Stoddart conducted the trainings which were designed to assist officers in identifying various criminal acts, preventing further victimization, and strengthening their cases before they go to court by having recognized the Link between animal abuse and human violence. Stoddart, a founding member of the Canadian Violence Link Coalition, has been delivering similar training to all Ottawa police recruits since 2019.

“This is not animal abuse training. It is to recognize human abuse,” she said. Noting how the Violence Link is well established by evidence-based research and is recognized by law enforcement agencies worldwide, Stoddart presented case studies where police could have prevented human tragedies if they had taken animal abuse incidents more seriously. Front-line officers in particular need to know about The Link. “If patrol doesn’t get this information, it’s not going anywhere,” she cautioned.

“Animal abuse is not normal behavior. Animal abuse usually indicates something else is going on. It’s never just an animal abuse call. If we do nothing, violence will escalate.” She said that on the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Screening Tool, animal abuse ranks #13 out of 31 risk factors for severe injury or death to the victim and also indicates an enhanced risk for the abuser’s recidivism.

In presenting details about the scope, laws and community responses to intimate partner violence in Canada, Stoddart noted that abusers’ infliction of psychological harm and controlling behaviors conspire to make pets soft targets. She encouraged officers to be intuitive and pick out cries for help. Talking to children and elders who love to talk about their pets can be highly informative about family dynamics. Awareness of The Link is applicable to a philosophy of law enforcement called Proactive Policing – a preventative, anticipatory approach to policing rather than a strictly reactive response to IPV.

The webinar also addressed bestiality and animal fighting and how they’re Linked to other crimes, including evidence from Greece.



Tammy Merritt described how SafePet Ontario coordinates long-and short-term foster care for individuals fleeing domestic or intimate partner violence so they can move into a better future. The program works with pet foster families and participating veterinary hospitals that provide a secret, neutral and safe location where the owner can drop off their pet before it enters foster care. Veterinarians provide examinations and administer any needed vaccinations.

## VETERINARY MEDICINE...and THE LINK

### Ohio VMA Publishes Handbook on Recognizing and Reporting Abuse

The Ohio Veterinary Medical Association has published an informative [20-page handbook](#), *Animal Abuse: Recognition & Reporting* as part of a series of resources to help practitioners understand their responsibilities and available resources concerning animal abuse and its Link to human violence.

The handbook was published shortly before **HB 33** was enacted which makes veterinary reporting of suspected animal abuse mandatory and offers them immunity from civil and criminal liability for making such reports in good faith. It is based on the premise that “veterinarians have taken an oath to protect animal welfare and have an ethical obligation to report suspected animal cruelty so that it can be investigated.” It details three key steps of recognizing, recording and reporting reasonable suspicions, including suspected domestic, child or elder abuse, to the appropriate community agency.

It utilizes the FBI’s typology of four types of animal maltreatment (simple and gross neglect, intentional physical abuse and torture, organized animal abuse, and sexual abuse), and adds ritualistic abuse and emotional abuse. It describes in detail common presentations of injuries and illnesses presented to veterinarians which may raise an index of suspicion of abuse, especially if they are inconsistent with the provided history.

The handbook notes that veterinarians should report these incidents “when they have a reasonable suspicion, so that the proper authorities can investigate, rather than waiting until they feel they can prove a case. The investigation is greatly improved when veterinarians are aware of what to look for and what to document when abuse is suspected.”

It provides a list of 10 specific details that should be added to the normal documentation when animal abuse is suspected, and sample reporting forms. It offers an extensive list of patient histories, client interactions, evaluations, and diagnostics which, taken in combination, may be considered “red flags” that abuse or animal fighting is occurring. It presents specific signs to look for that might differentiate accidental from non-accidental injuries.

The FAQ section includes several common questions including ethical and legal requirements to report, the confidentiality of patient records, sources for training, fears about losing clients or exposing staff to danger, and how to report. It cites the National Link Coalition’s [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#) to help practitioners locate the appropriate agencies in their community.

The handbook is part of a larger collection of [online resource materials](#) that include information about The Link between animal and human abuse, education and training opportunities, sample documentation forms for large- and small-animal abuse, and resource organizations for both practitioners and victims of domestic violence and their pets.



## Assistant Professorship in Human-Animal Interactions Being Created



The University of Arizona's College of Veterinary Medicine and School of Anthropology are inviting applications for a jointly appointed [tenure track position](#) with a focus on Human-Animal Interaction, broadly conceived. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, animal behavior, biology, physiology and cognition; evolutionary perspectives on human-animal interaction; the biopsychosocial effects of human-animal interaction; One Health; and behavioral ecology. The successful candidate will contribute to the University of Arizona's growing emphasis on research at the intersection of humans and nonhuman animals and will create bridges between the two schools.

## BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

### Saskatchewan SPCA Creates Informative Link Website

The Saskatchewan SPCA in Canada has launched an informative website as part of a province-wide initiative to provide research-based information on The Link as well as resources for victims and professionals in the human and animal services sectors. The website, [ViolenceLink.ca](#), offers extensive information, videos and brochures about The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence, including how to include pets in safety planning and how to recognize and report suspected abuse.



The Link has long been a focus of the SPCA, and several American and Canadian Link speakers have presented at training conferences in Saskatchewan. Executive Director Frances Wach, a former social worker, stresses the importance of helping people by helping their animals, and helping animals by helping their owners.

### Link Training for Police Officers Extends into Moldova

In February, Link training for the police and animal groups came for the first time to Chişinău, in the Republic of Moldova. Mark Randell, a retired Senior Detective from the UK, had teamed up with the British charity Naturewatch Foundation to deliver the training in 10 cities across Ukraine beginning in 2018. Randell tells The LINK-Letter that the work has now extended into Moldova, one of the former breakaway Russian republics.



An image from the Ukrainian Police Academy 2021 Calendar spotlighting rescue dogs

Link awareness has helped Ukraine to impose greater penalties for animal abuse, with a maximum 8-year jail term for animal abuse and the toughest terms given when the crimes happen in front of children. Since 2018, prosecutions have risen 75% and the police academy highlighted rescue dogs for their 2021 Calendar.

Randell has also worked on a Link project in Greece where recent new laws embrace the seriousness of animal cruelty. Greece now has a 10-year maximum jail sentence for felony abuse.

## **COVID-19... AND THE LINK**

### **“Opportunity to Abuse Theory” Proposed to Explain Family Violence During Pandemic Lockdowns**

Andrew Campbell, who has researched how the lockdowns necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic have decreased rates of reporting of family violence ([See the April 2020 LINK-Letter](#)), is applying a new “Opportunity to Abuse Theory” to help explain why family violence increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and after most prior natural disasters. This concerning decline in reports was greatest during periods of lockdown, when risk of abuse was likely at its highest.



**Andrew Campbell**

“What became increasingly clear is that many existing family violence prevention initiatives seem to fail under pressure,” he writes. The Opportunity to Abuse Theory assumes that if abusers share space with one who is vulnerable to abuse, abuse will occur in time. As opportunity to abuse increases, so does the likelihood of abuse perpetration. Opportunity is greatest when victims are most vulnerable and perpetrator accountability is low, he says.

This theory notes that abuse risk increases during disasters regardless of traditional socioeconomic family violence risk factors. The risk is intensified by disaster- or pandemic-caused social changes, such as prolonged isolation, limited accountability to outsiders, mass closures that increase stress, inconsistent government messaging, and greater alcohol consumption at home.

Additional actions to improve detection of and reduce risk for family violence, such as improving partnerships with animal welfare organizations, enlisting the aid of non-traditional family violence report sources, better utilizing hotels to provide safety when shelter space is limited, and ensuring texting options for reporting abuse, must be considered to reduce these opportunities.

Campbell argues that a global crisis can strip away facades and reveal a nation’s true priorities in health, safety and well-being. Any healthcare or safety disparities that pre-date the event are only furthered as a result. Gaps in care widen, and those most vulnerable fall through the cracks.

“If we fail to immediately make better identifying and protecting victims of family violence a real priority, acts of abuse perpetrated against humans or animals in the home will continue to claim the well-being, health, safety, and lives of many more over the months and years to come,” he writes.

He argues that public health response to intimate partner violence, child maltreatment and pet abuse has long fallen desperately short despite the wide impact these forms of family violence have. “While action was necessary to slow the spread of the virus, we did a great disservice to those most vulnerable to abuse in the home by taking no real widespread actions to mitigate the increased risk of abuse created by these actions,” he writes. “The result was increasing incidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse victimization in the home, harmful acts from which many may never fully recover,” – and which may serve to establish a “new normal” for the household.

Campbell reports that family violence is likely to continue to rise in communities around the globe, and victim-serving professionals must prepare for a sustained increase in service requests and reports of

abuse for the foreseeable future. Actions to slow COVID-19 significantly increased risk of abuse in the home while simultaneously significantly reducing opportunity for detection – a deadly combination.

The article tracks how calls from domestic violence survivors decreased significantly during lockdown when they were suddenly trapped with an abuser indefinitely and had limited opportunity to safely separate and call for help. He notes that while overall reports of intimate partner violence declined in many communities, there were dramatic increases in reports of domestic violence incidents involving weapons as lockdown restrictions were eased.

“It is not surprising that incidents involving a weapon were among those first reported when opportunity to report increased – as victims in these homes likely spent the preceding months fearing for their lives and the safety of other adults, children, and pets who reside in the home,” he writes. In rural Alaska, more women reportedly died at the hands of an intimate partner during lockdown than from the virus.

Similarly, reports of child maltreatment dropped significantly during the pandemic, traceable perhaps to the closing of schools and other organizations for children. This suppression of reports is alarming and is depriving victims from receiving necessary services from mental health and victim-service professionals.

Campbell suggests that early, incomplete data indicate that rates of pet abuse were not as significantly impacted by the pandemic. Because most pet abuse reports come from neighbors and passers-by, and pets may have spent more time outdoors with families working and schooling at home, the increased presence of people at home increased the likelihood of detecting and reporting animal abuse. However, one silver lining was that as animal shelters emptied their kennels, it created opportunities for partnerships with domestic violence shelters needing to find space for survivors’ pets.

“If community lockdown orders are to become a regular response for future similar crises, we must acknowledge that they create overwhelming opportunity for abuse to occur in the home, while also severely limiting traditional opportunities to detect and report the abuse,” he concludes.

-- Campbell, A.M. (2021). *Improving prevention of family violence during (and after) disaster: Lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic. Forensic Science International: Reports.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsir.2021.100179>

## Pandemic Leads to Surge in Online Puppy Scams

In several previous issues of *The LINK-Letter*, we described the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns have had on the incidence of animal, domestic, child, and elder abuse and the ability of those agencies to deliver needed services. Recently, our friends at the National Adult Protective Services Association alerted us to another aspect of the pandemic’s impact on animal welfare: a proliferation of fraudulent puppy scams.



With the pandemic dramatically increasing demand for pets as people who are quarantined or working from home seek the companionship of pets to fight loneliness and isolation, many people have found time they previously lacked to train a puppy. The [Better Business Bureau](#) is reporting that fraudsters have taken advantage of this new market and are charging would-be pet owners hundreds of dollars to purchase dogs that don’t exist.

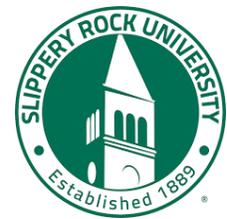
The BBB's Scam Tracker reported a dramatic spike in these scams in 2020, with nearly 4,000 reports in the U.S. and Canada -- a five-fold increase over 2017 figures. Reports of pet fraud peaked during the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas holiday season. The median loss reported was \$750; individuals aged 35 to 55 accounted for half of the reports. Some 12% of the reported scams involved kittens.

The BBB said that many scammers tell prospective pet owners they cannot meet the animals until they send money, usually via mobile payment apps. Most scammers say they cannot process credit cards, or use fraudulent online forms to collect credit card information. The BBB recommends using videoconferencing to see the animal and meet the seller and pet before sending funds, and to check out local animal shelters online for pets you can meet before adopting.

## ***SOCIAL WORK... AND THE LINK***

### **Animal-Assisted Social Work Teaching Position Available**

Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania is inviting applications for a full-time tenure track Assistant Professorship in the Department of Public Health and Social Work. MSW Program Director Yvonne Eaton-Stull tells *The LINK-Letter* that they are looking for someone with animal-assisted experience. (The department is one of only a handful of schools of social work in the U.S. to include the human-animal bond in social work training. The school offers an undergraduate minor and graduate certificate in animal-assisted interventions.)



The position starts August 2021. The position will teach generalist and advanced clinical social work courses, conduct scholarship and research activity, advise students, and serve on university committees and engage in community activities as appropriate. Details are available on the [university's website](#).



### **Human-Animal Interaction Research Fellowship Available**

The Institute for Human-Animal Connection in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver has announced it is accepting applications for a two-year [Research Fellowship position](#). The position is open to MSW graduates who plan to pursue a career in social science research or program evaluation, specifically in contributing to understanding the intersection of people, animals and the environment. The goal of the position is to provide the Research Fellow with robust training in social science research with a focus on human-animal interactions in preparation for a career in research. Applications are due April 15<sup>th</sup>.



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

## *THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES*

### **Link Bills We're Watching**

As the 2021 legislative sessions get under way, we're anticipating another record year for the number of bills to be introduced addressing animal abuse and its Links to other forms of family and community violence. Here are the **83 bills** that we know to have been introduced so far: we expect there will be more to come. [Please let us know](#) if you're aware of any others that we may have missed.

### *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**Arizona HB2451** would allow petitioners to request a "severe threat order of protection" to prohibit respondents who have made a credible threat of death or serious physical injury to self, others, or cruel mistreatment of an animal, or from possessing a firearm. The bill is in the House Judiciary and Rules Committees.



**California AB 258** would require emergency shelter and transitional housing programs for the homeless to allow residents to keep one dog or cat, provided the animal does not present a nuisance or threat to other occupants and is not in violation of humane or health laws. (It is not clear whether this would extend to domestic violence shelters as well.)



**District of Columbia B23-0181**, the Intrafamilial Offenses and Anti-Stalking Orders Amendment Act of 2020, was signed into law on Jan. 13, 2021 as **D.C. Act 23-571**. It clarifies procedures by which certain victims of intrafamily offense, sexual assault, sex trafficking of children, or individuals whose animals are victims of an intrafamily offense, to petition for a civil protection order. "Intrafamily offense" is defined as a criminal offense against an intimate partner or family or household member, or cruelty to animals owned by an intimate partner, or family or household member. Courts may also issue an anti-stalking order if the petitioner fears a household animal is endangered by the respondent.



**Kentucky HB 26** would include violence against a domestic animal used as coercive conduct within the definitions of "domestic violence and abuse" and "dating violence and abuse" and would allow judges to award possession of a domestic animal to the petitioner in a protection-from-abuse procedure. **HB 215** would define animal abuse when part of an incident of domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse as first-degree aggravated animal abuse, a Class C felony. It is in the Committee on Committees.



**Maryland SB 159** would require humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, including on the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bill is in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.



**Massachusetts HD.2220/SD.1466** would expand existing provisions that prevent respondents in a domestic violence protection order from harming, taking or disposing of household animals to also include protective orders issued in sexual assault harassment cases.



**Mississippi SB 2091** would have allowed municipal and justice courts to include companion animals in awarding protection orders. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

 **Missouri S71** would allow adult protection orders and child protection orders, full or ex parte, to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening to commit abuse against a pet. A protection order may include an order of custody of the pet where appropriate, as well as any funds needed to cover the medical costs resulting from abuse of the pet. The bill is in the Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee.

 **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.

 **New Jersey S 930** would allow courts to designate ownership or protective custody for a pet 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 A1353** would make it a crime to unjustifiably injure or kill a companion animal to threaten, intimidate or harass another family member. The penalty would be increased if the act occurs in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

 **New York A510** would expand domestic violence pet protection orders to allow courts to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals and to order respondents to stay away from the animals or take, transfer, harm, or conceal the animals. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

 **New York A5775/S4248** would require courts to consider the best interest of a companion animal when awarding possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees.

 **Texas HB 674** would require the public to be informed about the availability of provisions to include pets and other companion animals in protective orders.

 **Washington HB 1293**, the “Survivors’ Justice Act,” would allow courts to reduce what may be considered unduly harsh sentences for offenses committed by domestic violence survivors where the domestic violence was a significant contributing factor to the criminal conduct. However, judges could impose sentences above the standard range in a number of aggravating circumstances including “intent to obstruct or impair human or animal health care or agricultural or forestry research or commercial production.” The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.

### *Permission to Reprint*

The news 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).

### *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.

## *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*

 **Arkansas HB 1497** would expand the permitted use of courthouse dogs for child witnesses to also include vulnerable witnesses (e.g., with intellectual or developmental disabilities). The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Kentucky HB 215** would define animal abuse when committed in the presence of a minor child as first-degree aggravated animal abuse, a Class C felony.

 **New Jersey A 4880 and S 3168** would expand the definition of child abuse to include acts of animal cruelty against their animals. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.

 **New York A474** would increase prison terms for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child in order to minimize psychological damage to a still-developing minor's sense of judgment and ethical conduct. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

 **New York A1353** would make it a crime to unjustifiably injure or kill a companion animal to threaten, intimidate or harass another family member. The penalty would be increased if the act occurs in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

 **New York A748** would define the releasing or failure to control an animal so as to prohibit an agent of a residential facility operated by children and family services as second-degree assault. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.

 **New York A1816**, recognizing the adverse impact animal fighting can have on a child's emotional development and potential for antisocial behavior, would make it a misdemeanor to knowingly cause a minor child to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

 **Pennsylvania SB 78** (Kayden's Law – Preventing Abuse in Child Custody Proceedings), in noting that domestic abuse against a partner, spouse, child or pet can be part of a pattern of emotional and psychological abuse, would allow courts to include a person's prior conviction for animal cruelty or animal fighting to be considered in determining custody of the child and whether the person posed a threat of harm to the child.

 **Rhode Island S 308** would increase penalties for animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **Texas HB 1071** would allow courts to permit qualified facility dogs and therapy animals and their trained handlers to accompany witnesses if the dogs would assist the witness in testifying.

 **Washington HB 1292** would create a new crime of "providing harmful material to a minor" that would include "patently offensive representations or descriptions" of bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.

### *Animal Sexual Abuse*



**Connecticut HB 5193** would increase the penalties for engaging in sexual contact with an animal. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



**Hawai'i SB 343/HB1085** would establish the crime of bestiality, or sexual assault of an animal as a Class C felony, or Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor. **SB 343** passed the Senate and was sent to the House; both bills are in the House Committee on the Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.



**New York A614** would add sexual contact with animals to the state's animal cruelty law, make it a felony if serious injury or death of the animal occurs, require convicted offenders to relinquish all animals and bar them from future possession of animals, and undergo psychological evaluation. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



**Wyoming HB46** would define and create the misdemeanor crime of bestiality; 46 other states have already created similar laws.

### *Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse*



**Maryland SB 159** would require humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, including on the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bill is in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.



**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.

### *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**U.S. H.R. 1016**, the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act, would enhance enforcement of federal anti-cruelty laws, such as interstate trafficking of fighting animals, by creating an animal cruelty crimes section at the U.S. Department of Justice. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



**Kentucky HB 486** would require law enforcement officers to receive training on The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. The bill is in the Committee on Committees.



**New Jersey A 1572/S 746** would bar animal abusers from possessing a firearm. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



**New York S197/A1633 ("Kirby and Quigley's Law")** would expand aggravated animal cruelty to include harm to a pet during the commission of a felony. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

 **New York A99** would make the release of or failure to restrain an animal so as to prevent a police officer or peace officer from performing his or her duties an assault in the second degree on a police officer. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.

 **New York A558** would prohibit individuals convicted of serious felony offenses against animals from possessing firearms. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.

 **Oregon HB 2271** would appropriate moneys from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to enable local district attorneys and law enforcement agencies to add resource prosecutor positions dedicated to assisting the prosecution of animal cruelty offenses. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Washington HB 1038** would prohibit individuals convicted or found not guilty by reason of insanity of animal cruelty, whether in Washington or elsewhere, from possessing a firearm. The firearm provision already exists for persons convicted of or found not guilty by reason of insanity of domestic violence. The bill is in the Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

### *Cross-Reporting*

 **Florida HB 47 and SB 216** (“Allie’s Law”) would require veterinarians, technicians and other animal treatment provider employees to report suspected animal cruelty (at locations other than commercial food-producing animal operations) to authorities with immunity from civil and criminal liability, professional disciplinary action and employer retaliation. Failure to report would be grounds for disciplinary action. It would be a misdemeanor to destroy or alter medical records to conceal animal cruelty. Reporting at commercial food operations would be permissive. **HB 49 and SB 218** would allow veterinary records to remain confidential if animal cruelty is reported as a means to protect veterinarians and to encourage such reports by making them feel safe to do so.

 **Hawai’i HB1086/SB609** would require veterinarians to report animal injury, death or abuse to law enforcement with reasonable cause to believe that it relates to dogfighting or animal abuse. The measures give veterinarians immunity for civil liability for making the reports. **HB1086** passed the House Committee on the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs. **SB609** is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **Iowa HF 623** would amend the Iowa Veterinary Practice Act to grant veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil or criminal liability for actions undertaken in assisting in the investigation or prosecution of animal abuse and neglect cases, including reporting such abuse.

 **Massachusetts SD516/HD2440** would remove the 10-day time limit within which social services workers may report suspected animal abuse and allow them to report at any time.

 **Missouri HB 643** would give immunity from civil liability to anyone who reports suspected animal cruelty in good faith; intentional filing of a false report would be a misdemeanor and civilly liable.

 **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.



**New York A 5823/S 5023** would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal's injury, illness or condition is the result of animal cruelty to report the incident and disclose records concerning the animal's condition and treatment. (Existing law allows voluntary reporting.) The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Higher Education Committees.

### *“CASA for Animals”*



**Florida S 1316/H 1003** would provide for the appointment of lawyer and legal intern advocates for the interests of an animal in civil and criminal proceedings regarding the welfare, care or custody of animals.



**Illinois SB 153** would allow courts to appoint attorneys or law students as special advocates to assist the court in prosecution of cases involving the injury, health or safety of a cat or dog and represent the interests of justice. Advocates could monitor the case and attend hearings; consult with persons and review records relevant to the conditions of the cat or dog or the defendant's actions; and present information and recommendations to the court. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



**New Jersey A 4533/S 2868** would allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the interests of animals in cruelty cases. **S 2868** passed the Senate 34-0; **A 4533** is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



**New York S 3525/A 5315** would create court-appointed volunteer lawyer and law student advocates for animals in animal welfare proceedings. The bills are in the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees.



**Rhode Island H 5577** would permit civil and criminal courts to appoint pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to act as animal advocates in animal cruelty and abuse cases addressing the animals' welfare or custody, in the interests of justice. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

## *Animal Hoarding*



**Missouri HB 373** would add animal hoarding to the definition of animal neglect and require mental health evaluations for offenders. It is in the Crime Prevention Committee.



**New Hampshire HB 366** defines animal hoarding and sets forth a provision for a person charged with animal hoarding to be given a psychiatric evaluation. The bill is in the House Environment and Agriculture Committee.



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



**New York A1229** would create a violation of companion animal hoarding and allow courts to order mental health evaluations and prohibit possession of animals as penalties to give law enforcement needed tools for early intervention before a situation becomes a full-blown cruelty case. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

## *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*



**Missouri HB 643** would allow courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment for adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders. Evaluation and treatment would be mandatory for animal torture or motivation or upon second and subsequent convictions. **HB 373** would require mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding; it is in the Crime Prevention Committee.



**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 S230** would require courts to order psychiatric analysis and evaluation of animal abusers and to unseal the records of juvenile animal abuse offenders. **S229** would require courts to impose psychiatric evaluations for defendants convicted of aggravated animal cruelty. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.



**New York A524, S1257 and S1259** would prohibit persons convicted of “Buster’s Law” (aggravated cruelty to animals) from owning pets unless authorized by a court order after appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing determined the person showed clear and convincing evidence of capable and sound mental capacity and ability to properly care for the animal. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committees.

## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS



### Lady Gaga's Dogwalker Shot in Plot to Kidnap Her Dogs

Thieves apparently trying to kidnap Lady Gaga's three beloved French bulldogs stole two of them and shot her dogwalker while the entertainer was in Rome filming a movie. [TMZ](#) reported that the LAPD's Robbery-Homicide Division is investigating the high-profile case. Lady Gaga offered a \$500,000 reward for the return of "Koji" and "Gustav," who were later found safe tied to a pole several miles away; the third dog, named "Asia," escaped and was later recovered following the incident, which occurred

at 10 p.m. on Feb. 24 in West Hollywood. The dogwalker, Ryan Fischer, was reportedly recovering at an area hospital. Police were still seeking the suspects.

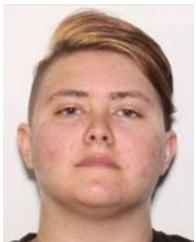


### Woman Charged with Homicide in Apparent Puppy Mill

A Marlow, Okla. woman was charged with homicide and animal cruelty after the body of an employee and some 165 dogs in terrible condition were found on her property. Stephens County Sheriff Wayne McKinney told [KSWO-TV](#) that Karen Jean Pritchard, 49, is accused of killing 31-year-old Ashley Nicole Anderson following an argument. Deputies responded after someone reported overhearing a conversation about a

**Karen Jean Pritchard** person who had been severely injured or killed. Upon investigation, authorities found Anderson's body and the dogs without shelter or water in 16° temperatures in what is believed to be a puppy mill. Pritchard was being held in the jail and the sheriff was working to rescue all the animals.

### Woman Indicted for Violation of PACT Act Banning "Crush" Videos



A Kokomo, Ind. woman arrested by the FBI on two counts of extreme animal abuse for allegedly making and distributing animal "crush" videos via social media depicting extreme mutilation, torture and killing of animals ([See the August 2020 LINK-Letter](#)) has been indicted by a federal grand jury. Crush videos depict small animals being tortured and/or killed for the sexual gratification of observers, and are a violation of the new federal PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act.

**Krystal Scott** Krystal Cherika Scott, 19, was indicted Feb. 17 in the U.S. District Court Southern District of Indiana on two felony counts of animal crushing, the [Kokomo Tribune](#) reported. Each charge is punishable by up to seven years in prison. A jury trial date is currently set for April 19 in Indianapolis. Scott is charged with intentionally killing a pregnant cat on June 13, 2020, by strangling it until it died of asphyxiation and then removing the unborn kittens from inside the cat's body, according to the indictment, and strangling to death a kitten on June 18, 2020, and filming the incidents on Instagram.

Scott was given the two cats by unsuspecting people who believed Scott was a "willing caregiver," according to the indictment, but shortly after taking custody of the animals, the cats were killed. The investigation involved police and sheriff's agencies in Boise, Idaho, the FBI office in Salt Lake City, and the ASPCA.

## Sex Offender Charged in Grisly Murder of Exotic Animal Dealer

A Philadelphia, Pa. man was charged with burglary and abuse of a corpse after the dismembered body of a massage therapist, whose home housed more than 60 exotic parrots, lizards, tortoises, and fish, was allegedly found in his U-Haul truck. The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) reported that Taray Herring, 47, a registered sex offender, was also charged with theft, tampering with evidence, and criminal trespass. Police investigating a burglary call pulled over the driver of the truck and reportedly found the dismembered body in a trash bag in the back. Police also found a person's hands and feet – which had been deep-fried – in a dumpster behind a nearby strip mall. Animal Care & Control Team officers removed the animals and said the victim, Peter Gerold, 70, was an exotic animal breeder and dealer.



Taray Herring



Estevan Hincapie

## Severed Rabbit Heads Found in Threat to Woman

Estevan Hincapie, 24, of Manchester, N.H., was charged with animal cruelty and criminal threatening for allegedly putting two severed rabbit heads on a woman's car in what police called a domestic incident. The [New Hampshire Union Leader](#) said that Hincapie turned himself in to police after an arrest warrant had been issued for him. Police said the woman told her that a man she knew had been text-threatening her and said he had left a "surprise" outside.

## LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**NOTE:** The pandemic has caused most in-person trainings to be canceled, rescheduled or converted into virtual formats. Click on the [underlined hyperlinks](#) for more detailed information.

**March 4 & March 11 (2-parts): Washington Grove, Md. (online):** Ken Shapiro will present a [two-part webinar](#) on "The Assessment and Treatment of Animal Abuse", including the policy and practice implications of The Link, for the Animals & Society Institute and the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and Law School.

**March 9 (online):** Andrew Campbell will present "The Risk to Law Enforcement when Responding to Domestic Violence Situations that Include Animal Abuse/Cruelty" at the National Sheriffs Association's [Animal Cruelty and Abuse Committee](#).

**March 10 – 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.

**March 11 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online):** Sgt. Teena Stoddart of the Ottawa Police Service will present Violence Link training on behalf of the [Ontario Veterinary Medical Association](#).

**March 12 (online):** Vicki Deisner will present on The Link between animal and human violence and Ohio's new legislation to [Legal Aid of Western Ohio](#).

**March 12 – Louisville, Ky.:** Joye Keeley of the [Kentucky Link Coalition](#) will speak to the Brandeis School of Law Animal Law Symposium.

**March 12 – Dallas, Texas:** [The North Texas Link Coalition](#) will hold a roundtable discussion meeting.

**March 22 – Washington, D.C. (online):** Phil Arkow, Randy Lockwood, Blair Decker, and Allison Jackson will join a panel discussing “The Abuse Interface: Animal Abuse, Child Abuse, and Domestic Violence” for the [D.C. Bar Association](#)'s Animal Law Committee.

**March 31 – Pittsfield, Mass. (online):** [HAVEN –The Human Animal Violence Education Network](#) – will hold its regular meeting.

**April 4 – Tokyo, Japan (online):** The Animal Literacy Research Institute and Japanese Association for the Promotion of Canine Good Citizens will conduct the second in a [six-part seminar series](#) on The Link, “The Association Between Crime and Animal Abuse: Is Animal Abuse a Precursor to Crime?”

**April 8 – Indianapolis, Ind. (online):** Andrew Campbell will present a [Justice Clearinghouse webinar](#) on “Disaster Without, Disaster Within: Natural Disasters and Family Violence” to describe victimization risks for animals, children and vulnerable adults during natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**April 13 – Novato, Calif. (online):** Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots: Addressing The Link between Animal, Domestic, Child, and Elder Abuse to Create a Safer Community” for the [Marin Humane Society](#) and the Center for Domestic Peace.

**April 15 – Rockville, Md. (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “The Link between Elder Abuse and Animal Abuse and Opportunities for Eldercare Agencies” for the [ElderSAFE Center](#).

**April 28 – 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.

**April 30 – Pulaski, Va. (online):** Phil Arkow will present a webinar on “The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence and its Implications for the Criminal Justice System” for the [Pulaski Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court](#).

**May 11 – Sacramento, Calif. (online):** Katie Campbell of RedRover will present “Pet-Friendly Domestic Violence Shelters” in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**May 12 (online):** Phil Arkow will present on “Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance's [National Victim Assistance Academy](#).

**May 19 – Springfield, Mo.:** Phil Arkow will present “The Link Between Human and Animal Abuse: Connecting the Dots” and “How to Implement the Animal Abuse Link Concepts Into Your Work” at the [Missouri Office of Prosecution Services](#)' 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Family and Sexual Violence.

**July 15 (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.

**July 30 – Minneapolis, Minn. (online):** Phil Arkow will present “One Health and the ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Preparing a Protocol Response to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect” at the [AVMA Convention](#).

**Sept. 15 – Burgos, Spain (online):** Phil Arkow will present a keynote address on “The Interconnection Between Animal and Human Abuse and Neglect” at the [One Welfare World Conference](#).

**Nov. 4-5 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online):** The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will hold its [National Violence Link Conference](#). The event will be followed by a half-day Violence Link network-building event for agencies in the Ottawa region.

**Nov. 6-7 – Maple Ridge, B.C., Canada (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “Veterinarians’ Response to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” for the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association/Society of BC Veterinarians Chapter](#).

**Nov. 11 (online):** Massachusetts Assistant District Attorney Erin Aiello and Janette Reeve with Humane Society International will present a webinar on “Preparing for Court: Tips for Effective Testimony about Animal Crimes,” including special considerations for cases related to intimate partner violence, for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

**Nov. 11 (online):** Phil Arkow will present on The Link for [One Health Partners](#).

**Nov. 18 – Alexandria, Va. (online):** Phil Arkow will discuss “How Pet-Inclusive Social Work and Cross-Reporting Can Improve Delivery of Domestic Violence Victim Services” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [National Advocacy Learning Center](#).



## 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.

### Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse  
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