



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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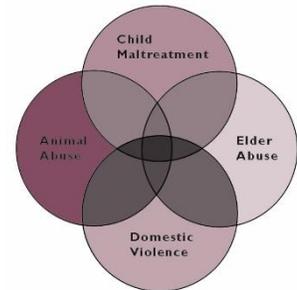
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK Crime Commission Learns About The Link

Florida's [Broward County Crime Commission](#) convened a panel of national Link authorities in April who presented what Commission CEO James DePelisi called a "lightning-in-a-bottle agenda" that addressed "The Beast from Within: The Link between Animal Cruelty and Human Cruelty." 39 participants in the half-day event, that was eligible for CEUs in mental health, medicine, nursing, and law enforcement, explored how animal abuse and human abuse are partners in crime.

In addition to National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow's presentation on "Understanding Animal Cruelty as Intimate Partner Violence," participants learned about:

"The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence"



Michelle Welch

Michelle Welch, Senior Assistant Attorney General in Virginia's pioneering statewide Animal Law Unit, offered case studies from some of the 1,878 matters her office has handled over the past six years in assisting local prosecutors as well as those in the U.K., Greece, Colombia, and Spain. She emphasized that Margaret Mead's famous quote – that "the worst thing that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it" – doesn't necessarily mean that every child who harms animals becomes a serial killer. "But it's definitely a red flag and not something that you want to take lightly," she said.

Welch described three types of Links:

- The **animal/child abuse Link** often manifests in child sexual abuse as a way to keep the child silent about the incidents and warn child that she or he could be next. "Just think about what message it sends to the child that he's killing her animals," she said. In addition, persons who engage in animal sexual abuse are more likely to engage in child sexual abuse. Children who are violent against animals are more likely to have been sexually abused.

- Animal abuse becomes a coercive control device in **domestic violence** as a way to gain control or exert revenge over the human victim; it becomes part of the pattern of indoctrination by which the abuser wears down the victim over the years by exerting power and control.
- Animal abuse in the **elder abuse** context is more multifaceted and often indicates a senior on welfare, or lacking adequate utilities, or having too many animals, or who is a victim of a family member's financial exploitation. "It's very complicated. Make sure you look for the red flags," she advised.

She focused on law enforcement issues involved with dog- and cock-fighting, which often involve other crimes including assaults, homicides, prostitution, child endangerment, tax law violations, illegal weapons, narcotics, gambling, moonshine, and larceny. She encouraged law enforcement agencies to educate their drug and gang units on these Links. "The more I see animal fighting the more I realize that the animals are commodities and it's all about the money," she said. "There's an underbelly of criminal behavior."

She recognized that animal sexual abuse is "icky" and a topic that "no one wants to talk about," but it's important to prosecute and sentence these cases because it often leads to other deviant sexual behavior including child pornography and child predation. She encouraged investigators, prosecutors and judges to treat bestiality like any other crime.

Welch described how animal abuse is also linked to other crimes, including narcotics, animal fighting and property crimes. But progress is being made, and she noted that the inclusion of pets in domestic violence protection orders is becoming so common in Virginia that judges are automatically even including the names of the animals in the orders. "I don't have to sell judges on the significance of animal cruelty anymore," she said. "People are taking it much more seriously."

"A Common Bond"



Mary Lou Randour of the [Animal Welfare Institute](#) described the motivations underlying the publication in 2008 of the book she co-wrote, *"A Common Bond,"* which introduced child protection workers to the concept that animals are important parts of children's lives and that animal abuse is a common occurrence and often occurs within the context of family violence. The book presents scientific evidence of the impact upon children who witness and commit animal abuse.

Mary Lou Randour

"Family violence has two-legged victims and four-legged victims," she said, encouraging child welfare workers to be curious and ask questions about pets in the clients' families. Surveys of children have reported that when asked who they feel most comfortable talking to when they are uncomfortable or sad, or who in their lives they trust the most, significant numbers report their pets.

Randour encouraged anyone working with children – therapists, teachers, visiting nurses, pastors, or even nextdoor neighbors – to be more curious and ask children about their pets, their names, and what happens to them when they misbehave. Doing so opens up a window into a child's environment. She acknowledged, however, that some groups, such as teachers and child protective services, do not want to bring up the question of animal abuse because they don't know what to do with the answer. "We need to treat these questions like a fire drill do people know what to do," she said.

The Beast from Within: The Alarming Problem of Animal Sex Abuse



Trailblazing researcher [M. Jenny Edwards](#) described her work in building a database of animal sexual abuse offenders, incidents and case outcomes to help participants better understand the trends and impact on animals, individuals and society of an insidious problem which many people are uncomfortable discussing. The problem of animal sexual abuse is growing, it's a form of sexual assault, it normalizes deviant behavior, and "it's not as rare as you thought," she advised. Bestiality has significant and measurable Links to other criminal and antisocial behaviors; strong and enforceable laws are key.

M. Jenny Edwards

She described numerous criminal justice, psychological and medical reasons why professionals can no longer ignore the issue of people having sex with animals:

- **Criminal justice:** Inmates admitting to bestiality include 23% of sexual murderers, 37% of sexually violent predators, 38-56% of adult sex offenders, and 81% of juvenile sex offenders. Although animal cruelty is often involved, bestiality should be considered a form of sexual abuse and assault and should be codified in the general criminal code rather than within anti-cruelty laws; currently, some states still call the offense sodomy or a crime against nature. The trend is to call it animal sexual abuse to put it more in line with child sexual abuse.
- **Psychological:** Animal sexual abuse is Linked with many mental health conditions and antisocial behaviors which may be difficult to detect. Practitioners are skilled in hiding what they do and they do not see their actions as being a mental health disorder. Offenders are rarely given psychological evaluation and there are no effective treatments.
- **Medical:** Sex with animals runs the risk of injury and death to both parties and animal sexual offenders delay or avoid medical treatment. Zoonotic disease transmission is an issue: "Dogs lick their behinds and offenders rarely use a condom," she noted. It's also a public health issue because this unhealthy lifestyle adds fear, anxiety and guilt to a community's sense of safety and well-being.

She described offenders as ranging in age from 14 to 81, mostly men but with a concerning increase in the number of women, who may be rural residents with low education levels but also urban professionals such as veterinarians, EMTs and professors. Most are gainfully employed, many are in human relationships, and 54% have criminal histories. She identified six types of offenders: predatory, non-predatory, mixed victims (humans and animals), voyeuristic, violent, and necrophiliac. The average age of first sexual contact with animals is between 10 and 13, but the average age at arrest is 38. "That's a really long time for offenses to be happening that we don't know about," Edwards said.

They include adult and child sex offenders. She speculated that some sex offenders turn to animals because they are under strict punitive mandates as to where they can go and who they can be around.

Animal sexual abuse cases are seriously underreported and often the result of another investigation, from a traffic stop or welfare check to a domestic violence or child pornography case, or from an electronics repair. Many offenders are charged with or plea-bargain down to lewd and lascivious behavior or trespassing to avoid embarrassment. Animal care and control agencies may not break out

bestiality cases specifically, and if the animals involved are wildlife or livestock they may not know about these cases. Consequently, gathering research on these cases is limited, but growing.

Children are often victimized. Edwards reported that 32% of animal sex offenders also abuse children and female partners, and that 50% of child victims are under age 10. One-seventh of these children are forced to have sex with a family pet. 70% of animal pornography also involves child pornography. “This sets up a lifetime of problems for these kids,” she advised.

She recognized that the Internet has fueled an increasing ability for offenders to reach out and seek animals for sex, seek other people to have sex with their own animals, and to offer their own animals and children for sex. There are online forums where practitioners learn the how-tos of grooming an animal for sex, treating an injured animal at home, or avoiding an investigation.

Edwards identified several theories why offenders have sex with animals:

- **Neurological:** brain damage or disorders, genetics, or substance abuse.
- **Psychological:** autism, a lack of empathy, schizophrenia, psychosis, and possibly sexual orientation.
- **Sociological:** a result of early learning, reinforcement-based, thrill-seeking, a means of seeking attachment, or an expression of dominance and anger.
- **Cultural differences:** in some cultures, sex with animals is considered a rite of passage, an acceptable preparation and training for marriage, or an acceptable outlet outside of marriage.

“It’s worse that you think,” Edwards concluded, noting how animal sexual abuse is Linked with human trafficking, animal brothels and sex parties, coercion of children and vulnerable adults, solicitation, online manipulation and exploitation, extortion of human participants, and pornography involving animals. “If you can do it with a person you can do it with an animal,” she said, citing cases that involved fondling, molestation, oral and anal penetration, rape with objects, use of bondage and restraints, torture, and mutilation. Of growing concern is a dramatic rise in “zoosadism” – animal sexual torture.

“Not addressing this issue doesn’t make it go away. This behavior is not just about fondling your pet. The fact is that animals are injured even if the injuries are not immediately visible. The animals are always behaviorally injured and that sets up a whole other line of problems. There’s all sorts of evidence that bestiality has been going on from the beginning of recorded history, but we’re still not talking about it.”

Georgia Gang Investigators Learn About Links with Animal Fighting



Jessica K. Rock, Assistant District Attorney for the Towaliga, Ga., Judicial Court and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for Animal Crimes in Georgia, presented a program on Animal Fighting Investigations and the Gang/Cartel Connection to the Georgia Gang Investigators Association. Rock is also a statewide animal crimes prosecutor and trainer.

Canadian Parliament Weighs Mandatory Training for Judges on The Link

A major expansion of Link awareness among judges is being considered in Canada, where a bill that would amend the Judges Act and Criminal Code to require judges' continuing education seminars to include courses related to sexual assault law will also include training on The Link between animal abuse and human violence.



Bill C-3 has passed through Parliament's Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The bill is scheduled to go on to a Third Reading and, if passed, will become law. The Committee accepted [Humane Canada](#)'s proposal to include training on the violence link for the judiciary, said Humane Canada CEO Barbara Cartwright.

The purposes of the measure are to affirm the need for survivors of sexual violence to have faith in the criminal justice system, and to recognize the effect that sexual assault proceedings can have on those affected and the potential for those proceedings to revictimize survivors. It is also designed to recognize the importance of judges participating in continuing legal education concerning sexual offenses including bestiality and bestiality in the presence of a child.

Amy Fitzgerald and Betty Barrett, co-founders of the Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group ([AIPARG](#)) at the University of Windsor and the authors of several key Link studies (*See the [December 2019](#), [August 2020](#), [March 2019](#) and [March 2021 LINK-Letters](#)*) testified in support of the bill. Fitzgerald is also a member of Humane Canada's Violence Link Coalition Steering Committee.

"It is essential that judges who will be deliberating in cases of sexual violence have a contextual understanding of its relation to domestic violence and other forms of violence in the home, including violence against companion animals," Fitzgerald testified at the hearing. "Animal abuse is part of the constellation of abusive behaviors enacted by perpetrators of domestic violence. Domestic violence involving animal abuse results in more severe consequences for survivors than domestic violence victims without animal abuse."

Barrett added that "More severe and frequent abuse of animals was associated with more severe and frequent abuse of women by their partners, including sexual victimization. Approximately 1 in 8 survivors of physical domestic violence also experienced threats or an act of violence against their pets."

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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.

DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

\$2.5 Million in Grants Announced for Sheltering Pet Victims of Domestic Violence

The U.S. Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) has announced its 2021 schedule for Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance Grants. Five \$500,000 grants for a 36-month period of performance, beginning Oct. 1, will increase the number of shelter beds and transitional housing options to meet the needs of domestic violence victims who also need shelter for their pets. Grants may also be used to provide training on The Link between animal abuse and neglect and domestic violence and best practices in designing and delivering services that protect victims' confidentiality.

An [optional pre-application webinar](#) to review the grants process will be held on May 20, from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. A preliminary grants application must be submitted by June 15 to grants.gov, with a full application due by June 29 to JustGrants. [Details are available online](#) from OVC.

Pennsylvania Considers Pet Protection Order Legislation



Reps. Sappey (left) and Mihalek

A bill introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly on March 26 would add the Commonwealth to the list of 35 states that have already enacted pet protection order provisions that allow courts to include companion animals in domestic violence restraint orders. **Pennsylvania HB1031** would amend the Protection from Abuse Act to give judges explicit authority to order defendants to refrain from abusing victims' pets. It would allow courts to grant temporary ownership rights over companion animals in protection orders, and direct defendants from possessing, contacting, attempting to contact, transferring, or relocating companion animals or entering the property of anyone sheltering the animal. Final agreements would allow courts to direct defendants to not abuse, harass, stalk, threaten, or use physical force against the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

The bipartisan measure was introduced by Reps. Christina D. Sappey (D-Chester County) and Natalie Mihalek (R-Allegheny County). "There is no reason any animal should have to go through unimaginable anguish and pain at the hands of someone who is supposed to take care of them. It is our duty as legislators to recognize that the time has come to go even further to protect and serve all of our constituents, including humans and animals," they wrote. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Online Directory of Pet Sheltering for Survivors Adds Social Media Components

Animal Welfare Institute

SAFE HAVENS  MAPPING PROJECT

In 2011, the Animal Welfare Institute began working on Safe Havens for Pets, an [online directory](#) for survivors of domestic violence to provide information on where and how to find safe shelter for both themselves and their pets. AWI has just taken this program a step further by creating social media accounts to raise awareness of these resources and to engage with the online domestic violence community. The new handles are @safehavensforpets on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), and @safehavens4pets on [Twitter](#).

National Summit to Spotlight Breaking Barriers for Survivors and Pets

The [Urban Resource Institute](#) (URI) and the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) will convene what will be the 2nd National Summit on the intersection of domestic violence and pets with a panel of nationally-renowned experts representing the domestic violence and animal welfare sectors.



The May 26 virtual event will include the results of *Domestic Violence and Pets: Breaking Barriers to Safety and Healing*, the largest and first truly national survey of domestic violence survivors about how fear for the welfare of pets left behind and lack of shelter for people and pets together impacted their ability to leave an abusive situation and access safety. Registration is free and [available here](#).

Conducted virtually, the event will focus on strengthening the dialogue and relationship between the animal welfare funding community with the domestic violence direct services sector. The goal is to bring more awareness, solutions and resources to both sectors to help adults, children and pets find safety and healing from domestic violence by being together. Panelists will be:

- **Nathaniel M. Fields**, CEO of URI, the largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the U.S., whose People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program is the largest to provide co-living shelter for victims and their pets ([See the January 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).
- **Katie Ray-Jones**, CEO of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the only 24/7 national domestic violence crisis line.
- **Aimee Gilbreath**, President of PetSmart Charities, which has announced \$2.1 million in grants to U.S. and Canadian programs serving at-risk pet parents experiencing domestic abuse and other crises ([See the November 2020 LINK-Letter](#)).
- **Kim Van Syoc**, Executive Director of the Banfield Foundation, which in 2019 announced an ambitious four-year plan of Safer Together grants to contribute \$1 million to improve the lives of animals caught up in domestic violence ([See the April 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).
- **Nancy Blaney**, Director of the Animal Welfare Institute, who will describe the implementation of the Pet And Women Safety Act (PAWS Act) which is awarding \$2.5 million for shelter, support and training services to help shelters care for survivors' pets ([See the January 2021 LINK-Letter](#)).
- **Kelli Owens**, Executive Director of the NY State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.
- **Hope Dawson**, domestic violence survivor and former PALS client.

Moderating the panel will be animal expert and author **Steve Dale**, nationally syndicated radio and TV host and member of the National Link Coalition's steering committee.

The panel will discuss:

- The URI/NDVH survey results, the largest U.S. nationwide survey of domestic violence survivors on the topic of domestic violence and pets.
- How to increase awareness of this issue nationally.
- Flexible and sustainable funding to support domestic violence victims and their pets.
- Other models of pet support beyond domestic violence shelters, such as fostering programs.
- Scaling, replication and technical support through URI's Community Response Model.

URI convened its first National Summit in 2015, bringing together a panel of nationally renowned experts on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence ([See the December 2015 LINK-Letter](#)).

“Clare’s Law” May Include Animal Abuse in Domestic Violence Risk Assessments

The Canadian province of Alberta has enacted “[Clare’s Law](#)” which enables people who feel at risk of domestic violence to get information about their partners so they can make informed choices about their safety. The Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence Act enables concerned members of an intimate partner relationship to find out if their partner has a history of domestic violence, stalking or harassment, breaches of no-contact orders, and other relevant acts which are believed to include a history of animal abuse.



Alberta defines Domestic Violence as the actual or threatened use of force in an intimate partner relationship that may include a single act of violence, or a number of acts forming a pattern of abuse that include threats to harm children, other family members or pets. An Integrated Threat and Risk Assessment Center, a provincially-run program with experts in risk assessment and domestic violence, will conduct risk assessments to determine if applicants are at risk from the partner and, if so, to what degree. The level of risk may be used to assist in providing social supports (if requested) and potentially mitigate risk for violence.

Clare’s Law was named in memory of a young woman who was killed by an ex-boyfriend with a history of violence against women.

The new law, which took effect April 1, is modelled on similar policies in the United Kingdom, Australia and Saskatchewan. In addition, Clare’s Law provides multiple “access points” for individuals to connect with relevant social supports and/or member(s) of a police-based victim service unit. In 2019, family violence accounted for 30% of police reported violence in Canada. Alberta’s rate of domestic violence is among the highest in Canada.

Feelin’ Groovy: Harbor House Raises \$68,000 for Survivors’ Pet Care



Since 10 years to a dog is equal to 70 years to a human, [Harbor House of Central Florida](#) celebrated its 10th Annual Paws for Peace Walk with a “groovy” 70’s theme. Tie-dye was all in fashion at the event on April 17th which raised over \$68,000 to help keep pets and their people safe and together. More than 200 in-person walkers and 120 virtual walkers showed their support for the 1970s-style celebration to raise funds for Harbor House’s providing safe shelter, food and veterinary care for the pet survivors of domestic violence. Dignitaries in attendance included the Orange County Sheriff and the Orlando Mayor and two Orlando City Commissioners.



CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

Parents and Foster Parents Alerted to Childhood Animal Abuse

Several recent articles published for mainstream audiences are offering parents and foster parents a glimpse into animal abuse as it impacts healthy child development and behavior.

Bundoo, a physician-driven resource where expecting and new parents can get information that bridges professional healthcare experts and the social community, published [guidelines](#) from Florida child psychologist Eva Benmeleh. Noting that, “Animal abuse or cruelty has been associated with a variety of childhood psychological and/or emotional issues, including negative childhood exploration, depression, anger, a sign of future violent behavior, or a signal that a child is being abused,” she recommends that identifying early signs of childhood animal abuse is a signal to seek help.



Eva Benmeleh

She writes that while animal abuse may be an example of the graduation hypothesis – that children may start abusing animals at a young age, then graduate to abusing people as they age – animal cruelty can sometimes result from a child’s misunderstanding of an animal’s feelings and viewing an animal as a toy instead of a living thing. It is important to consider a child’s animal cruelty behaviors in the context of their age. She offers age-specific approaches to counseling a child and when to seek professional psychiatric help when underlying physical or sexual abuse or antisocial personality disorder are present.



Two earlier articles in the Foster Parent College’s *Connections* newsletter address a relatively unexplored issue: the implications of animal cruelty for children in foster care. Charley Joyce, LICSW, [described the importance](#) of assessing the seriousness of a foster child’s abuse of animals by reviewing the intent, pattern and frequency of the child’s behavior. Innocent mistreatment of an animal “will usually be extinguished” by the animal’s reaction – snarling or biting back, for example – reinforced by the parent’s explanation.

Charley Joyce

But a consistent desire to hurt animals, and a lack of response to parental interventions, could signal more serious concerns. “We know that children are in foster care often as a result of abuse and neglect. As a result, a child who has been abused and is angry might displace the anger onto a vulnerable animal,” Joyce writes. “There might also be an emotional gratification for the child in being able to be in complete control and dominance of an animal’s safety, pain and life.”

In a [follow-up article](#), Joyce emphasizes that “Intentional childhood cruelty to animals can be linked to a lack of development of a conscience. It is essential that youth who display intentional cruelty to animals receive psychological assessment and treatment.”

A comprehensive treatment model should include:

- establishing clear boundaries for the child’s contact with animals;
- providing information to authorities in other settings where the child might have contact with animals;
- providing appropriate therapy if the child is a victim of abuse or neglect;
- teaching skills for effective anger recognition and expression through empathy-focused therapy;
- and involving the child’s parents in the therapy.

Journal Seeks Papers on Children’s Bonds with Animals

The *Childhood Education* journal has issued a call for papers for a special issue which will focus on humane education and the child-animal bond. The premise of the issue is that accepting responsibility and learning to care for nonhuman living beings is a route to building compassion in young children.

The editors note that research has just begun to address some of the complex questions that demand fuller, more nuanced answers. They seek academic papers addressing such questions as how and why do behaviorally healthy relationships between children and animals succeed or fail? What evidence suggests that early experiences with animals shape later prosocial behaviors such as empathy, compassion, and altruism? What animal welfare considerations enter into these bonds to make them reciprocally rewarding for children and animals? How does this unique form of interspecies attachment prompt children to become animal guardians/advocates rather than treat animals as playthings or make them targets of cruelty? How does a secure bond (or lack thereof) affect cognitive and affective functioning during early childhood? How do professionals who work with young children include interactions with animals as part of their practice?

Details about the process and how to apply are available [here](#).

ANIMAL HOARDING... and THE LINK **New Website Provides Comprehensive Approach to Hoarding Problems**

After over a year of work, the Fairfax County, Virginia Hoarding Committee has launched a [new website](#) that offers detailed resources for responding to hoarding issues, including animal hoarding. This group was the first hoarding task force in the U.S., formed in 1998 following a fire at a heavily cluttered building that claimed four lives.



In a statement, the committee recognized the need to involve the entire community in responding to hoarding. “Because hoarding is a complex behavioral problem that creates a dangerous living situation to the individual(s) involved, it often requires a multi-faceted response,” the committee said. “Neglect or self-neglect associated with the elderly, children, or animals may require emergency interventions, while structures with overloaded support systems could pose immediate dangers to the occupants, first responders and the community.”

Groups represented on the committee include Animal Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Code Compliance, Mental Health Services, Fire and Rescue, Housing and Community Development, Police, and others. National Link Coalition co-founder Randy Lockwood, a resident of Fairfax County, serves on the Committee and has provided assistance specifically addressing the animal hoarding component.

The website provides specifics on Hoarding Disorder and animal hoarding as well as sections offering advice to families, treatment options, links to research and media, and a guide to resources available in the county. It also features a slide show on “How to Create A Hoarding Task Force.” The committee hopes that other communities will use the site as a template for providing resources in their own area.

ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK

Elders' Home Assessment Checklist Includes Pet Issues

The National Link Coalition has recently learned about a seniors' services center that has taken the welcome step of including questions about clients' animals and welfare in their home assessments.

[One Senior Place](#), based in Brevard County, Fla., with a second location in the Orlando area, is a one-stop resource center for all types of senior products and services. Information, counseling, referrals, educational events, and direct access to independent senior-focused businesses are among its many services.



Staff use a 22-page home assessment intake form when evaluating clients' needs and concerns. Included are five areas which identify animals, welfare and safety issues affecting them and the seniors, and cross-reporting issues:

- **BASIC INFORMATION** lists the number of pets, and asks if there are more than four (which could indicate an animal hoarding situation.) The questionnaire lists the name of the veterinarian; the pets' primary caretaker; and each animal's name, age, gender, species, and markings.
- **PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF ANIMALS** allows interviewers to describe each pet's body condition score, coat conditions, visible abrasions, and detailed signs of physical injuries or behavioral issues such as aggression or submissive hiding, plus how long the owner has had each animal.
- **SAFETY ASSESSMENT** is a checklist where the interviewer can identify such issues as walking or bathing the pet, tripping over it, cleaning up after it, risk of disease transmission, bite risk, and transportation to veterinarians as either a major, minor or no risk.
- **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS** allow yes-or-no answers as to whether the pets have adequate food, water, sanitation, kenneling facilities, exercise, and play. It also asks whether there is anyone in the home who doesn't get along with the pets and whether the owner has expressed a need for help with pet care, veterinary transport, exercise, or grooming.
- **CROSS REPORTING** asks whether the owner has past reports of family violence, a history of animal services visiting the home, or law enforcement being called out to alleviate aggression.



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RAISING LINK AWARENESS

Link Training in Ukraine Continues to Expand



Efforts to raise awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence in Ukraine (See the [November 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) are continuing, with training now expanding to an 11th city in the former Soviet republic. Coordinator Mark Randell tells *The LINK-Letter* that programs in March reached students and other professionals at the Technical University Faculty of Law in Lutsk. Earlier this year, a Link program was

presented to children between 8 and 13 in Chernivtsi on Valentine’s Day as part of a Naturewatch Foundation campaign focused on building hope for the future by reaching a younger generation. Ukraine’s new police service is also beginning to appreciate the Link content being offered through the training programs.

Randell also described a tragic case in a village near Kherson where a 7-year-old girl named Maria was raped and killed by a man who was known by the community to have been previously responsible for killing cats by hitting them on the ground. Unfortunately, the seriousness of his acts was not understood and the animal cruelty was not reported.

Marin County, Calif. Grows Link Awareness

119 multi-disciplinary participants attended a Link webinar on April 13. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow was the keynote speaker on “Connecting the Dots: Addressing The Link between Animal, Domestic, Child, and Elder Abuse to Create a Safer Community.” The cross-disciplinary event was co-hosted by the [Marin Humane Society](#), which describes itself as “not just animal people but people people,” and the [Center for Domestic Peace](#), which describes its work with survivors as being like “a plane that never lands.”



From top, Center for Domestic Peace Executive Director Donna Garske, National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow, and Marin Humane Society CEO/President Nancy McKenney led the multi-disciplinary program.

Link Cases in a Pandemic: “Disaster Without, Disaster Within”



Indianapolis researcher Andrew Campbell, whose work has correlated domestic violence and animal control incidents and the increased risk of Link violence during the COVID-19 lockdowns, has compared the pandemic risks to similar increases in family violence following natural disasters. He presented one such webinar last fall for the Positive Links coalition in New Mexico (*See the [September 2020 LINK-Letter](#)*) and presented an updated version in April for the

Justice Clearinghouse. The latest webinar, “Disaster Without, Disaster Within: Natural Disasters and Family Violence” is now available in the [Justice Clearinghouse archives](#).

Los Angeles SPCA Designs Humane Education Based on The Link

Expanding upon many animal shelters’ programs that conduct humane education programs to inspire children to be kind to animals, humane education at spcaLA uses a Link approach as a form of violence prevention and animal protection informed by The Link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. The SPCA’s programs aim to support the development of healthy relationships and compassionate communities as one way to prevent animal cruelty and interpersonal violence.



The spcaLA [Violence Prevention and Humane Education](#) programs include:

- engaging youth and children in empathy-based animal welfare education and social-emotional learning;
- encouraging youth advocacy for animals, others, and themselves;
- offering violence intervention and support services for adults and families.

In addition to more traditional humane education programs aimed at children, the spcaLA has the Animal Safety Net program (*See the [November 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) that offers free, temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence survivors. The Animal Safety Net’s Youth and Families component offers animal-assisted programming for domestic violence-affected families, in partnership with local domestic violence agencies.

The Violence Prevention and Humane Education campaign includes five specific web pages designed to aid in the recognition and response to suspected animal cruelty by [teachers](#), [law enforcement](#) personnel, [veterinarians](#), [social services workers](#), and concerned [parents and neighbors](#). Each page offers a series of FAQs about animal cruelty’s potential indication of mental disorders and family dynamics, the motivations for animal abuse, positive aspects of the human-animal bond, inter-agency collaborations, conditions specific to that profession, how to talk to children about animal abuse, and procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK



Wyoming Becomes 47th State to Ban Bestiality

Wyoming became the 47th state to make sex with animals illegal when Gov. Mark Gordon signed **HB 46** into law on March 30. The measure creates the crime of bestiality as a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison and/or a \$1,000 fine. Normal, ordinary and accepted practices in animal husbandry, artificial insemination and veterinary medicine are exempted, as is typical in other similar state statutes. It takes effect on July 1.

The new law creates a new statute, W.S. § 6-4-601, which defines “sexual act with an animal” to include any direct physical contact between the genitals of one and the mouth, anus or genitals of the other. Evidence of penetration need not be proven. Causing, aiding or abetting another in engaging in a sexual act with an animal, visually recording such activities, or sexually stimulating an animal are prohibited.

Bestiality or animal sexual abuse is closely Linked with other sexual crimes, particularly child sexual abuse and child pornography, sex trafficking, and the “dark web” (*See the [August 2019](#) and [December 2020 LINK-Letters](#)*).

News from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS



Allie Phillips

Link Coalition Coalescing in Lansing, Michigan

Allie Phillips, who founded Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)[®], is helping to organize a new community Link coalition based in the Lansing, Mich. area. The group, temporarily called the Mid-Michigan Link Coalition, already includes representatives from the Ingham County Animal Shelter, Preuss Pets, the Ingham County Sheriff’s Department, a long-term hotel for possible pet-friendly transitional housing, and two domestic violence shelters – End Violent Encounters (EVE) and Michigan State University’s Safe Place. A homeless shelter is also considering joining.

The coalition plans to work together to offer training and create a safety net for domestic violence survivors going into shelter and needing help with their pets. The coalition’s immediate focus is Ingham County, where the state capital of Lansing is located, but plans include expanding rapidly into four or five surrounding counties. Right now, there are no pet-friendly SAF-T shelters in the area and it’s a significant barrier to safety for abused women and their pets.

Keystone Link Unveils New Website

Our newly-formed Link coalition in Pennsylvania, Keystone Link, has announced the unveiling of its first [website](#). Subtitled Breaking the Cycle of Abuse, the website will feature details about how its members are engaging Pennsylvanians in greater awareness of The Link between animal and human abuse; education and training resources; and advocacy campaigns aimed at prevention and intervention programs that break the cycle of violence. Much of the website’s content is still waiting to be uploaded, but it already features a video of the Harcum College Criminal Justice program roundtable discussion on The Link (*See the [April 2021 LINK-Letter](#)*), news media articles about the gaps in the Violence Against Women Act, and resources from the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The Humane Society of Harrisburg built the website.

SOCIAL WORK... AND THE LINK

Spanish Social Work Journal Calls for Recognizing Impact of Pets

A new article in the Spanish journal *Trabajo Social Hoy* (*Social Work Today*) is arguing that while it previously seemed “absurd” to include in family evaluations the role of pets in family dynamics, today there is abundant evidence that animals not only influence family relationships and can help reveal family dysfunction and situations of abuse and maltreatment. Carmen Caravaca Llamas of the University of Murcia conducted extensive bibliographic research to describe “pets in the social report.” Her findings “explain the socio-affective dimension of pets in the family and their potential as an indicator of the reality of the coexistence nucleus.”

“Before, it seemed absurd to include in professional evaluations the role played by the pet or animals in the human family,” she writes. “Now it seems a determining factor to be considered in social reports and systemic interventions because in many investigations it has already shown that the animal not only influences the family relationship but also occupies a place and can be an element that reveals to the professional family dysfunction or even situations of abuse or abuse.”

-- Caravaca, C. (2020). *Las mascotas en el informe social [Pets in the social report]*. *Trabajo Social Hoy*, 90, 49-66

THE LINK... in the LITERATURE

Link Cited in Study of Indonesian Stray Animals

In what is believed to be the first reference to The Link between animal abuse and human violence in Indonesia, a research paper has cited several U.S. and British authorities to note that the large number of stray and abandoned animals in the Asian island nation can lead to violence against animals because people who do not understand animals torture them. While not specifically pointing to how animal abuse can lead to human violence, the article – which focuses on the stray animal problem and a lack of adoption facilities for strays -- cites 10 research articles that link animal crime to the scope and severity of crimes against humans.

-- Nurfitriyani, S.J., Akbar, Z.I., Rahajeng, S.D., Leonardo, C., & Warnars, H.L.H.C. (2019). *MYANIMACH: Aplikasi mobile untuk membantu binatang yang diabaikan*. *Jurnal Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknik Informatika*, 12(2), 155-164.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

As the 2021 legislative sessions roll along, 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 **112 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



Canada Bill C-3 would require judges to receive training on the Violence Link between animal abuse and sexual and domestic violence in continuing legal education. The bill passed Parliament's Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and if passed following a Third Reading would become law.



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 homeless emergency shelter and transitional housing programs to allow residents to keep pets. It is in the Assembly Housing & Community Development Committee. **SB 344** would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop and administer a program to award grants to shelters for the homeless to provide shelter, food and basic veterinary services for residents' pets. It is in the Senate Appropriations Committee. (It is not clear whether these bills would cover homeless persons who are fleeing domestic violence.)



Connecticut SB 6 would have added "a pattern of coercive controlling behavior" that includes cruelty or the threat of cruelty to animals to the provisions by which a family member may apply to the Superior Court for restraining order relief. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



District of Columbia B23-0181, the Intrafamilial Offenses and Anti-Stalking Orders Amendment Act of 2020, was signed into law on Jan. 13 as **D.C. Act 23-571**. It clarifies procedures by which victims of intrafamily offense, sexual assault, child sex trafficking, 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/household member, or cruelty to animals owned by an intimate partner, or family/household member. Courts may also issue an anti-stalking order if the petitioner fears a household animal is endangered by the respondent. **It is expected to take effect May 18.**



Illinois HB 1907 would require the Department of Human Services to establish a grant program, incorporating third-party funding and services, for counties with populations greater than 200,000 to support domestic violence shelters and service programs that assist domestic violence survivors' pets. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



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. The bills were in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**



Maine LD 535 would allow courts adjudicating the dissolution of marriages to consider the well-being of companion animals in the disposition of property. The bill **was carried over to a future legislative session.**



Maryland SB 159/HB 281 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 bills passed both houses and were sent to the Governor.



Massachusetts S.939/H.1820 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. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



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 passed the Senate and was sent to the House.



Nevada AB 350 would increase the penalty for harming or killing a companion animal from a Category C felony to a Category B felony if the act is committed to threaten, intimidate or terrorize a person. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary 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/S3039 would expand existing 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 bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Children & Families Committees.



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.



New York A3985 (“Bella’s Law”) would require the Office of Children & Family Services to investigate possible domestic violence or abuse for persons who have been accused of animal abuse. The bill is in the Committee on Children & Families.



Pennsylvania HB1031 would amend the Protection from Abuse Act to allow courts to grant temporary ownership rights over companion animals in protection orders and direct defendants from possessing, contacting, attempting to contact, transferring, or relocating companion animals or entering the property of anyone sheltering the animal. Final agreements would allow courts to direct defendants to not abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or use physical force against the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H 5569 would permit family courts to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint. The House Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study.



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. The bill is in the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee.



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.

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



Maryland SB 159/HB 281 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 bills passed both houses and were sent to the Governor.



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 Child Maltreatment



U.S. H.R. 763, the Child and Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to require that data collected by the federal government from state child protection agencies include information about animal abuse as a risk factor for child abuse. The bill is in the House Education and Labor Committee.



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 passed the House and the Senate Judiciary Committee and was sent to the full Senate.



Florida SB 96 would establish a legislative intent to require reporting and cross-reporting protocols between child protective and animal services personnel based on The Link between the welfare of family animals and child safety and protection. It would require child protective investigators to report known or suspected animal cruelty and grant them criminal, civil and administrative immunity for such reports. It would require animal control officers to report suspected child abuse to the state hotline. The Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Animal Control Association would jointly develop a one-hour training module on The Link and on timely cross-reporting procedures. It would also redefine bestiality as “sexual contact with an animal” and ban animal pornography. The bill passed the Senate 40-0 and is in the House.



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. The bill was in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned**.



Massachusetts H.1716/S. 943 would expand the power of Department of Children & Families employees and contractors to report suspected animal abuse over a longer period of time. Current law allows such cross-reporting only during their specific 10-15 day investigation or evaluation timeframe. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



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 Agri-culture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.



New York A474 and A3726 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. **A474** is in the Agriculture Committee and **A3726** is in the Codes 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. The bill was removed from the table.

 **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. It is in the Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee.

 **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 have increased the penalties for engaging in sexual contact with an animal. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Florida SB 96/HB 7039** would redefine bestiality as “sexual contact with an animal” and ban animal pornography. It would also establish a legislative intent to require reporting and cross-reporting protocols between child protective and animal services personnel based on The Link between the welfare of family animals and child safety and protection. They would raise bestiality from a 1st-degree misdemeanor to a 3rd-degree felony. **SB 96** passed the Senate 40-0 and is in the House Health & Human Services Committee.

 **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 House and was sent to the Governor.

 **Missouri HB 373** would require mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding; it is in the Rules Committee.

 **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.

 **Washington HB 1292** would create a new crime of providing harmful material to a minor, including bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture, as a gross misdemeanor or Class C felony. The bill is in the Public Safety Committee.



West Virginia HB 2827 would create a new felony offense of sexual crimes against animals. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Wyoming HB46 defines and creates the misdemeanor crime of bestiality; The bill passed the House 60-0 and the Senate 30-0. On March 30 it was signed into law and takes effect on July 1.



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. The bill was in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**



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 bills are in the respective Agriculture Committees.



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.



New York A2661 would define animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption. 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.

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 Rules 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 has been retained** in the House Environment and Agriculture Committee for action in the 2nd year of the session.



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.

Cross-Reporting



Florida HB 47 and SB 216 (“Allie’s Law”) would require veterinarians, technicians and other animal treatment providers to report suspected animal cruelty (other than in 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. **HB 47 and HB 49** are in the House Regulatory Reform Subcommittee; **SB 216 and SB 218** are in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



Hawai’i HB1086/SB609 would require veterinarians to report animal injury, death or abuse to law enforcement where there is 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 and the Senate and was sent to the Governor.



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. The bill is in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



Massachusetts H.1716/S.943 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. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



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. The bill is in the House Committee on Crime Prevention.



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.



New York A 5780 would permit mandated reporters of child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Committee on Children and Families.



Oregon HB 3071 would add all elected officials of the state, state agencies, boards, commissions or departments, and all elected city and county elected officials, to those mandated to report suspected child and elder abuse. The bill is in the House Committee on Human Services.



Texas HB 4330 would require veterinarians to report suspected cruelty of non-livestock animals to the county sheriff or municipal police agency; reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative discipline. Texas veterinarians currently have immunity for reporting all animal abuse but are not mandated to do so. The bill is in the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence.

“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. The bills are in the Senate Governmental & Accountability and House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Subcommittees.



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 and joined **A 4533** 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/S 534 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 House Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study; the Senate bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



Connecticut H 6251 would have required police, prosecutors and judges to receive training or education on The Link between animal abuse and commission of crimes so that cases are prosecuted and adjudicated with an understanding and consideration of such information, and require any and all resolutions to animal cruelty cases to include mandatory psychological evaluation and sessions to identify the potential for more serious criminal behavior. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



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 Rules 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

Mother Gets 235-Month Sentence in Child and Animal Sex Abuse Case

A woman who sexually abused her 4-year-old son and the family dog and created digital videos of the abuse, which she traded with someone she met in an online room dedicated to animal sexual abuse, (See the [May 2019 LINK-Letter](#)) was sentenced to 235 months in prison followed by 10 years of supervised release and registration as a sex offender. The unusually stiff sentence in the “crush video” case came after Teela Moore Hendrix, 35, of Ooltewah, Tenn., pled guilty in a plea agreement before the Hon. Curtis L. Collier in the U.S. District County for the Eastern District of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the [Manchester \(Tenn.\) Times](#) reported.



Teela Moore Hendrix

Drug Bust Nets Four on Narcotics and Animal Cruelty Charges



From left: Lakisha Warner, Clay Robinson, Angelina Horskin, & Modestine Ingram

Sheriff’s deputies in Vero Beach, Fla. conducting a controlled drug buy arrested three people on crack cocaine charges and one person on animal cruelty charges for unlawful confinement of six dogs. [CBS12 News](#) reported that Lakisha Warner, Modestine Ingram and Clay Robinson were arrested on the drug charges by Indian River County deputies, and Angelina Horskin was arrested on the animal confinement charges. In searching for the cocaine and drug paraphernalia, six dogs that were allegedly housed in rotten wooden kennels without food or water were removed; the dogs were living in their own feces and their nails were reportedly severely overgrown.

Father Accused of Punching Pregnant Mother and Killing Puppy

Police in Hollywood, Fla., were reported to be looking for Tyson Pierre-Louis, 20, accused of punching the mother of his unborn child in the face as she watched helplessly while he beat her 9-month-old puppy to death. The incident, according to the [Orlando Sentinel](#), allegedly occurred despite a court order she had against him for previous domestic violence. According to court records, the woman, whose name was redacted, and her puppy, “Bai Bai,” accepted a ride from Pierre-Louis’s father who stopped to pick up his son. When she asked to be let out of the car because she had a no-contact restraining order against Pierre-Louis for a previous domestic violence incident, the son reportedly became enraged, accused her of disrespecting his father, snatched her cellphone and threw it on the ground, punched her in the right eye, and hurled the pit bull puppy to the ground because he said he had paid for it and could do anything with it he wanted. She and her 16-week-old unborn child were uninjured except for her black eye. Pierre-Louis is facing new charges that include aggravated battery on a pregnant woman, aggravated animal cruelty and abuse, criminal mischief, and violating the terms of his pre-trial release from jail on the prior domestic violence case.



Tyson Pierre-Louis

5 White Supremacists Indicted for Pagan Ritual Torture of Goat



Members of The Base pose with the severed animal's head in a photo found on a group member's phone.

Michael Helterbrand and Jacob Kaderli, have been in custody for more than a year on charges linked to the animal's death and a plot to allegedly kill a Bartow County couple who had antifascist ties. Mathews, Lemley and Bilbrough had also been arrested in Maryland and Delaware in January, 2020 on federal felony charges. Federal prosecutors said the men stole the animal and tried unsuccessfully to kill it with a knife before shooting it to death and cutting off its head.

Five additional men at a Georgia training camp for white supremacists have been charged with animal cruelty and livestock theft after an animal, described as either a goat or a ram, was stolen and beheaded in 2019 in what prosecutors called a "pagan ritual sacrifice." The [Rome News-Tribune](#) reported that Patrik Mathews, William Garfield Bilbrough IV, Brian Mark Lemly, Jr., Brandon Gregory Ashley, and Duncan Christopher Trimmell were charged in the killing at the camp in Silver Creek, which prosecutors said was organized by The Base, a hardcore neo-Nazi group that espouses violence to accelerate overthrowing the U.S. government. Three other Georgians linked to The Base, Luke Austin Lane,

Virginia Meth Heads Convicted of Using Medieval Weapon to Kill Goats



Andrew Haefele, Charles McKinney, Donald Compton, & Halie Morgan

Ray Compton, 35, of Spotsylvania, and Charles E. McKinney, 35, of Maurertown, beat the goats with a spiked mace, a medieval weapon, then slit the animals' throats with a machete and ordered their dogs to attack them. The owner of the goats, Halie Morgan, 22, of Spotsylvania, will serve one year in jail for her role in encouraging the attack which occurred in June, 2020, according to a video taken at the time. Compton haves an additional three years for possessing a gun as a convicted felon and for violating his probation. "You've lost some humanity, and I hope you're able to get it back at some point," Judge Ricardo Rigual said at the sentencing hearing, according to the [Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star](#).

In an apparently unrelated but similar case, three Virginia men who had been high on meth for five straight days were sentenced to three years in prison for the gruesome torturing of two goats with a medieval weapon. [Newsweek](#) reported that Andrew J. Haefele, 37, and Donald

Pet-Abusing Mother Charged with Murdering Her Son

A Louisville, Ky. mother who had received at least three citations for dog neglect was charged with cutting out the tongue of her 10-year-old son, Kyon, shooting him in the head, and stuffing his body in the trunk of her car. [WLKY-TV](#) reported that Kaitlyn Higgins, 28, is accused of the murder. A neighbor told reporters that she had been suspicious about conditions at the house because of the alleged dog neglect. A babysitter, who said the boy had once come to her house with a black eye and later with scratches on his face and neck. Said she regretted not having called child protection services because she feared Higgins, who she knew had a weapon. A 2-year-old child in the home was reportedly safe in the care of relatives.

California Man Arrested on Federal “Crush” Charges and Weapons Offense



Another alleged violation of the federal PACT Act banning the making and distribution of online “crush” videos depicting animals being tortured was announced by U.S. attorneys in Riverside, California. Angel Ramos-Corrales, 19, of Riverside, was arrested by the FBI and local police on April 26 of charges of allegedly slitting a young dog’s throat in his apartment and posting a video of it dying on his Snapchat account. He was also charged with a weapons offense for felony possession of metal knuckles. The [Riverside Press-Enterprise](#) reported that Ramos-Corrales, who

Angel Ramos-Corrales faces up to seven years in federal prison, allegedly said “I’m cold-hearted” while kicking the dying Chihuahua puppy, named “Canelo.” The pup, who also had fractured bones in its head and chest, had to be euthanized. While officers were making the arrest, they found a roommate had locked himself in his bedroom after seeing blood spatter and the dog wrapped in a rug.

In February, a Kokomo, Ind. woman was indicted on two felony counts of alleged animal crushing ([See the March 2021 LINK-Letter](#)).

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.

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

May 11 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): The Saskatchewan SPCA’s One Health Education Committee will present Part 1 of a [webinar series](#) on The Violence Link with a focus on Child Abuse.

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 12 – Pittsfield, Mass. (online): [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network – will hold its regular meeting.

May 13 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): The Saskatchewan SPCA’s One Health Education Committee will present Part 3 of a [webinar series](#) on The Violence Link with a focus on Domestic Violence.

May 13 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): Sgt. Teena Stoddart of the Ottawa Police Service and Tammy Merritt of SafePet Ontario will present “The Violence Link” for [Caledon/Dufferin Victim Services](#).

May 18 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): The Saskatchewan SPCA’s One Health Education Committee will present Part 3 of a [webinar series](#) on The Violence Link with a focus on Child Abuse.

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’ 15th Annual Conference on Family and Sexual Violence.](#)

May 19 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

May 20 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): The Saskatchewan SPCA’s One Health Education Committee will present Part 4 of a [webinar series](#) on The Violence Link with a focus on Animal Abuse.

May 26 – New York City, N.Y. (online): The Urban Resource Institute and the National Domestic Violence Hotline will hold a [virtual national summit](#) bringing together animal welfare funders and direct services providers to discuss the largest national survey on The Link between animal and domestic abuse and to raise awareness and resources to help at-risk women, children and pets.

May 30 – Tokyo, Japan (online): Keiko Yamazaki will present a [webinar](#) on “The LINK Between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence: Is there a Connection Between the Two?” for the Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Alains Tale Corp.

June 2 (online): Allie Phillips, of Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)[®], and Wendy Mota of Futures Without Violence, will present a [webinar](#), “Supporting Children with Therapy Animals: Human-Animal Interactions for Children Survivors of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment.”

June 6 – Tokyo, Japan (online): Sakiko Yamazaki will [present](#) “The Association Between Child Abuse and Animal Abuse: Comprehensively Protecting Weaker Beings in Households” for the Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Canine Good Citizens.

June 10 (online): Elizabeth Strand will describe ways to integrate the four pillars of Veterinary Social Work – The Link between Human & Animal Violence, Compassion Fatigue & Conflict Management, Animal-related Grief & Bereavement, and Animal-assisted Interventions – into animal shelter settings at the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement’s [2021 Spring Conference.](#)

June 16 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

June 17-19 – Madrid, Spain (online): Randy Lockwood, Melinda Merck, Adam Stern, Jason Byrd, Sérvio Reis, and John Cooper will join two dozen other speakers addressing global Link and veterinary forensics topics at the [1st International Virtual Meeting of Forensic Animal Sciences.](#)

June 18 – Charlottetown, P.E.I., Canada: Phil Arkow will present an overview of Link activities in the U.S., for the [Violence Link PEI](#) group.

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 21 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

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](#).

Aug. 18 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Sept. 9 – Las Vegas, Nev.: Phil Arkow will present “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Preparing a Protocol Response to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse & Neglect,” and Nicole Forsyth will present “Exploring the Role of the Veterinary Community in Helping Break Cycles of Abuse in Domestic Violence,” at the [WVC Annual Conference](#).

Sept. 15-16 – 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](#).

Sept. 15 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Oct. 20 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Nov. 4-5 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will hold its [National Violence Link Conference](#).

Nov. 6 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will hold its annual one-day [Prosecution of Animal Abuse Conference](#).

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. 12 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada: The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will host a special half-day [Violence Link Workshop](#) specifically for multi-disciplinary criminal justice professionals working in the Ottawa community whose work intersects with The Violence Link.

Nov. 17 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

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](#).

Dec. 15 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.



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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