



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 14, No. 7 July 2021**

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



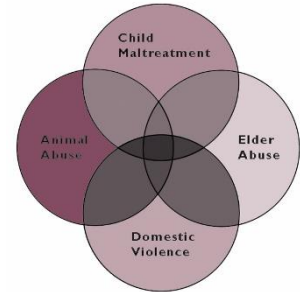
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

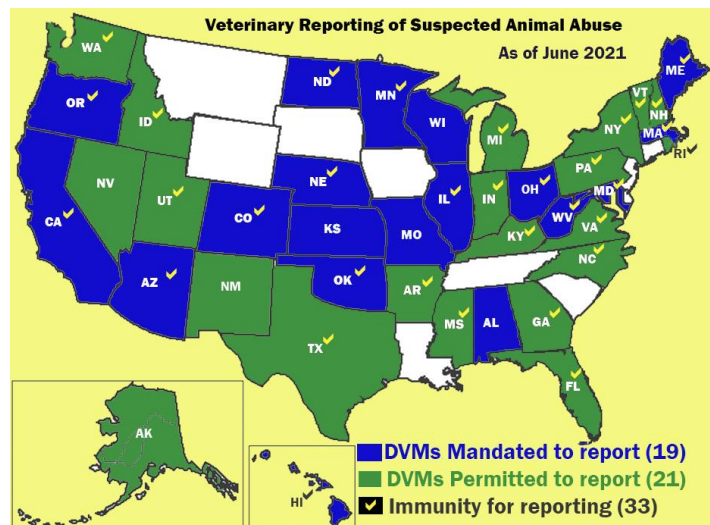
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## ***VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK***

### **Hawai'i Mandates Veterinary Reporting of Animal Abuse and Fighting**

Hawai'i became the 19<sup>th</sup> state to mandate that veterinarians report suspected animal abuse when Gov. David Y. Ige signed **HB 1086** into law on June 28 as Act 091. The measure, which took effect immediately, adds two new sections to H.R.S §471 requiring licensed veterinarians who have reasonable cause to believe that an animal has been injured or killed through participation in a staged animal fight or has been a victim of animal cruelty to report the event to appropriate law enforcement authorities in the county where the event occurred.



The new law also establishes that veterinarians making such reports are immune from civil liability as a result of making the report. It also grants practitioners immunity from liability for civil damages for any pro bono, good-faith rendering of emergency care to a sick or injured animal at large except for acts of gross negligence or wanton omissions.

In addition to the other 18 states where veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal abuse, 21 states permit practitioners to make such reports. Of the 40 states with reporting provisions, 33 grant veterinarians immunity from civil and or criminal liability or administrative sanctions.

Bills this year in Florida (**HB/49** and **SB 216/218**), Iowa (**HF 623**) and Texas (**HB 4330**) which would have added reporting provisions for veterinarians died in committee when their legislatures adjourned. Several bills are still pending: Missouri (**HB 643**), New Jersey (**A 4880/S 3168**), and New York (**A 5823-A/S 5023**).

## WSAVA Encouraged to Help Domestic Violence Survivors

Companion animal veterinarians and their staffs worldwide staff have a duty to help identify incidents of domestic abuse affecting both humans and animals, assist victims in finding a safe place to start a new life, and work with local agencies to address a problem seen with increasing frequency across the globe.

That was the message presented to the [2020 Congress of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association](#) by Melinda Merck, a forensic veterinarian from Austin, Texas. Veterinary staff should be alert to the possibility that animals with non-accidental injuries will be brought to their practice. Well-established warning signs of non-accidental injury include multiple animals being brought in over time by the same owners, or clients giving histories that are inconsistent with the observed lesions.

The [Vet Times](#) reported that Merck described a growing body of literature that can help practitioners distinguish between accidental and non-accidental injuries. Every small animal practice should have an information folder available for use by staff, outlining how they should respond to a suspected non-accidental injury case, she suggested.

Because the presumed perpetrator will often accompany the person bringing the animal in for treatment, staff should devise a strategy to keep them apart so that the caregiver – who is very likely to have also suffered violence themselves – can be persuaded to give a true account of what happened.



**Melinda Merck**

When there is clear evidence of ill-treatment, the practice should always report the incident to the appropriate agency – police, social services or an animal welfare charity.

She reassured colleagues that – at least in the U.S. -- these concerns will be listened to, as there has been a major change in the way that U.S. law enforcement agencies deal with animal cruelty incidents. Concerns over possible animal abuse are used when seeking warrants to search a property, due to the frequent associations between these incidents and both gun and drug offenses, she explained.

The responsibilities of veterinary staff in dealing with these incidents does not end with the successful investigation and prosecution of those committing domestic violence, she noted. It is well established that human victims are often reluctant to leave an abusive relationship because of the risks of violence against the family pet and a shortage of suitable pet-friendly shelters or pet fostering programs where they can go.

She maintained that the COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and predictable effect in increasing the numbers of adults, children and pets at risk of being injured by a member of their own household. Within 15 minutes of the announcement of lockdown in California, all available vacancies had been snapped up in domestic violence shelters in Los Angeles County. “Those people knew that being stuck at home with their abuser was going to be a huge issue,” she said.

## Veterinary Foundation Grants Reimburse Practitioners Caring for COVID-19 and Domestic Violence Pets

The American Veterinary Medical Association's [charitable foundation](#) has announced a grant program to reimburse veterinarians for discounted or pro bono charitable services they provide to clients unable to afford pet care due to COVID-19 conditions or domestic violence. The new National Veterinary Charitable Care Grant Program is supported by \$200,000 in grants from Merck Animal Health and individual donations.



"This program is designed to improve access-to-care issues, especially as they relate to ongoing financial hardship due to COVID-19 and domestic violence," said Dr. David Granstrom, American Veterinary Medical Foundation assistant executive director. He added the program also contributes to the well-being of the veterinary health care team and members of the public struggling to afford veterinary care for their pets.

To be eligible for reimbursement, applicants must be a current AVMA member, and the request for reimbursement must benefit those experiencing financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic or domestic violence. A reimbursement cap of \$500 for grant requests related to COVID-19 has been set in anticipation of high demand and to provide assistance for as many animals as possible with the funds available. No cap is in place for requests related to domestic violence.

## ***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK***

### Missouri PPO Law Protects Pets, Requires Abusers to Pay for Their Care

Missouri has enacted what may be the nation's most comprehensive law allowing courts to include household pets in orders of protection with the passage of **SB 71**. The measure not only allows courts to include pets in ex parte and full orders of protection for victims of domestic violence, but also specifically protects the pets of children in these abusive homes. Significantly, the law also includes what may be a unique provision among the 36 states with pet protection orders in not only awarding possession and care of the pet to the petitioner, but also requiring the respondent to pay any moneys necessary to cover medical costs that may have resulted from abuse of the pet.



**Sen. Elaine Gannon**

"Victims of domestic violence should not have to live in constant fear of their abuser's retaliation, their beloved pet being harmed or having to re-appear in court multiple times to renew the same order of protection," Sen. Elaine Gannon (R – De Soto), who sponsored the bill, said in a statement. "I am humbled by the opportunity to be a voice for those who have been silenced by abuse. I hope this new law will help victims transform into victors."

The new law, signed by Gov. Mike Parson on June 29, amends Sections 455.032, 455.045, 455.050, 455.513, 455.520, and 455.523 of the Missouri Revised Statutes. It takes effect on Aug. 28.

## Pandemic Analysis Exposes Gaps in Ohio Pet Protection Order System

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic caused many survivors of domestic violence to be quarantined in their homes with those who abuse them, further isolating them from friends and family and offering abusers more opportunities to control and harm survivors and prevent them from obtaining protection orders, [Ohio Animal Advocates](#) has written an [extensive report](#) evaluating how COVID-19 impacted the State of Ohio and 88 county governments. The report analyzes strengths and weaknesses in available resources and provides policy recommendations to better protect human and animal survivors of domestic violence.

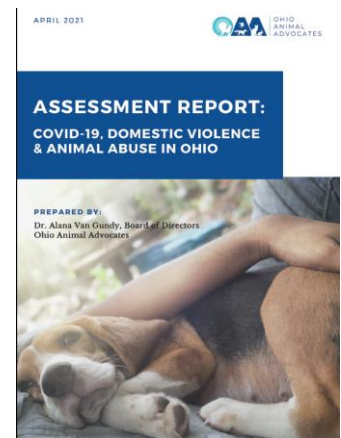
In 2018, 75,466 individuals – 7% of whom were children – reported domestic violence incidents in Ohio. The pandemic’s shutdown of courts, social service agencies and much direct contact with survivors forced state and counties to rely on websites to inform victims, but the report identified significant gaps in the system. Only 22 of 88 county websites directed survivors to the Supreme Court of Ohio’s main protection order web page – which provided no instruction on what to fill out and how to submit. Crucially, the ability to include pets in protection orders – which was enacted in Ohio in 2014 – was not included on the state’s protection order forms until April 15, 2021.

The analysis revealed that 49% of the 88 counties had either a co-sheltering or reciprocity housing agreement for pets, but only 3 counties specifically included pets on their protection order forms. Only one county included a separate instruction page that explained how to include pets on protection orders.

The OAA report made 10 public policy recommendations to reform how the state treats survivors of domestic violence. “For Ohio to become proactive in assisting domestic violence survivors, it is critical that both state and local policymakers be educated in the different forms of abuse and control occurring within the domestic violence household. Ohio must provide additional legislative responses to ensure protection for both human and non-human victims of abuse,” it concluded.

Recommendations include:

- Provide a consistent procedure for applying for protection orders.
- Require each county to provide information and protection order applications on its website, including a “safe exit”.
- Create a direct-entry petition for a protection order form.
- Consider application procedures that allow reciprocity among counties.
- Create “safe havens” and partnerships, particularly in rural counties, that can accept survivors’ farm animals for temporary housing.
- Continue remote video conferencing options for survivors appearing in court even after COVID restrictions are lifted.
- Create training courses with the Department of Public Safety and the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse.
- Increase the number of domestic violence shelters that accept pets.
- Ask the Ohio Highway Patrol to allow pets to be included in the Law Enforcement Automated Data System, to allow first responders to know that pets are included in protection orders and must be sequestered away from abusers.



## Canadian Study Explores Agencies' Responses to The Link

The results of a study in Saskatchewan (See the [March 2020 LINK-Letter](#)) that explored how abuse of pets, livestock and service animals affects people, domestic violence and animal services providers and the general public has been published. Crystal Giesbrecht, Director of Research and Communications for the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) surveyed 128 domestic violence, victim service, police and legal professionals, and 43 animal welfare and veterinary professionals about their awareness of The Link, their experiences in responding to concurrent animal abuse and safekeeping in cases of IPV, and challenges of effective service provision.

Both human and animal welfare professionals expressed the need for pet-friendly domestic violence shelters and long-term housing options, improving delivery of services for IPV victims and their animals, improving access to Emergency Intervention Orders that include animals, and strengthening existing and building new interdisciplinary partnerships.

She noted that women in rural areas, in particular, are faced with unique risk factors and barriers to safety including: geographic isolation, greater emergency response time, limited housing and domestic violence service options, perceived lack of anonymity and confidentiality, patriarchal social values, ownership of firearms, and shared responsibilities for farm work and investments in livestock.

Unlike many previous studies that interviewed women in shelters, Giesbrecht chose to focus on service providers who had connected with victims who had often chosen not to seek services in order to care for their animals. The survey included both quantitative data and qualitative examples that were shared by survey participants. Respondents noted, for example, that being separated after fleeing abuse was a hardship not only for the owner but was also stressful for their pets, and that finding temporary safekeeping for livestock is a challenge. The need for pet-friendly shelters was a resounding theme.

The study concluded that while awareness of The Link has grown significantly, gaps in service delivery remain. Closing these gaps will help both human and animal welfare professionals build a society where both people and animals are free from violence.

-- **Giesbrecht, C.J. (2021, June 17). Animal safekeeping in situations of intimate partner violence: Experiences of human service and animal welfare professionals. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211025037>**

Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Abuse	Human Service Professionals	Animal Welfare Professionals
Felt animals' safety and safekeeping impacted victims' planning and decision-making	89%	93%
Have worked with IPV survivors where animals were abused	65%	56%
Agency asks individuals about safety of animals or children/adults during intake	51%	70%
Feel local access to animal safekeeping support is adequate	28%	8%
Awareness of IPV/animal abuse awareness expanded in recent years	68%	68%
Want more training on IPV and animal safekeeping	71%	61%

Provide Assistance with Temporary Safekeeping of Animals when IPV is Occurring	Human Service Professionals	Animal Welfare Professionals
Agency helps individuals plan for animal safekeeping	52%	39%
Have not, but know how to do this if and when is needed	21%	7%
Would like to be able to	12%	29%
Not relevant	15%	24%
Have received requests to help with animal safekeeping	64%	73%



## Domestic Violence Coalition Publishes Model Guidelines for Service and Emotional Support Animals in Shelters

The New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence has published an [online guide](#), *Model Guidelines for Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals in Domestic Violence Programs and Shelters*, to assist sheltering agencies in adjusting to the needs of residents who require these unique canine supports.

The 9-minute video, created in 2018, introduces audiences to the confusing distinctions between service, emotional support, therapy, and companion animals. **Service animals** are two specific species – dogs and miniature horses -- defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and specifically trained to perform specific tasks for an individual. They can go anywhere the public is allowed, and domestic violence shelters must make accommodations for them. The questions that can be asked of an individual with a service animal are limited.

	SERVICE DOGS	THERAPY DOGS	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS
COMPARISON	SERVICE DOGS	THERAPY DOGS	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
ADA covered: Rights to bring animal into public establishments	✓	✗	✗
Needs to tolerate a wide variety of experiences, environments, people	✓	✓	✗
May live with their Disabled owners, even if "No Pets" policy in place	✓	✗	✓
Primary function is to provide emotional support, through companionship	✗	✗	✓
Specifically trained to assist just one person	✓	✗	✗
Provide emotional support and comfort to many people	✗	✓	✗

**Emotional support animals** can be multiple species. They are not trained for specific tasks but merely provide their owners with emotional comfort. They do not have full public access, only to air travel and housing. Under the Fair Housing Act, they have housing privileges in domestic violence shelters only if the person has documentation from a doctor or licensed mental health professional of a disability and that the animal is necessary and beneficial. Administrators can ask survivors to show documentation, even if the survivor has to wait to retrieve such documents left behind when they left home in a hurry.

**Therapy animals** are visitors brought in by outside groups or individuals to provide stress release, fun, education, or therapy. They do not have specialized training and are typically registered by a reputable therapy animal organization after being evaluated for temperament and obedience. They are considered pets and do not have housing privileges or public access. If a client says she has a therapy animal, administrators should treat it as they would a regular pet.

**Companion animals, or pets**, are not required by law to be housed in shelters, although some 250 agencies in the U.S. are pet-friendly. Advocates should be aware of shelters' individual policies regarding residents' pets and help survivors find safe shelter options that allow on-site pets or off-site foster care.

Shana Aldahl, NMCADV Project Coordinator, concludes the video with an appeal to service providers to make additional efforts to serve their clients who have service and emotional support animals. "By putting up barriers to individuals who are accessing services, we're not fulfilling our mission to serve domestic violence survivors in the best way that we can," she says.

## U.S. & U.K. Responses to Pets and Domestic Violence Compared

A recent article compares the British and American responses – and lack thereof – to the impact of animal abuse within domestic violence.

Christina Warner, of the Goldsmith Chambers law firm in London, and Marion C. Willetts, sociology professor at Illinois State University, reference numerous examples in both countries where domestic violence professionals witness companion animals being abused



**Christina Warner & Marion Willetts**

as coercive control in the context of intimate partner violence. They describe responses by nonprofit organizations in the U.S. to provide co-sheltering options and pet foster care, and in the U.K. to offer pet fostering services. However, such resources remain scarce, particularly in rural areas.

While many American states have enacted laws allowing pets to be included in protection-from-abuse orders and pet abuse within the statutory definitions of domestic violence, pets remain outside the scope of protective orders in U.K. family courts. However, the Serious Crime Act of 2015 and the Domestic Abuse Act of 2021 expanded British definitions of domestic abuse to include coercive, controlling and threatening behaviors, as well as psychological, financial and emotional abuse.

“While language concerning companion animals is not explicitly included in this Act, this broader definition could potentially allow for the recognition of companion animals to form part of the greater picture of victims’ suffering, in that courts in England and Wales could consider the psychological abuse caregivers endure when harm or threats of harm are made by abusers toward their companion animals in the absence of other legislation to protect them,” they write. “The broader definition also indirectly recognizes the role companion animals play in prolonging the time during which victims may remain with their abusers, in addition to the support system companion animals may offer whilst living with or being targeted by the abuser.”

They offer several recommendations for both countries, including: legislation that encourages collaboration and information sharing between animal protection and human services agencies; extending protection to animals in domestic violence scenarios based upon its secondary deleterious impact on children’s mental health and behavioral development; and having British family courts consider animal abuse as an increased risk factor to human victims when considering injunctive relief.

-- Warner, C., & Willetts, M.C. (2021, May). Protecting companion animals from domestic abuse: A comparative analysis of legal developments in the U.S. and the U.K. *Global Journal of Animal Law*, 9, 1-10.



### What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

## RedRover Grants Expanded into Canada

RedRover, the Sacramento organization whose Safe Escape and Safe Housing grants have long helped American individuals escaping domestic violence and shelters building facilities to house their pets, has [expanded its grantmaking into Canada](#). Working in partnership with the FAM Network and funding from the Donner Canadian Foundation, grants of up to \$26,342 CAD are being made available to domestic violence shelters in Canada to house the pets of domestic violence survivors.



The program aims to make more Canadian shelters pet-friendly. According to Women's Shelter Canada, some 66 on-site and 166 off-site shelters, out of approximately 450 nationwide, offer pet facilities; a number of these facilities appear to be on First Nations tribal lands (*See the [February 2021 LINK-Letter](#)*). Canadian research by Amy Fitzgerald and others confirms American findings that a shortage of pet-friendly shelters, and limited public awareness of these facilities, causes 56% of women to delay leaving their abuser and 33% of them returning out of concern for their pets' safety (*See the [December 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*).

## CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

### Cross-Reporting Tip Sheets Help Ohio Child, Elder & Animal Welfare Officers

Two handy tip sheets – to help child welfare advocates recognize telltale signs of animal abuse, and to help humane officers recognize suspected child maltreatment and elder abuse – have been created by animal protection agencies in Ohio.

*Recognizing & Reporting Child & Elder Abuse in Ohio* was created by the Ohio Animal Welfare Federation (formerly Ohio Federated Humane Societies). The two-page flyer includes telltale signs and legal definitions of child abuse and neglect and elder abuse, neglect and exploitation; phone numbers to call to make a report; and information that the caller will need to provide. The back page offers a handy template of information the caller will need to provide, such as the alleged victim's name, age and address; name of suspected abuser; location, date and time of the incident; the reason the caller suspects abuse; and other helpful information.



*Ohio Cross Reporting: How to Recognize & Report Animal Abuse* was created by Ohio Advocates for Animals for the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, which handles child and adult protective

services. It is a colorful one-page flyer describing physical and environmental signs of animal abuse. The flyer encourages J&FS agents that signs of child maltreatment or intimate partner violence in the home should raise suspicions that animal cruelty might also be involved. It directs users to Ohio Animal Advocates' partial directory on animal abuse investigating agencies in Ohio. (A [more comprehensive list](#) is available on the National Link Coalition's National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies.)

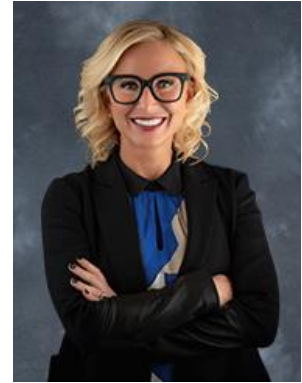
The [two forms are available](#) in the National Link Coalition's online resources, along with similar materials prepared for [Connecticut's](#) DCF and animal control officers.



## Florida Becomes 5<sup>th</sup> State with Full Cross-Reporting Of Child Maltreatment and Animal Abuse

After a three-year effort, Florida took a major step forward in recognizing The Link between child and animal abuse by enacting **SB 96**, which makes the Sunshine State only the fifth state to require full two-way cross-reporting between child protective services workers and animal control officers.

The new law, which took effect July 1, creates a new Florida Statute, Sec. 39.208, based upon the premise that “The Legislature recognizes that animal cruelty of any kind is a type of interpersonal violence that often co-occurs with child abuse and other forms of family violence. Early identification of animal cruelty is an important tool in: safeguarding children from abuse, abandonment and neglect; providing needed support to families; and protecting animals.”



**Sen. Lauren Book**

The Legislature also recognized the need for regular training and education for child protective investigators and animal control officers on The Link between the welfare of animals in the family and child safety and protection. Consequently, the new law mandates the establishment of reporting and cross-reporting protocols and collaborative training between the two sectors “to help protect the safety and well-being of children, their families and their animals.”

Under the new provisions:

- Anyone who investigates child abuse, abandonment or neglect and who, within the scope of his or her employment, knows or has reasonable cause to suspect animal abuse occurring at the same address shall report such knowledge or suspicion within 72 hours to a local animal control agency.
- Child protective services personnel are presumed to have made such reports or engaged in inter-agency collaboration in good faith and are immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative sanctions.
- Anyone who investigates animal cruelty who, within the scope of his or her employment, knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned or neglected or is in need of supervision and care shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the state central abuse hotline immediately.
- Failure to report, either by child protection or animal control investigators, is subject to penalties.
- The Department of Children and Families and statewide animal welfare and control agencies will develop a one-hour training course for all child protective investigators and animal control officers on the accurate and timely identification and reporting of child and animal maltreatment and the interconnectedness of such abuse.

Full two-way cross-reporting between child and animal protection officers were enacted earlier in Connecticut, Illinois, West Virginia, and Ohio, plus the District of Columbia.

The measure was introduced by Senate Minority Leader Lauren Book (D – Broward County). It also redefines bestiality as “sexual contact with an animal” and bans animal pornography. It had passed the Senate 40-0 and the House 116-0 and was signed into law on June 29.

## ***ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK***

### **Animal Sexual Assault, Linked to Human Crimes, Banned in Hawai'i**

After several extensive efforts, Link advocates have finally succeeded in getting animal sexual abuse banned in Hawai'i. Following earlier victories in Wyoming and Guam (*See the [May 2021](#) and [January 2021 LINK-Letters](#)*), Hawai'i now becomes the 48<sup>th</sup> state, plus Puerto Rico and the Uniform Code of Military Justice, to outlaw bestiality.



**Gov. David Y. Ige**

With little fanfare, Gov. David Y. Ige signed **SB 343/HB 1085** into law on June 7 as Act 031. The new law, which took effect immediately, adds a new Section §711 to Hawai'i Revised Statutes making Sexual Assault of an Animal – subjecting an animal to sexual contact -- a Class C felony to, and a Class B felony if the offense is committed in the presence of a minor. An extensive list of activities related to promoting, coercing, organizing, participating in, and obtaining animals for sexual contact are prohibited.

Significantly, the premise for the law was that the legislature found that 46 other states at the time had already banned such activities. “While Hawaii has strong animal cruelty laws, the sexual molestation of animals by humans is not adequately addressed,” it read. “Some sexual assaults of animals cannot be prosecuted under animal cruelty laws because they do not cause bodily injury. Additionally, many acts of animal sexual abuse are discovered long after the incident occurs, limiting the available evidence.

“The legislature further finds that the sexual assault of an animal has been significantly linked to the sexual abuse of children, as well as interpersonal violence and other forms of animal cruelty. In addition, sexual abusers of animals have been shown to collect and share child pornography and express interest in other aberrant behavior involving sexual violence and fetish behaviors.

“The legislature additionally finds that establishing the sexual assault of an animal as a separate crime will allow state law enforcement officers to better identify potentially dangerous and violent sexual predators in their communities,” it concluded.

Convicted offenders will be required to: surrender all sexually abused animal(s); reimburse animal services agencies for the animals’ care and medical treatment; attend psychiatric or psychological counseling; make restitution to animals’ owners; and be prohibited from owning any animals, residing in any household where animals are present, and working or volunteering with animal establishments for at least five years after release from incarceration.

Animal sexual abuse is still legal in West Virginia, where **HB 2827** died this legislative session, and in New Mexico and the District of Columbia, where legislatures have yet to address the issue.

## ***CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK***

### **Link and “Green Criminology” Seen as Improving Animal Welfare Laws**

A Canadian law journal article argues that a criminological and research focus on The Link, coupled with a “green criminology” and “ecocentric justice” perspective, could advance animal welfare legislation. James Gacek, an assistant professor of Justice Studies at the University of Regina, targets his concern in particular for Canada’s federal and provincial animal welfare laws which are “considered the worst in the Western world.” He argues that Canadian animal cruelty laws have not kept pace with societal changes and humans’ shifting values toward animals.



**James Gacek**

“Green criminology” provides inter- and multi-disciplinary engagements and approaches to environmental crimes and harms that could increase interest within the broader field of criminology in animal abuse issues.

One section, “Reconsidering the cruelty connection: Linking interpersonal violence with animal abuse” describes how “animal cruelty is a widespread phenomenon with serious implications for animal welfare, individual and societal wellbeing.” The Link is “a growing concern and gaining traction within disciplines like sociology, criminology and critical animal studies.” Gacek cites several U.S. and Canadian Link authors who have described family violence, including animal abuse, as a multifaceted phenomenon based upon a dynamic of power and control in which various forms of violence co-occur and may signify the existence of others.

His formula for an “ecocentric justice” approach includes: encouraging multi-agency collaboration in recording and collecting evidence in animal cruelty cases; creating new crimes and harsher penalties to hold animal abusers accountable; and stimulating additional research on the incidence, frequency and severity of animal cruelty crimes and demographics of offenders. Such limited data as exist, both in Canada and the U.S., are often “thoroughly unreliable and difficult to standardize across jurisdictions,” he notes.

-- Gacek, J. (2019). *Confronting animal cruelty: Understanding evidence of harm towards animals. Manitoba Law Journal*, 42(4), 315-342.

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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.

## Webinar Describes Link Access to Justice and COVID Impact

Judicial officials in British Columbia were treated to an informative [CLE webinar](#) on humans' and animals' abilities to access justice and how the shared vulnerabilities and shared harm of disenfranchised groups Links people and animals in a pattern where "violence begets violence."



**Victoria Shroff and Christian Kim**

Victoria Shroff, a Vancouver animal lawyer, and Edmonton Crown Prosecutor Christian Lim spoke to the BC Courthouse Library Society. Shroff discussed pet custody issues in divorce settlements and the violence Link. Pets are considered personal property, and Canadian courts apply a "best ownership" formula, rather than a "best interests" test, regarding family pets when allocating assets to separating parties. This is difficult to explain to clients, she said. *(New U.S. state laws in Alaska, California, Illinois and New Hampshire now allow courts to apply a "best interests" perspective in awarding custody.)*

Shroff said the isolation caused by COVID-19 restrictions have caused both pet adoptions and family violence to rise; Vancouver women's shelters reported 300% more crisis line calls, increasing the need for Link reporting. "By reporting animal abuse or signs of animal cruelty, these investigations may spark interventions by other law enforcement or child protection workers that could save someone's life."

She emphasized that teaching animal law is not restricted to attorneys, but should also include teaching children about The Link. Advocates should be "getting them to understand that violence isn't OK on them and it's not OK on their animals. Quite often the violence in a household is Linked," she said. Animal abuse, like other forms of family violence, is a crime of power. "People are surprised to hear about the Link but once they do it's really easy to understand," she said.

"Animals and humans both need a pathway to access justice. We need to widen the pathways so that animals and their humans are having their voices heard. Animals and humans are interconnected. We cannot see one without the other, she said.

Lim described The Link between animal and human abuse as "a real social and legal phenomenon." He noted that The Link is not just about people and animals, but also about how changing attitudes within the legal profession. He described multiple challenges and solutions by which Canadian animals can gain access to justice. "Animal voices are being heard – louder and clearer," he said.

## ***ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK***

### Survey Examining Agencies' Experiences with Pet Issues

The Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging in Cleveland is conducting a survey of caregivers and others who work with older persons or those with dementia to better understand the prevalence of pet ownership issues facing these populations and to facilitate healthy aging. Four participants will win a \$50 Visa gift card. Healthcare, social service and community organization personnel can access the brief 15-minute survey by clicking <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/petissues>



## ***LAW ENFORCEMENT... and THE LINK***

### **Mandatory Link Training, Special Unit Added to Edmonton Police Service**

Following up on an unusual petition drive by a veterinary association (*See the [November 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*), the city of Edmonton, Alberta has created a dedicated animal cruelty unit. The Edmonton Police Service officially launched the first Animal Cruelty Investigation Unit in May as a six-month pilot project. The new unit works closely with the police Domestic Offender Crimes Section, the city's animal care and control peace officers, Children's Services, veterinarians, and the Crown Prosecutor.



In 2020, Edmonton Police Service handled some 400 animal cruelty investigations, a majority of which also exposed other criminal activity including homicide, aggravated sexual assault and weapons offenses. In light of the Link between animal abuser and interpersonal violence, Constables Ilka Cunningham and Ted Dyck had been assigned since 2019 to provide mandatory training for 900 patrol officers on The Link, animal law and animal cruelty crime investigation techniques.

The Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians launched the petition drive after the Edmonton Humane Society stopped enforcing the province's Animal Protection Act, leaving the city of 932,000 with only four animal care and control officers to handle the caseload. Over 2,800 individuals signed the petition.

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

### **Link Articles Sought for Polish Veterinary Social Work Journal**

The Polish Sociological Association's Section on Interspecies Relations has issued a call for papers for a special publication dedicated to "Veterinary Social Work as a New Area of Theory and Practice." The journal will consider a One Health perspective on the most current challenges and successes of veterinary social work, including aspects of The Link.

Topics to be considered will include violence against people and its connection with violence against animals, and child abuse against animals. Other topics include: therapeutic relations between humans and animals; rehabilitation with animals; animals and humans in the face of human life crises; mourning, sadness, trauma and stress in human-animal relationships; and support for veterinarians and technicians.

The journal is being edited by Lucja Lange, Hanna Mamzer, and Magdalena Gajewska. Send abstracts with five keywords and author bios to Lange at [lucja.lange@eksoc.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:lucja.lange@eksoc.uni.lodz.pl) by Sept. 30. Selected authors will have until Dec. 31 to submit the full articles.



## ***RAISING LINK AWARENESS***

### **Link Included in International Veterinary Forensics Conference**

A multi-national array of veterinary pathologists learned about The Link between animal abuse and human violence as part of a pioneering three-day virtual symposium dedicated to veterinary forensics. The [1<sup>st</sup> International Virtual Meeting of Forensic Animal Sciences](#), conducted in Spanish, Portuguese and English, featured over 100 participants and speakers from countries including Spain, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Portugal, Chile, Turkey, Albania, Kenya, Zambia, Croatia, Taiwan, as well as the U.S. and U.K. The conference's overall theme was to achieve "better science for better justice" in addressing veterinary forensics investigations of companion and domesticated animal and wildlife.



National Link Coalition coordinator Phil Arkow described how legislators are more receptive to animal welfare and violence prevention legislation when they are framed in a three-faceted strategy of: veterinary forensics that enhance animal cruelty prosecutions; a One Health approach that embraces animal-assisted therapy and greater understanding of the neuroscience underlying the human-animal bond; and a focus on how animal abuse also adversely affects people.

National Link Coalition co-founder Randall Lockwood presented on The Link between animal abuse and the multispecies family. He described the psychology of animal cruelty and hoarding offenders and his checklist of assessing the dangerousness of offenders.

### **Proposals Sought for Animal Shelter and Community Responses**



The ASPCA, in partnership with the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement, is [requesting abstracts](#) for a free online ASPCA-AAWA Research Forum to be held Nov. 3. The Research Forum provides a platform for researchers to disseminate research directly to animal shelter leadership and to inspire shelter leaders to apply cutting-edge research insights within their organizations and communities to increase impact for animals.

Examples of potential topics include preventing and responding to animal cruelty, making veterinary care accessible, reducing euthanasia rates, interventions for treating animal behavioral challenges, reducing community cat populations, and equine welfare. Submissions are due Aug. 1.



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

## ***THE LINK... in the LITERATURE***

### **Link Cited in Study of Animal Cruelty Crimes in Hong Kong**

What is believed to be the first large-scale study of the nature of animal abuse and hoarding and their offenders in Hong Kong includes references to The Link as affecting the challenges facing animal welfare regulators and recommendations for future improvements. The study reviewed 254 complaints of active animal maltreatment, passive neglect, commercial exploitation, and animal hoarding recorded by the Hong Kong SPCA between 2013-2019. It identified the gender and age of abusers, their relationship with the animal or its owner, and the circumstances of the abuse in order to determine motivations for and patterns of offending. Males were significantly more likely to be offenders in active maltreatment, neglect and commercial exploitation, but there was no gender bias in hoarding cases; offenders in all four types represented a wide range of ages.

Citing research that the correlation between family violence and animal abuse is well established, the authors noted that Hong Kong is no exception; relevant factors leading to the abuse of companion animals which were known to present difficulties for regulators included mental illness, childhood abuse and domestic violence. While specific instances of attacks on family pets co-occurring with domestic abuse were not included in the study, the authors recommended that “the Link between family violence and animal cruelty should be considered in protocols developed by the Social Welfare Department for dealing with at-risk families” and in future research in Hong Kong.

-- Whitford, A., Woodhouse, F., Ho, S., & Chun, M. (2021). A retrospective analysis of typologies of animal abuse recorded by the SPCA, Hong Kong. *Animals*, 11, 1830. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11061830>



### **Call for Papers on Frontiers of Animal Protection**

Guest editor Kendra Coulter has issued a [call for articles](#) for a Special Issue of *Animals* covering “Frontiers of Animal Protection.” The Special Issue will assemble high-quality social science research that considers the social, legal, political, and employment dimensions of animal protection. Coulter, in the Department of Labour Studies at Brock University, has written extensively on the benefits of cross-reporting and risks faced by women cruelty investigators (*See the April 2018 and January 2020 LINK-Letters*). She says that despite its importance for protecting diverse kinds of animals from human harm and the complementary benefits for vulnerable people and public safety, the animal protection landscape remains underexamined.

Papers on the following topics are especially welcome:

- The legal context shaping animal protection;
- The politics of animal protection and its connection to other social challenges;
- Case studies of front-line programs and their strengths and weaknesses;
- Innovative approaches to animal protection;
- The place of gender, race, and/or class in animal protection;
- Emerging challenges and opportunities for animal protection.

The deadline for manuscript submissions is March 31, 2022.

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

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

With many state legislatures sessions ended or on summer break, we're still 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 **119 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.

#### *Animal Abuse and Elder/Disabled Abuse*



**Maryland SB 159/HB 281** requires new humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, and existing personnel to receive six hours of continuing education annually, on a variety of topics including the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bills were **signed into law on May 18.**



**Maryland HB 234/SB 607** prohibits the willful and malicious killing, injuring, or interfering with a service animal. Offenders face up to two years in prison and/or a \$2,500 fine and may have to pay restitution for all damages. **The bill was signed into law and takes effect Oct. 1.**



**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.

#### *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**Canada Bill C-3** requires Canadian judges to receive training on the Violence Link between animal abuse and sexual and domestic violence as part of their continuing legal education. The bill passed Parliament's Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and **was enacted by Royal Assent on May 6 as 2021 Annual Statute c.8.**



**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 was being held in the House Judiciary and Rules Committees.



**Arkansas HB 1724** cites the lockdown pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic as "a worst-case scenario for victims experiencing domestic violence" and the rationale to expand existing provisions that allow courts to include pets in domestic violence orders of protection. The measure also allows courts to issue protection orders based on a respondent's "course of control" or "disturbing the peace." The premise for the measure states that the COVID-19 shelter-in-place and other restrictions are being used "as a scare tactic to keep victims isolated from their children or support systems. **It became law on April 30 as Act 1068.**





**California AB 258** would require emergency shelter and transitional housing programs for the homeless to allow residents to keep pets. The Assembly Judiciary Committee approved it and sent it to the Appropriations 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 passed the Senate and was sent to the Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development. (It is not clear whether these bills would cover homeless persons who are fleeing domestic violence.)



**California SB 320** would amend the law which requires violators of domestic violence protection orders (which may include pet protection provisions) to surrender ammunition as well as any firearms. It passed the Senate and is in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.



**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 was 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** requires new humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, and existing personnel to receive six hours of continuing education annually, on topics including the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bills passed both houses and **were signed into law on May 18.**





**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 SB 71** allows 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 the House and **was signed into law** by Gov. Mike Parson on June 29. It takes effect on Aug. 28.



**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 was in the Assembly Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



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



**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 passed the Senate and are in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



**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 bills passed the Senate and Assembly and are back in the Senate.





**The Ohio Supreme Court** on April 15 closed a gap in its inclusion of pets in domestic violence prevention orders by finally including a prohibition against respondents removing, damaging, hiding, or disposing of companion animals in the standard protection order form. Although these provisions were first enacted in 2014, they were not specifically included in the standardized form until this year.



**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 passed the House and is in the Senate 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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## *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** expands the permitted use of certified facility dogs for child witnesses to also include vulnerable witnesses (e.g., with intellectual or developmental disabilities), and expands the areas where these dogs may assist witnesses from courthouses to also include law enforcement investigations, children's advocacy centers, prosecutors' offices, and offices of court-appointed special advocates and guardians ad litem. **The bill was signed into law on April 21.**



**Florida SB 96 / HB 7039** establishes 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 requires child protective investigators to report known or suspected animal cruelty and grants them criminal, civil and administrative immunity for such reports. It similarly requires 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 will jointly develop a one-hour training module on The Link and on timely cross-reporting procedures. It also redefines bestiality as "sexual contact with an animal" and bans animal pornography. **SB 96** passed the Senate 40-0 and the House 116-0 and **was signed into law** by Gov. Ron DeSantis on June 29. It took effect on July 1.



**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.**



**Maryland HB 186/SB7** expands the existing "Court Dog and Child Witness Program," which allows facility dogs or therapy dogs to accompany child witnesses in court proceedings and other court processes, to now include such dogs in Veterans Treatment Courts. The program is also renamed as the "Court Dog Program." The measure was **signed into law on May 18.**



**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.



**Missouri SB 71** allows 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 the House and **was signed into law** by Gov. Mike Parson on June 29. It takes effect on Aug. 28.





**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 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.



**North Carolina HB 544** would make it a felony to permit a person under age 18 to attend or participate in and dog-, cock- or other animal fighting. The bill passed the House and is in the Senate Committee on Rules and Operations.



**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 is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.



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



**Texas HB 1071** allows 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 was signed into law on June 3 and takes effect on Sept. 1.**



**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*



**Colorado Ballot Initiative 16**, proposed for 2022, “Protect Animals from Unnecessary Suffering and Exploitation” (PAUSE), would amend the state’s bestiality statutes to criminalize safe and common artificial insemination of dogs, horses and livestock as a “sexual act with an animal.” Colorado veterinarians and animal welfare groups are opposed to the proposal.



**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** redefines bestiality as “sexual contact with an animal” and bans animal pornography. It also establishes 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. The new law raises bestiality from a 1<sup>st</sup>-degree misdemeanor to a 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony. **SB 96** passed the Senate and House unanimously and **was signed into law** on June 29 and took effect on July 1.



**Hawai’i SB 343/HB1085** makes sexual assault of an animal as a Class C felony, or Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Because animal sexual assault is strongly linked to child sexual abuse, interpersonal violence and other animal cruelty, offenders will now surrender all sexually abused animal(s), reimburse animal services agencies for the animals’ care and medical treatment, attend psychiatric or psychological counseling, make restitution to animals’ owners, and be prohibited from owning any animals, residing where animals are present, and working or volunteering with animal establishments for at least five years after release from incarceration. **It became law on June 7** and took effect immediately,



**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.



**Oregon Ballot Initiative 13**, proposed for 2022, would add breeding domestic, livestock and equine animals to the definition of sexual assault of an animal.



**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 have created a new felony offense of sexual crimes against animals. The bill was in the Judiciary Committee **when the Legislature adjourned**.



**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, introduced because of cited Links between animal cruelty and violence against humans, 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's Environmental and Natural Resources Division. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law.



**Illinois HB 3531** would expand prohibitions of violent video games to include games in which a character kills or causes serious physical or psychological harm to an animal. Psychological harm would be defined as including depictions of child abuse, sexual abuse, animal abuse, domestic violence, and violence against women. The bill is in the House Rules 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 Senate Agriculture and Assembly Codes 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/S6112** would define animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.



**New York A7267** would require the prosecutor in each county to appoint an assistant district attorney to oversee the prosecution of crimes against animals. The bill is in the Local Governments 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 have required veterinarians, technicians and other animal treatment provider employees to report suspected animal cruelty (other than commercial food-producing operations, where reporting would be permissive) 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. **HB 49 and SB 218** would have allowed veterinary records to remain confidential if animal cruelty is reported to protect veterinarians and to encourage such reports by making them feel safe to do so. **HB 47 and HB 49 died** in the House Regulatory Reform Subcommittee; **SB 216 and SB 218 died** in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



**Hawai’i HB1086/SB609** requires veterinarians to report animal injury, death or abuse to law enforcement where there is reasonable cause to believe that the animal is a victim of dogfighting or animal abuse. The measures give veterinarians immunity for civil liability for making the reports. **HB1086 was signed into law** on June 28 and took effect immediately.



**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 was in the Senate Agriculture Committee **when the Legislature adjourned**.



**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-A/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 would allow the disclosure of records concerning the animal's condition and treatment. (Existing law allows voluntary reporting.) The bills have passed the Senate and Assembly.



**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** adds 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 was signed into law on June 11.**



**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 was in the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence **when the Legislature adjourned.**

### ***“CASA for Animals”***



**Florida S 1316/H 1003** would have provided 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 died** 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 Rules 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 A 5315/S 3525-A** would allow courts to appoint volunteer lawyers and law students to advocate for animals' interests and to help ensure the well-being of living animal victims in civil and criminal 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 and Senate Judiciary Committees recommended they be held for further study.

## *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.



**Texas SB 48** allows courts to require defendants convicted of certain animal cruelty and animal fighting crimes to undergo psychological counseling or other appropriate treatment programs. **The measure was signed into law on June 14 and takes effect on Sept. 1.**



## ***THE LINK... IN THE NEWS***

### **Leader of Narcotics/Dogfighting Ring Gets 30 years in Federal Prison**



**Jermaine Hadley**

A man who headed a major narcotics distribution network and dogfighting ring across the Florida Panhandle was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison on June 4. Jermaine “Tank” Hadley, 32, of Quincy, Fla., led the drug trafficking and dogfighting group, 20 of whom have also been arrested. The [U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida](#) said the group distributed more than 100 pounds of methamphetamine and over 30 pounds of cocaine while possessing illegal firearms and promoting a ring that involved more than 100 animals who fought to the death before paying and gambling spectators in 2018-2019. Authorities said the narcotics distribution network involved members of the Gadsden County “424” criminal street gang with drugs funneled in from Texas, Louisiana and Georgia. “The abuse of animals for profit is both inhumane and illegal and will be vigorously prosecuted by this office,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Jason R. Coody.

### **MLK’s Assassin’s Ex-Wife Charged with 44 Counts of Animal Cruelty**

The ex-wife of the man who assassinated The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was charged with 44 counts of animal cruelty when investigators uncovered a house of horrors with 44 dogs living in filth and their own waste. Anna Sandhu Ray, 74, was arrested in Jackson, Tenn. At least three dogs were found dead and agents of the Animal Rescue Corps told [WBBJ-TV](#) that dangerously high levels of ammonia could be smelled outside. Many dogs reportedly showed signs of extreme neglect and none had access to food or water, officials said. Ray had been previously arrested in 1996 and her house in Knoxville condemned when police found 25 live dogs and cats and several dead ones in her home. She married James Earl Ray in 1978, 10 years into his 99-year sentence for assassinating King on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, about a year after escaping from the Missouri State Penitentiary where he had been serving a 20-year prison sentence for a 1959 armed robbery, his fourth felony conviction. She filed for divorce in 1992 and James Earl Ray died in 1998 at the age of 70, reportedly from liver disease and kidney failure.



**Anna Sandhu Ray**

### **Charge Dropped Against First Kentucky Bestiality Suspect**



**Larry Jason Stewart**

The first defendant to be charged under a new Kentucky law that made bestiality illegal has had the single count of Sexual Crimes Against Animals dismissed as part of a plea bargain. Larry Jason Stewart, 45, had been arrested by Kentucky State Police and charged on Nov. 15, 2019, with 14 felony counts of possession and distribution of child pornography and the single count of animal sexual abuse ([See the November 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). At a Christian County Circuit Court hearing on May 13, 2021 Stewart pled guilty to two charges of Possession or Viewing of Matter Portraying a Sexual Performance by a Minor. The charges are a Class C felony, punishable by 5-10 years in prison if the minor was under 12 years of age, or a Class D felony, punishable by 1-5 years in prison if the minor was under 18 years of age, plus potential fines. Sentencing is scheduled for July 21. Kentucky became the 46<sup>th</sup> state to outlaw sex with animals in March, 2019.

## ***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.

**July 14-15 – (online):** RedRover and Greater Good Charities will present a free [2 half-day training](#) on “Don’t Forget the Pets: Housing People and Pets” to explore ways to create and sustain pet-friendly programs at domestic violence shelters.

**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 29 – 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. 1 – Tokyo, Japan (online):** Sakiko Yamazaki will present a [webinar](#) on “The LINK Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence: Protecting the Human-Animal Bond” for the Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Canine Good Citizens.

**Aug. 13-16 (online):** The [Animal-Assisted Social Work Conference](#) will explore therapeutic animal-assisted interventions with vulnerable populations

**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. 11-14 – Orlando, Fla.:** Katie Campbell of RedRover will present “Domestic Violence and Pets: Creating Pet-Friendly Programs that Work” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s 47<sup>th</sup> [Annual Training Event](#).

**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.

**Sept. 29 (online):** Andrew Campbell will discuss academic literature and victim accounts of partner, child, elder, and pet abuse in rural communities in “The Road Less Traveled: Family Violence in Rural Communities” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

**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. 10 – Forsyth, Ga.:** The [Georgia Public Safety Training Center](#) and Animal Law Source will partner for the Crimes Against Animals Symposium, which will feature several Link presentations.

**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. 11 (online):** The [Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association](#) will conduct a Link webinar.

**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. 1-3 – Baton Rouge, La.:** The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Animal Legal Defense Fund will conduct the 10<sup>th</sup> [National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

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

**Jan. 25, 2022 (online):** Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Criminal Justice: Preventing Crimes Against People by Focusing on Animal Abuse” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

**Feb. 17-19, 2022 – Columbus, Ohio:** Phil Arkow will present “Recognizing, Recording and Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse and Neglect” for the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).

**May 3, 2022 (online):** Phil Arkow will present “The Forgotten Partner in Responding to Animal Abuse: The Veterinarian” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.



## 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

#### Phil Arkow, Coordinator

Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,  
The Latham Foundation  
Etowah, N. Car.

#### Lesley Ashworth

Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,  
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division  
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#### Diane Balkin, J.D.

Retired Chief Deputy District Attorney, Denver, Colo.  
Retired Senior Staff Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund  
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#### Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Univ. of Cincinnati College of Medicine  
Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital  
Cincinnati, Ohio

#### Steve Dale

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author  
Chicago, Ill.

#### The Hon. Rosa C. Figarola

Retired Circuit Probate Judge, 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
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#### Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Research,  
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research  
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#### Kendall Houlihan

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American Veterinary Medical Association  
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#### Mark Kumpf, CAWA

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#### Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Consultant, ASPCA  
Falls Church, Va.

#### Paul Needham

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National Adult Protective Services Association  
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#### Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D. (ALTERNATE)

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#### Allie Phillips, J.D.

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#### Gale Rasin, J.D.

Retired Associate Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court,  
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#### Chelsea Rider, J.D.

Director,  
National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse  
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#### The Hon. John J. Romero, Jr.

Retired District Judge, Children's Court Division  
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#### Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

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