



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



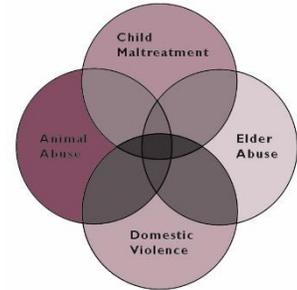
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

Scottish Initiative to Keep Homeless People and Pets Together



Gilly Mendes Ferreira

The Scottish SPCA has launched an initiative designed to provide all public and private landlords in Scotland with specialist advice on supporting pet-friendly accommodations in public housing, refuges and rental properties, as a precursor to eventually expanding the initiative to include domestic violence shelters.

The [Pet and Tenants Together](#) campaign grew out of a 2021 [manifesto](#) which called for the Scottish Parliament to commit to developing initiatives to support landlords and tenants to allow pets in homes. Currently, there are no fixed rules about keeping pets in social or council housing, but a survey reported that 77% of Scottish people believe housing associations and refuges should preserve the human-animal bond. “We don’t believe that someone should have to choose between a pet and a house,” said Gilly Mendes Ferreira, Scottish SPCA head of education, policy and research.

Allie Phillips, developer of the [SAF-T® Sheltering Animals and Families Together](#) program in the U.S. has been collaborating with the Scottish group as a first step towards gathering additional data and opening discussions with domestic violence shelters. Currently, no domestic violence shelters in Scotland are believed to accommodate pets.

Mendes Ferreira emphasized that preserving people’s relationships with their pets improves their mental, physical and social health and helps them heal while working their way through crises. It is estimated that pet ownership in the U.K. saves the National Health Service £2.45 billion due to the reduced number of visits to doctors by people with pets.

“The bond with an animal can be a lifeline, a relationship of trust for someone who has no one else,” said Nicola Hazelton, Edinburgh Community Hub Manager for Shelter Scotland. “We’ve recently seen people experiencing homelessness face an impossible choice: accept accommodation or keep their dog. It’s a real dilemma and can be the barrier to bringing someone in off the streets and giving them the stability of a place to stay where they can start rebuilding their lives.”

13 Shelters Share \$241,715 in Grants to Become Pet-Friendly

Thirteen domestic violence and animal shelters are sharing \$241,715 in the latest round of Safe Housing, Purple Leash Project and Safe Housing Animal Shelter [grants from RedRover](#) to enable more domestic violence survivors to find safe housing for their pets as well as the human members of their families. These grants enable domestic violence shelters to create on- and off-site space to house pets and also allow animal shelters to build dedicated housing for animal victims of abuse. Recipients of the May 2021 grants were:

RedRover Safe Housing Domestic Violence Shelters

- The Ark Domestic Violence Shelter – Brown County, Texas, \$8,765.
- NextStep Domestic Violence Project – Washington County, Maine, \$2,593 (also a Purple Leash grantee).
- Peace House Inc. – Summit County, Utah, \$20,000.
- Safe Harbor Crisis Center – Davis County, Utah, \$20,000.
- Stillwater Domestic Violence Services (Wings of Hope Family Crisis Services) – Payne County, Okla., \$20,000.

RedRover + Purina Purple Leash Project Domestic Violence Shelters

- Domestic Sexual Assault Outreach Center – Webster County, Iowa, \$20,000.
- NextStep Domestic Violence Project – Washington County, Maine, \$17,407 (also a Safe Housing grantee).
- Services to Abused Families – Culpeper County, Va., \$20,000.
- Survivor Advocacy Outreach Program – Athens County, Ohio, \$12,950.

RedRover Safe Housing Animal Shelters

- Friends of Cabot Animal Support Services – Lonoke County, Ark., \$20,000.
- Hope's 2nd Chance Animal Sanctuary – Ionia County, Mich., \$20,000.
- The Kauai Humane Society – Kauai County, Hawai'i, \$20,000.
- Souris Valley Animal Shelter – Ward County, N. Dak. \$20,000.
- Wadena County Humane Society – Wadena County, Minn., \$20,000.

Since 2012, RedRover has given 151 grants to shelters in 44 states, totaling more than \$1.7 million, and equaling more than 387,200 safe nights for pets. Safe Housing grants have created the first pet-friendly domestic violence shelters in nine states.

“These grants can be lifesaving for domestic violence survivors who have pets and are afraid to leave them behind. They enable survivors to take that brave step to leave their abuser and find safe haven at a shelter together with their pets,” said RedRover President and CEO Nicole Forsyth.

“As a humane community, we have a responsibility to help our neighbors. This does not apply to just those who are open about their struggles in life but most importantly those who are too afraid to speak up,” said Mike Wheeler, director of Cabot Animal Support Services. “We are humbled by the grant provided by RedRover that will allow us to offer boarding for the pets of those faced with domestic violence. This will remove one very crucial barrier for individuals who fear that leaving their abuser would put their pets at risk of taking on that abuse in their place.”

“We will be able to create a comfortable, outdoor kennel for our survivors’ beloved pets,” said Safe Harbor’s Hailey Cragun. “This seemingly small action will save lives, as pets are often used to control victims and prevent them from exiting life-threatening situations. Having pets onsite can create a sense of normalcy for victims, which can contribute to a faster recovery. We are enthusiastic about our burgeoning pet program and filled with gratitude for RedRover’s contribution.”

The grants were awarded in RedRover’s first 2021 grant cycle which ended in May. The deadline for the next round of grant applications is October 15. RedRover and Purina have set a goal to help ensure 25% of domestic violence shelters are pet-friendly by 2025.

Three Agencies Recognized for Outstanding Pet Programs of the Year



Three domestic violence programs have been recognized by [Domestic Shelters.org](https://www.domesticshelters.org) for having the most Outstanding Pet Program in the national Purple Ribbon Awards commemorating the best shelters, programs, personnel, volunteers, and survivors.

The 2021 Gold Award winners for Outstanding Pet Program were:

- Oklahoma Humane Society, Oklahoma City, Okla.
- Samaritan House, Virginia Beach, Va.
- Stand Up Placer, Auburn, Calif.

All three organizations were listed as being larger than \$2,000,000. Awards are issued in three categories based on organizational size, enabling entries to be evaluated among representative peer groups.

The awards recognize 31 categories, including best COVID-19 response plans, outstanding national organizations, lifetime achievement, best board members and hotline employees, and outstanding thrift shops, fundraising, youth initiatives, and awareness campaigns. The inclusion of Outstanding Pet Program, honoring innovative and impactful pet sheltering programs, recognizes how significant the provision of services for the pets of domestic violence survivors has become and how many shelters have addressed the issue with either on-site pet housing or off-site foster care arrangements.



The awards are said to be the first comprehensive national program to honor the countless heroes of the domestic violence movement, including advocates, programs, shelters, survivors, and members of the community support system. Entries are judged on four factors: challenge and impact; creativity and originality; excellence of the submission; and an overall rating relative to other entries.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

UN Report Cites Animal Abuse's Impact on Child Welfare

The potential adverse effects of public spectacles of animal cruelty on children's development was the subject of a [report](#) issued in June from the 87th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The report addressed a wide range of issues affecting child welfare, including the involvement of children in armed conflict, the sale of children, and child prostitution and pornography. But one recommendation singled out Tunisia for its practices, policies and services, including societal violence against animals, "that may not be in the best interests of the child."



The recommendation apparently came as a result of advocates led by Malcolm Plant of the [European Link Coalition](#) who has long argued that the extermination of stray dogs on the street as part of population control efforts adversely affects children who witness it.

The report was not the first time the UN Committee has addressed the impact of violence to animals on child observers. Petitions in the past criticizing the attendance of children at bullfights in Spain, France, Portugal, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador resulted in the Committee recommending that children not participate in bullfighting schools nor attend bullfights. To date, only Ecuador has prohibited the attendance of children at such events.

A study of 240 school children in Madrid published in 2004 in *Aggressive Behavior* reported that exposure to videotapes of bullfights resulted in more expressed aggression in boys than in girls and that some of the youths were disturbed by what they saw.

-- Graña, J.L., Cruzado, J.A., Andreu, J.M., & Muñoz-Rivas, M.J. (2004). *Effects of viewing videos of bullfights on Spanish children. Aggressive Behavior, 30(1), 16-28.*

SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Phoenix-Area Vet Centers Seeking Veterinary Social Worker



[1st Pet Veterinary Centers](#), a consortium of three practices in Mesa, Chandler and North Valley, Ariz., is recruiting for a Veterinary Social Workers whose responsibilities will include assessment and clinical interventions with domestic violence concerns. The Veterinary Social Worker will provide safety planning for pets when domestic violence may be an issue, in addition to other responsibilities including client grief counseling, de-escalation between clients and staff, training staff on stress management and compassion fatigue, assessment and treatment planning for suicide ideation, and supporting clients experiencing high stress or emotionality and with needs for their children or the elderly. Applications are being handled by [ZipRecruiter](#).

ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK

Pennsylvania Bill Would Bar Bestiality Offenders from Working with Dependent Adults

In declaring it to be Commonwealth policy that older adults who lack the capacity to protect themselves and are at imminent risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment, a bill in the Pennsylvania General Assembly would ban offenders convicted of animal sexual abuse from working with older adults for a period of 25 years.



Rep. Tim Hennessey

HB 1681 would impose a 25-year employment ban upon conviction for an extensive list of certain offenses – including sexual intercourse with an animal -- that evidence “a reckless disregard for the vulnerability of care-dependent populations.” Facilities covered by the employment ban would include residential care homes, long-term nursing homes, home health care agencies, hospices, adult daily living centers, personal care homes, assisted living residences, and public or private organizations that use public funds to provide care to care-dependent individuals.

A list of criminal offenses would ban offenders from employment in such facilities for either 10 years, 25 years, or life. Such offenses include homicide, sex trafficking, rape, sexual assault, incest, endangering children’s welfare, child sexual abuse, arson, burglary, robbery, and corruption of a minor.

The prime sponsor is Rep. Tim Hennessey (R – Chester and Montgomery Counties) with four co-sponsors. The bill is in the House Committee on Aging and Older Adult Services.

THE LINK... in the LITERATURE

Applicants Sought for Professorship in Animal Studies

Eckerd College in Florida is conducting a search for a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Animal Studies with a specialty in human-animal relationships, to start in August, 2022. A Ph.D. in a Social Science related-field is required. The professor will teach seven undergraduate courses per year, including Introduction to Animal Studies, Senior Capstone and electives for a newly developed, interdisciplinary program in Animal Studies. Expertise in statistical methods and qualitative methodology are pluses. Submit a letter of application, vita, teaching evaluations, statement of teaching philosophy, research agenda, graduate and undergraduate transcripts, and contact information for three references by October 15 to [Dr. Erin Frick](#).



ECKERD COLLEGE

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

For Additional Information

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

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Link Featured in Georgia VMA Magazine Article on Liability



Claudine Wilkins

Members of the Georgia Veterinary Medical Association were given an introduction to The Link between animal abuse and human violence in an [article in the Summer 2021 issue of GA Vet](#) describing The Link in terms of its being a non-medical issue which practitioners should be familiar with in order to avoid exposing themselves to potential liability.

Claudine Wilkins, Founder of the [Animal Protection Society](#) and past chair of the Georgia Bar Association's Animal Law Section, writes that "animal crimes come in all forms and veterinarians are often the first one to break a case on animal abuse, animal hoarding, puppy mills, dogfighting, sex abuse against animals, and domestic violence."

The article addresses The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence. "Veterinarians continually ask me, 'What should I do if suspect animal abuse or domestic violence?' These calls became so frequent, I decide to build a course around this topic and prepared a 'Do's and Don'ts' poster for veterinarians to post in their clinics," she writes. Her "Spot Abuse/Stop Abuse" is linked to the article.

She discusses the "dark web" and animal abuse, noting that sex crimes against animals and children are frequently Linked. The article also discusses other legal dilemmas confronting practitioners, including clients who use their pets to fraudulently obtain prescription drugs, rendering aid to animals seized in puppy mills, and how to testify in court.

Wilkins, a former prosecutor who admits she started out wanting to be a veterinarian "until I hit organic chemistry in college," writes that she shares the same mission as most veterinarians. "I am determined to inspire the next generation to be responsible pet owners and animal protectors as well as strengthen the bond between humans and animals, make good laws, and provide education for professionals and the public.

"Veterinarians are in the fabric of every community. We all benefit from having veterinarians to care for our beloved furry family members and to educate us on how to care and protect them. Exploring outside of your daily grind, you will see there is much to know such as other specialties you can partake in as a veterinarian, vet forensics, how to participate in animal cases, understanding federal, state and local laws pertaining to animals, running a successful vet business, knowing your rights if someone dumps an animal at your clinic, how to protect yourself from lawsuits, how to report animal abuse or domestic violence and much more," she concludes.

-- Wilkins, C. (2021, Summer). **Protect yourself while protecting animals: What every veterinarian should know outside of medicine: How veterinarians can get involved in animal laws and protect themselves from liability.** *GA Vet*, 6-8.

Link Described as the “Abused Canary” in the Coal Mine



Jennifer Woolf

Jennifer Woolf, a veterinary forensics consultant based in California, has had an article published in the online journal [Veterinary Partner](#) describing The Link and its particular significance for veterinarians. Woolf describes The Link as the connection between animal abuse and violence against humans including child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, and other forms of interpersonal violence. “Essentially, if a person is violent against sentient beings, it does not matter if that being is human or not. Where there is violence against people, animals are at risk and vice versa,” she writes.

“The canary in the coal mine of an abusive home may literally be an abused canary,” she adds. “By responding to the injury or death of that canary, we can potentially save many other pets and people.”

Veterinary Partner is a public-facing component of the Veterinary Information Network (VIN). Articles are meant to be relatively short summaries of animal health topics.

—Woolf, J. (2021, July 20). [The Link: the connection between animal abuse and interpersonal violence.](#) *Veterinary Partner.*



Melinda Merck

Lecture Trains Veterinarians to Recognize and Respond to Domestic Violence

Forensic veterinarian Melinda Merck has recorded a [50-minute lecture](#) for [SafePet Ontario](#) on “Animal Cruelty & Domestic Violence: Suspicious Indicators and Response for the Veterinary Community.” The lecture discusses: the context of suspicious indicators; clients’ behaviors and patterns; tools and essential points; working with law enforcement; and how to interact with clients.

SafePet Ontario coordinates long- and short-term foster care for the pets of individuals fleeing violent situations in the Canadian province. Once survivors have made the transition to safety, the organization reunites pets with their owners so they can all move into a better future together. The program was established by the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association in 2003 to enable more survivors with pets to seek safety. Veterinary hospitals serve as neutral locations where pet owners can drop off their animals, where they will receive health examinations and needed vaccinations, before entering foster care.

SafePet Ontario also works with law enforcement, animal shelters, victim services, humane societies, and human shelters in an extensive network of community partnerships.



AVMA Workshops Address DVMs and The Link

The American Veterinary Medical Association included two workshops on The Link between animal abuse and other forms of family violence as part of its 2021 [annual convention](#). Originally scheduled to take place in Minneapolis, the convention was converted to a virtual format in response to COVID-19 pandemic considerations.

Nicole Forsyth

Nicole Forsyth, President and CEO of [RedRover](#), presented “Exploring the Role of the Veterinary Community in Helping Break Cycles of Abuse in Domestic Violence”, which attracted 67 participants. “Domestic violence is closer than you think,” she said. “Many of your clients are likely experiencing abuse: are you prepared?”

She encouraged practitioners to offer support to their local domestic violence organizations, to recognize signs that clients might be experiencing domestic violence, and to help their communities by collaborating to create pet-friendly solutions for survivors with pets. For example, veterinarians can ask clients if they have any obstacles impeding their ability to care for their pets. She presented some of RedRover’s resources including wallet cards for survivors, directory of pet-friendly shelters, and infographics.

Veterinarians can assist domestic violence shelters by providing examinations of survivors’ pets at intake, offering routine veterinary care and emergency services. Because many pets experience the animal equivalent of PTSD during the trauma and relocations involved with domestic violence, many survivors report their pets experience behavioral changes and veterinarians can assist with behavior modification plans.

Forsyth described several creative options for building pet facilities in domestic violence shelters, such as in-room and outdoor kennel models. She presented results of a survey conducted with the University of Windsor that identified the different types of pet care responses. She also described grant opportunities available to help domestic violence shelters build safe housing facilities for pets. Because there is still a shortage of domestic violence shelters that accept pets, RedRover has a goal to make 25% of shelters pet-friendly by 2025.

She also described options for foster pet care programs, particularly the more specialized ones which need to care for horses and other species.

Her presentation was part of track on “Explorations of the Human-Animal Bond,” which also featured National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow’s program. “One Health and the ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Preparing a Protocol Response to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect” attracted 49 attendees. Both presentations described potential suspicious signs of animal abuse and other family violence and responses available to veterinary practitioners.

RAISING LINK AWARENESS



Japanese-language Link Resources Expanded

Japan's [Animal Literacy Research Institute](#) has added to the growing body of Japanese-language materials about The Link between animal abuse and human violence with a collection of podcast videos, articles and infographics. ALRI Director Sakiko Yamazaki tells *The LINK-Letter* that over the past year the organization has been actively expanding its offerings of free educational resources.

Sakiko Yamazaki

- [Is It True that Animal Abuse is a Precursor to Violent Crimes?](#) is an article from Japan's Animal Literacy Research Institute.
- [The Link between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence: Wisdom to Protect both Humans and Animals](#) is a 13-minute YouTube recording of an ALRI FaceBook live podcast.
- [The Link between Animal Abuse and Crime: Toward a Society that Protects both Humans and Animals](#) is a 10-minute YouTube recording of an ALRI FaceBook live podcast.
- [The Link between Animal Abuse and Child Abuse: Comprehensively Protecting Family Members in Weaker Positions](#) is a 15-minute recording of an ALRI FaceBook live podcast.
- [Is there an Association between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence? Exploring the Phenomenon Called The LINK](#) is an 8-minute lecture from the Animal Literacy Research Institute.
- [Infographic on The Link](#) is a visual infographic summarizing the several types of Links between animal abuse and interpersonal violence.

Links to these and other Japanese-language materials are on the National Link Coalition's web page of [free foreign-language resources](#), including materials in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Italian, Bulgarian, and Turkish.

Article, Podcast Showcase How Pet-Friendly Domestic Violence Shelters Save Lives



The *Toronto Star* newspaper has published an extended [article](#) and a [podcast](#) describing how accommodating pets in domestic violence shelters is helping to save lives. Joanna Chiu, in the *Star's* Vancouver bureau, described results from a groundbreaking study of Canadian domestic violence survivors by Amy Fitzgerald and Betty Barrett (*See the August 2020 LINK-Letter*) as illuminating the Violence Link concept that abuse of animals and abuse of people are not distinct problems but rather are part of intertwined patterns of behavior.

Chiu interviewed Jessie Rodger, Executive Director of two Anova domestic violence shelters in London, Ont., about the lengthy process by which they came to accept pets. Since becoming pet-friendly, Anova has seen over 100 animals "with everything from dogs and cats to turtles, fish and birds," she said.

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses is maintaining a [directory of shelters](#) in the province that offer services for pets of women leaving violence. "We don't want [survivors] to choose between their personal safety and children's safety or their pets' safety," said Amber Wardell, OAITH Resource Coordinator.

The podcast featured a 16-minute interview by Saba Eitizaz with Hannah Brown manager of Humane Canada's criminal justice system reform program and coordinator of the Violence Link initiative.

News from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Portrait of a Steering Committee Member – Steve Dale

The National Link Coalition is guided by a steering committee of multi-disciplinary, nationally-recognized authorities in such fields as animal care and control, veterinary medicine, criminal justice, domestic violence, child and elder abuse, social work, and law enforcement. The Human-Animal Bond Association (formerly the Association of Human-Animal Bond Veterinarians) recently ran a feature spotlighting Steve Dale, who serves on the HABA Board of Directors as well as our steering committee. We thought we'd share Steve's profile with you:



Location: Chicago, IL

Occupation: Certified Animal Behavior Consultant

Involvement with HABA: “The human animal bond is too often taken for granted, but obviously there’s something to it as no one – as far as I know – forces people to have a pet. Yet, well over half of all families in America have a pet. That wouldn’t be the case if it wasn’t for the human animal bond. Yet, the bond surfaces in all sorts of other ways. For example, more people go to zoos than any other sort of entertainment venue around the world. Why is that? Apparently, it makes us feel good. Our bond with nature may be ignored these days, but it’s within all of us. People bond in a subtle way with birds when they provide a feeder, for example. However, no doubt, our bonds with cats and particularly dogs is so very special.”

Hobbies: “I’m a not so skilled runner. My wife Robin and I love to travel.”

Family members: “Currently, lots of geriatrics, a nearly 19-year-old Devon Rex cat named Roxy; 11-year-old Chihuahua/Terrier mix named Hazel and a 25-year-old Northern Blue Tongue Skink named Cosette. We know she is a female because, after all, her name is Cosette.”

About myself: “I was on the radio playing music in Chicago and also a reporter, mostly covering entertainment for the Chicago *Tribune*, *People* magazine and *USA Today* --- but also wrote about pets, and eventually that’s all I wound up writing about. Along the way, became a certified animal behavior consultant. For about 25 years I’ve hosted a pet show on WGN Radio Chicago, and for over 15 years two nationally syndicated radio shows. I’ve appeared on many TV shows, from Oprah to GMA to lots of animal planet programs. Far more important to me are the veterinary textbooks I’ve contributed to, and have authored my own books, and traveled around the world to speak at conferences and events. For about 15 years I’ve served on the Board of Directors of the EveryCat Health Foundation, and have served on many other Boards and Advisory Boards.”

Most memorable Human Animal Bond experience: “I suppose a few of my ‘claims to fame’ are that I was the guy who convinced the Chicago White Sox to allow dogs inside what was then Comiskey Park for an event called Dog Days. As a result many major league teams today have their own version of Dog Days and nearly all minor league baseball teams. To thank me, the White Sox asked me to throw out the ceremonial first pitch, which I did with two dogs at my side. And one other quickie: I was once the answer to 57 across in a TV Guide crossword puzzle.”

Hidalgo, Mexico Link Group Promoting Awareness and Collaboration



The National Link Coalition has been in contact with an animal welfare organization in the Mexican state of Hidalgo which is focusing its work on “El Vínculo” – The Link – as part of a community collaborative effort to prevent violence and crime and build a culture of peace.

The [Asociación Hidalguense para la Protección de los Animales \(AHPAAC\)](#) became the first nonprofit animal protection association in Hidalgo in 2002 with an overarching purpose of promoting a culture of respect, protection and dignified treatment for life. Over the years, like so many other animal welfare groups, AHPAAC came to realize that the overpopulation of animals in the streets was merely the tip of an iceberg of an even bigger societal problem.

Today, AHPAAC’s mission is to reduce the levels of violence in society and improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups through social-animal welfare programs while promoting a culture of responsible guardianship of companion animals. The care model is based on “Socio-Animal Welfare” that recognizes that the welfare and legal protection of animals is not an “animalistic” issue, but rather a social problem requiring multidisciplinary approaches in the state of 2.8 million people.

AHPAAC works in ethology, veterinary and human medicine, biology, anthropology, anthrozoology, law, animal welfare, social and comparative psychology, criminology, and victimology. Its ultimate goal is to create a culture of peace through the social prevention of violence and crime through getting collective organizations, governments and society in general to understand both the underlying factors of animal abuse and its correlation with social violence. In addition to addressing The Link, AHPAAC focuses on One Health, animal-assisted therapy and the human-animal bond as a way to improve the conditions of animals and our relationship with them, while understanding their world and how they can improve ours.

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 **121 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 Hoarding



Missouri HB 373 would have added animal hoarding to the definition of animal neglect and require mental health evaluations for offenders. It was in the Rules Committee **when the legislative session ended.**



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.

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 the Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development and was sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. (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 the Assembly Public Safety and Judiciary Committees and was referred to the Appropriations 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 both the Senate and the Assembly.



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 have required 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 was in the Senate Jurisprudence Committee **when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **Washington HB 1293**, the “Survivors’ Justice Act,” would have allowed 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 have imposed 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 was in the Committee on Public Safety **when the legislative session ended.**

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.

 **Pennsylvania HB 1681** would impose a 25-year ban on offenders convicted of sexual intercourse with an animal from employment working with care-dependent adults. Facilities covered by the employment ban would include residential care homes, long-term nursing homes, home health care agencies, hospices, adult daily living centers, personal care homes, assisted living residences, and any other public or private organization that uses public funds to provide care to care-dependent individuals. The bill is in the House Committee on Aging and Older Adult Services.

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 and S 4130 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 and Senate Codes Committees.



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 any dog- or cock-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 passed the Senate and is in the House Judiciary 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 have created a new crime of “providing harmful material to a minor” that would have included “patently offensive representations or descriptions” of bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill was in the Committee on Public Safety **when the legislative session ended**.

Animal Sexual Abuse



Colorado Ballot Initiative 16, proposed for 2022, “Protect Animals from Unnecessary Suffering and Exploitation” (PAUSE), would amend 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 1st-degree misdemeanor to a 3rd-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 establishes the crime of 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, convicted offenders will now 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. **The measure was signed into law on June 7** and took effect immediately,



Missouri HB 373 would have required mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding; it was in the Rules Committee **when the legislative session ended**.



New York A614 would make sexual contact with animals a felony if serious injury or death of the animal occurs, require offenders to relinquish all animals, bar them from future possession of animals, and undergo psychological evaluation. It 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 have made 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 was in the Public Safety Committee **when the legislature adjourned**.



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 the state's criminal code 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 have appropriated 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 was in the House Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



Pennsylvania HB 1570 ("Cash's Law") would allow courts to add a sentencing enhancement in cases of burglary or criminal trespass where a domestic animal is harmed or killed in the course of that crime. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Washington HB 1038 would have barred individuals convicted or found not guilty by reason of insanity of animal cruelty 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 was in the Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary **when the legislative session ended.**

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 (at locations other than commercial food-producing animal operations) to authorities with immunity from civil and criminal liability, professional disciplinary action and employer retaliation. Failure to report would be grounds for disciplinary action. It would be a misdemeanor to destroy or alter medical records to conceal animal cruelty. Reporting at commercial food operations would be permissive. **HB 49 and SB 218** would have allowed 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 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 have given immunity from civil liability to anyone who reports suspected animal cruelty in good faith; intentional filing of a false report would have been a misdemeanor and civilly liable. The bill was in the House Committee on Crime Prevention **when the legislative session ended.**



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.



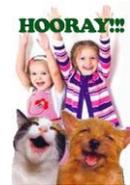
New York A 5823-A/S 5023-A would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal’s injury, illness or condition is the result of animal cruelty to report the incident and would allow the disclosure of records concerning the animal’s condition and treatment. (Existing 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 have required veterinarians to report suspected cruelty of non-livestock animals to the county sheriff or municipal police agency; reports made in good faith would have been 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 have allowed courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment for adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders. Evaluation and treatment would have been mandatory for animal torture or motivation or upon second and subsequent convictions. **HB 373** would have required mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding. The bills **died when the legislature adjourned**.



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

Two Women Charged in Abuse of Child and 84 Animals

Two women from Homosassa, Fla., were each charged with 61 counts of aggravated animal cruelty, 13 counts of animal cruelty, and one count of child neglect after animal control officers and sheriff's deputies reportedly found 84 animals and a child living in "unlivable conditions." [WTVT-TV](#) reported that Tabitha Kaye Iverson, 51, and Christine Anne Iverson, 42, were charged in the investigation which involved 21 dogs, 27 cats, six birds, five rabbits, and a turtle and a



Tabitha (left) and Christine Iverson

chicken inside the home. Many animals were reportedly lying in their own urine and feces and had open sores and injuries. One dog was so severely malnourished it had to be euthanized. Additional livestock outside the home were also seized. "There are basic standards of humane care for both people and animals. These two individuals not only allowed 84 animals to suffer in this hazardous and unsanitary environment, but they even exposed a juvenile child to these unlivable conditions," said Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast.



Prentiss Madden

DVM Pleads Guilty to Child and Animal Pornography

The Florida veterinarian who had been charged with possession of child pornography and sexual abuse of a dog ([See the April 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) has pled guilty and faces between five and 87 years in prison when he is sentenced on Oct. 8. The [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#) reported that Prentiss Madden, 40, pled guilty to four counts of knowingly receiving or possessing 1,667 visual depictions of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. He also pled guilty to one count of creating an animal "crush" video for making several videos of himself sexually abusing dogs and sharing the videos on social media. Madden, the former medical director at Caring Hands Animal Hospital in Aventura, lost his job two weeks before his arrest when the hospital learned he was being investigated for "heinous and unthinkable crimes." He has been held without bond at Miami's Federal Detention Center since his arrest in mid-March.

Man with Domestic Violence History Charged with Attack on Kitten



Dumetrice Wilson

A Fort Myers, Fla. man with a history of domestic violence is facing a charge of animal cruelty for allegedly kicking and stomping a kitten and throwing it against a wall during an argument with his ex-girlfriend. Dumetrice Laquawn Wilson, 48, was charged, according to [WINK-TV](#). The 8-week-old kitten named "Boomer" had to be euthanized. The woman who ran to the police department to report the incident was escorted home by police, who then detained Wilson. Wilson was arrested in 2020 for allegedly smacking a woman in the face and covering her and the floor in mayonnaise, syrup and ketchup; the charges were ultimately dropped. He was also arrested in 2020 for violating a protective order when he followed an ex-girlfriend home, according to records.

Man Indicted on Weapons, Abduction, Larceny, and Animal Cruelty Charges

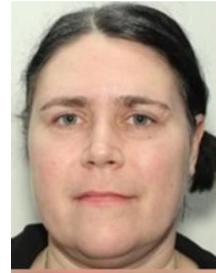


James Cantrell

James Patrick Cantrell, 44, of Pilgrim’s Knob, Va., was indicted by a grand jury on charges of aggravated malicious wounding, malicious discharge of a firearm in an occupied building, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, grand larceny of a motor vehicle, and animal cruelty for allegedly torturing or mutilating a dog causing death or serious injury. [WJHL-TV](#) reported that Cantrell was arrested after a shooting victim was found with a gunshot wound to the head. Cantrell was also charged with abduction by force for allegedly kidnapping a woman who was at the residence when the shooting occurred.

Atlanta Police Seek Suspect, Motive in Killing of Woman and Her Dog

Police in Atlanta, Ga., were going door-to-door and looking for surveillance video to try to identify who stabbed a 40-year-old woman to death and killed her dog on July 28. The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) reported that Katherine Janness had been stabbed multiple times. While authorities did not indicate how the dog, named “Bowie,” died, police described the scene as “gruesome.” Authorities were also trying to identify a motive for the killings, which occurred in a popular 185-acre park around 1 a.m. A \$10,000 reward was being offered by CrimeStoppers Atlanta for information in the brutal killing.



Victim Katherine Janness



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

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.

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.

Aug. 25 – (online): Michelle Welch and Richard Samuels will present “Investigating & Prosecuting Animal Crimes in Small, Rural and Tribal Communities” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

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. 9 – Orlando, Fla.: Rosa Figarola will present “The Link between Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty” at the Florida Department of Children & Families’ 2021 [Child Protection Summit](#).

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 47th [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. 19 – Godmachester, U.K. (online): Lesley Winton will present “Reversing the Cycle of Abuse and Fostering Compassion” at the [Society for Companion Animal Studies’ conference](#) on Animal-Assisted Interventions: Research Meets Practice.”

Sept. 21 – Columbus, Ohio (online): Phil Arkow, Jessica Bibbo, Barbara Boat, Vicki Deisner, Janet Hoy-Gerlach, and others will conduct an [all-day webinar](#) on “Better Together: Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services,” with details on how Ohio’s new **HB 33** cross-reporting law is addressing The Link.

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. 4-5 (online): Allie Phillips will give a virtual presentation on “Animal Abuse & Family Violence: Rural Strategies to Keep Families Safe,” and on pet-friendly domestic violence sheltering, for the [Institute for Coordinated Community Response](#).

Oct. 15-17 – Portland, Ore. (online): The Animal Legal Defense Fund’s [Animal Law Conference](#) will feature 16 presentations on a variety of topics related to The Link.

Oct. 19-21 – Boulder, Colo. (online): The National American Indian Court Judges Association (NAICJA) will include a presentation, “On the Bench: The Link Between Animal Cruelty, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse and Neglect -What Tribal Judges Can Do,” at the National Tribal Judicial and Court Personnel [Virtual Conference](#).

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

Oct. 29 – New Rochelle, N.Y. (online): Phil Arkow will present “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse and its Link with Human Violence” for an [Animal and Human Health class](#) at Iona College.

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 10th [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

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