



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 15, No. 1 January 2022**

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



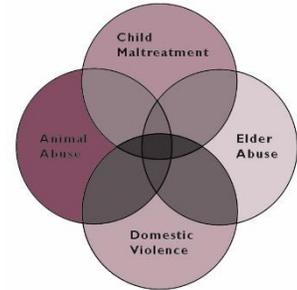
**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



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

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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## ***LEGISLATION... and The LINK***

### **A Link Emphasis Can Advance Legislation and Aid Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities**

A holistic look at how animal abuse also affects people can play a major role in advancing legislation that makes life better for people and animals by legislators who are barraged by proposals and special interests. That was the message offered by two pre-eminent Senators in who have been instrumental in advancing Link-based animal welfare legislation in Canada’s Parliament over the past five years.

Sens. Pierre Dalphond (Progressive – Quebec) and Yvonne Boyer (Independent – Ontario) were the closing plenary speakers at Humane Canada’s two-day Violence Link Conference in November. Their presentation, “The Senate Perspective of Social Context and Our Relationships with Animals,” offered a rare insight into how legislators think and prioritize societal needs – whether in Canada, the U.S. or elsewhere.



**Sen. Pierre Dalphond**

Adding the human perspective to animal abuse “makes more people aware of The Link and people will be more mindful of the respect we should have as a society,” said Dalphond. Noting that he had not previously been aware of how animal abuse impacts people, he related how he became increasingly impressed with the testimony of witnesses who have witnessed violence and the growing academic evidence supporting The Link. “All these Links are starting to merge through social research and are important to look at when considering any bill,” he said. Adding a holistic approach to the social safety net coordinates seemingly disparate legislation and prevents people from getting hurt. That’s becoming easier now that more people are aware of the Link, he said.

Facts and evidence are critical for legislators, said Boyer. “When we have statistical evidence where we see that 90% of domestic violence survivors said their pets were mistreated, that makes a ground base for why we need shelters for both people and animals. I can’t stress how important the Violence Link is.”

Dalphond compared growing awareness of animal sentience and the animal abuse Link to changes that occurred over time with child protection. We used to think of children as property and their parents

could do whatever they wanted with them, but no longer. “Parents now see that they have duties to their children. The same is true with our relationship with animals.”



Sen. Yvonne Boyer

Boyer – a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario with ancestral roots in the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and the Red River, and one of 10 Indigenous Senators in Parliament – gave the Violence Link perspective through the holistic worldview of human-animal interdependence so often associated with Indigenous peoples. While proposed animal welfare legislation can stand alone, the Link “is attached everywhere you look. For me, as an Indigenous woman, I look at it through Indigenous eyes. We need to look at all this legislation through Violence Link eyes because that’s what’s going to bring it forward.

“We as Senators have a duty to reflect societal changes,” she added, noting how Quebec has a provincial law that recognizes animals’ sentience. “Animals are thinking beings, not chattel, so we can reflect that.”

“Things are moving. We are all part of the life cycle,” added Dalphond. Bringing the holistic perspective that First Nation and Indigenous people have and the holiness of life enhances human and animal welfare legislation. Taking such a holistic perspective of interdependence can also play a role in reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities and bringing people together.

We are all the sum of our relationships; they’re part of who someone is and how individual health is part of community health, said Boyer. In Indigenous cultures, a dog is not just a dog – it can be the spirit of someone’s grandfather. Indigenous women in particular will not leave an abusive relationship because of the spiritual connection that have with the animals they might have to leave behind. Boyer cautioned people trying to offer Link training to Indigenous communities that the first step is to ask them what they need. “Don’t assume anything. Ask them; they know what they need.”

The Senators reflected on the recent passage of bill **C-3** which mandates that Canadian judges receive continuing legal education on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence and sexual assault ([See the June 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) as a sign of progress. As family courts consider what is in the best interests of a child, they need to include violence against the family’s animals as an important criterion, said Dalphond. “These are signs that should not be ignored; there’s a Link and The Link is obvious. Where there’s violence it should not be good for the children. For judges to understand this they have to understand The Link. You have to mind the bigger picture and animals are part of that picture.”

Another sign of progress has been the platforms advanced by the Liberal and Conservative parties during the recent elections, both of which included Link references to children, domestic violence and animals. “It shows that something is happening,” said Dalphond. With more and more Canadians acquiring companion animals, and emphasizing the economic impact of the animal care sectors, “Animals can get votes. That’s the way we can influence.”

Legislators are continually challenged to improve the future for their constituents, and many interests compete for their attention. But Boyer continued to emphasize the significance of the Violence Link and the need to see social services legislation through that lens. “Sometimes I get involved in some critical issue and I feel like I have to scream my head off,” she admitted. “I have to scream about this one. The Violence Link is real and we have to take action now.”

## “CAAP” Bill to be Reintroduced in Florida Legislature

A controversial bill in Florida which would allow courts to name pro bono Court-Appointed Advocates for Animals in certain court cases will be re-introduced in 2022. [Florida S 172](#) is a re-introduction of [Florida S 1316/H 1003](#) which died in the 2021 session. The measures would allow for the appointment of an advocate for “the interests of an animal” in civil and criminal court proceedings regarding animals’ welfare, care or custody. Advocates could be appointed, either upon the court’s initiative or upon request, from a list of designated attorneys and certified legal interns provided by the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar Association.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has expressed opposition to the language, noting that allowing lawyers to advocate for the “interests of an animal” is a different legal standard than “in the interest of justice.” The former is an attempt to require courts to apply the same types of standards as they would for a child in an abuse or custody case, while the latter includes notions of fairness, animals that are deceased, and the interest of the animal’s owner, says the AVMA.

Similar objections have been raised in the introduction of similar bills in Colorado. Existing “CAAP” laws enacted in Connecticut and Maine use the “interests of justice” approach. Other bills addressing animal advocates for animals have been introduced over the past few years in Alaska, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. Animal-advocate bills are currently being considered in Illinois, New Jersey and New York.

### ***CHILD MALTREATMENT... and The Link***

#### **Child Welfare Professionals Needed for Judges’ Focus Group**

The [National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges](#) is seeking a small group of child welfare administrators or supervisors with their state or tribal child welfare department to participate in a one-time, two-hour virtual focus group session to help develop resources for judges and child-and family-serving professionals to better understand The Link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence.

NCJFCJ, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, has an opportunity to create new resources for practitioners who work with families impacted by child abuse and neglect. The focus group will offer input to guide the creation of these resources. The new resources will offer a greater understanding of how The Link between animal abuse and human violence is relevant to child welfare agencies and family courts when they are handling child maltreatment cases and what information about children’s attachments to their pets would be helpful when making reports, recommendations or decisions about child safety, placement and services.

Participation is voluntary and participants may drop out at any time. All identities and responses will be confidential. Participants will receive a free hard-copy of NCJFCJ’s *Animal Cruelty Issues: What Juvenile and Family Court Judges Need to Know* in appreciation for their time and assistance.

The goal of the project is to create a tool that can be used by child welfare professionals to provide important information that can help judges build rapport with children and better address their needs. For more information, contact Dr. Martha-Elin Blomquist, Senior Site Manager, at NCJFCJ at [mblomquist@ncjfcj.org](mailto:mblomquist@ncjfcj.org). To volunteer and choose a date that works for you, please click on this link: [https://ncjfcj.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bmzpMzEBiiS4API](https://ncjfcj.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bmzpMzEBiiS4API).

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

### **National Link Coalition Compiling List of Animal Cruelty Prosecution and Law Enforcement Units**

The increasing public interest in prosecuting animal cruelty cases aggressively, combined with the complexity of these cases and growing awareness of how crimes against animals are often Linked to crimes against people, are causing many prosecutors and law enforcement agencies to initiate specialized Animal Crimes Units and Animal Cruelty Task Forces. Many of these agencies cite The Link as a rationale for these specialized programs. For example:

- The **Fresno County, Calif. District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Unit** was formed in 2015 because "animal cruelty can be a precursor to violent crimes against people." One goal of the Unit is "to break this connection between animal abuse and human violence."
- The **Sacramento County, Calif. District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit and Animal Cruelty Task Force** were created, "recognizing a link between animal abuse and violent crimes against people (particularly child abuse and domestic violence). The District Attorney's office believes a specialized unit will result in consistent and skilled vertical prosecution of these offenders and that the task force will unite partners in law enforcement and community organizations to improve training, communication and awareness concerning issues of animal cruelty."
- The **Albany County, N.Y. District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Taskforce** was created in 2013 to utilize a multi-agency response to animal abuse, neglect, and hoarding cases, as well as combine law enforcement prevention efforts and public education outreach.
- The **Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General's Animal Law Unit** was created in 2015 because "laws related to animal welfare and animal fighting should be strictly enforced for the sake of animals themselves and for the strength and safety of our communities since animal fighting often reveals other associated crimes like illegal gambling, illegal drugs or alcohol, or even things like assaults, domestic abuse, or illegal weapons."

The National Link Coalition is compiling a list of known prosecutors, sheriffs and police departments that are believed to have specialized, dedicated animal cruelty units. We invite LINK-Letter readers to help us keep this list current. Please email any additions or corrections to us at [arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net).

### **PROSECUTORS & LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES BELIEVED TO HAVE ANIMAL CRUELTY TASK FORCES**

**Updated Jan. 10, 2022**

#### **ARIZONA**

Phoenix Police Department Animal Investigations Unit  
Maricopa County Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Diversion Program  
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Animal Crimes Investigations Unit

#### **CALIFORNIA**

Alameda County District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Task Force  
Fresno County District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Unit

Los Angeles City Attorney's Office Animal Protection Unit  
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Unit  
Los Angeles Police Dept. Animal Cruelty Task Force (*disbanded 2020 due to fiscal crunch*)  
Sacramento County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit and Animal Cruelty Task Force  
San Bernardino County District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Unit  
San Diego County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit  
San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office Quality of Life Division

**COLORADO**

Colorado Springs – 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office Animal Care Unit

**GEORGIA**

DeKalb County Office of Public Safety Animal Services and Enforcement division  
Towaliga Judicial Circuit Office of the District Attorney – Butts County

**MICHIGAN**

Macomb County Prosecuting Attorney's Animal Protection Unit (APU) – PAWS (Protecting Animal Welfare & Safety)

**NEW JERSEY**

Bergen County Prosecutor's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force  
Cape May County Office of the Prosecutor Animal Cruelty Task Force  
Ocean County Prosecutors' Office Animal Cruelty Unit

**NEW MEXICO**

Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force (*current status unknown*)

**NEW YORK**

Albany County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Taskforce  
Essex County Animal Cruelty Taskforce  
Manhattan (NYC) District Attorney's Office – Animal Cruelty Program  
Nassau County District Attorney's Office Animal Crimes Unit  
Otsego County Animal Cruelty Task Force – PETS (Prevention, Education, Training & Systems)  
Queens County – District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Prosecutions Unit  
Richmond County (Staten Island, NYC) – District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit  
Syracuse – CNY Animal Cruelty Task Force

**NORTH CAROLINA**

New Hanover County Sheriff's Office Animal Services Unit

**OREGON**

Oregon Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney (Jake Kamins in Benton County DA's office)

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Allegheny County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Unit  
Bucks County District Attorney's Office  
Lancaster County Office of the District Attorney

**TEXAS**

Austin Police Department Animal Cruelty Unit  
Dallas County District Attorney's Animal Cruelty Unit  
El Paso Police Department Animal Cruelty Unit  
Harris County District Attorney's Office Animal Cruelty Task Force  
Laredo Anti-Animal Cruelty Partner Council Task Force

**VIRGINIA**

Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General's Animal Law Unit

## *DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK*

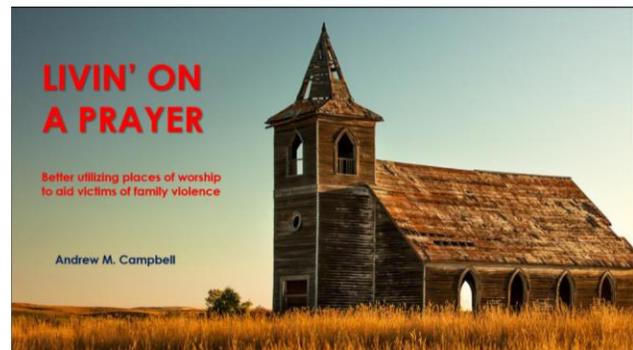
### Churches Seen as Untapped Resource for Victim Support

The multidisciplinary research and programming addressing Link violence has included diverse social services and community agencies, but the faith-based community has been largely ignored in these efforts. Link researcher [Andrew M. Campbell](#) is trying to rectify this oversight by encouraging pastors to think of their churches as places with a great opportunity to have an impact on survivors and perpetrators.

Speaking on a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar conducted in partnership with the National Sheriffs Association and the National Organization for Victim Assistance, Campbell's message, "Livin' on a Prayer: Better Utilizing Places of Worship to Aid Victims of Family Violence" described several reasons why domestic violence victims and their abusers both gravitate to church environments. "There's no reason to think that the people attending your services haven't experienced these situations, and they need to be addressed," he said, citing statistics that 30% of domestic violence homicide victims and 18% of their perpetrators – as well as many serial killers -- have been affiliated with churches.

But churches have been reluctant to provide the emotional support and resources that victims desperately need. 95% of churchgoing women reported that have never heard a specific message on abuse preached from the pulpit. Although 81% of pastors surveyed said they would take action to reduce domestic violence if they had adequate training and resources, only 18% say they've had any training. "And without training, you can do a lot of harm if you don't know what you're doing," Campbell said.

Despite recent incidents of sexual abuse within churches, church is seen by many families as a safe space, and for an abused woman it may be the only opportunity her abuser allows her to get out of the house. "You will have a lot of individuals who are abused at home and come to church. For some, this might be their break from abuse," he said, noting that the opportunity to disclose abuse to a trusted pastor might be a "turning point" in their lives.



But many victims experience what he called "a disheartening response" when church officials refuse to believe that a member of their congregation could be "a monster at home." In one study, 72% of pastors said domestic violence was a problem in the community but only 25% said it was a problem in their church. Another study reported that 89% of church-goers said domestic violence impacts few to none in their church and 68% said it impacts few to none in their community.

Pastors, rather than domestic violence agencies, can often be a victim's "first go-to source" for comfort and counseling about disturbing or shameful secrets, given their long-term and trusting relationships, Campbell said. That initial contact can be extremely important and even the "swing vote" in helping a victim determine whether to seek help or continue living in harm. "I see churches potentially being a turning point for these families," he said, when victims see that they have support from others who are interested in helping them. "People are entering the church in despair and leaving with hope."

Unfortunately, too many victims and survivors have reported that they received a “closed door” when they tried to tell someone at their church about their plight. That can be “soul-crushing,” he said.

Campbell cautioned that it is well-known that it takes a victim an average of seven times before she can free herself from the safety and support of her abuser and leave. He emphasized that it’s not the pastor’s responsibility to determine whether abuse actually happened, but rather to listen and refer the person to an appropriate agency. “When someone comes forward, whether or not you believe that the abuse happened, you have someone who’s hurting and who needs your help,” he said.

Campbell listed several reasons why domestic violence abusers, registered sex offenders and child molesters gravitate to church environments. They like the church’s message that all are welcome, that God forgives them and that their past doesn’t matter. They meet other people whom they believe can be manipulated emotionally. While registered sex offenders may be prohibited from being around children in schools and playgrounds, there are no such restrictions covering churches and their youth groups. Having a prominent presence in church tricks the community into thinking they’re harmless and makes their victim’s story less likely to be believed.

Campbell also presented maps showing geospatial correlations between churches in several Indiana cities and the location of registered sex offenders and domestic violence incidents. In one community, 150 known offenders lived within a ½-mile walk of a church.

He offered several ways in which churches can help to end family violence:

- Learn more about the family violence issues that affect so many congregants.
- Present clear messaging that your church takes a firm stand against physical and emotional abuse.
- Believe victims when they come forward to disclose their stories.
- Be on a first-name basis with personnel from community agencies so you can refer a victim to a specific person rather than a faceless bureaucracy.
- Continue to support victims. The reality for everyone in their families is that the issues are never behind them and they are always surviving. Let them know that God hates abuse.
- Help perpetrators find resources, such as substance abuse and addiction groups.
- Talk about these issues in the community. Guest speakers from community agencies can speak to the congregation, either on Sunday (the day of the week when most domestic violence incidents are reported) or at special events.
- Make the church a safe place for children, including reporting suspected child abuse. 77% of pastors surveyed underestimated the risk of child abuse in homes where there is also domestic violence. Church may be one of the few places where a child can be separated from the abuser and has an opportunity to disclose.
- “Don’t forget the pets,” he said, who are often targeted for abuse and who are extremely important to the human victims. Bringing pets to church events can trigger a victim becoming willing to disclose abuse.

Resolving family violence is a multi-disciplinary effort and churches can be a big part of it by just being a church and doing what they do best in providing comfort and emotional support. “When I think of churches I think of community and support,” he concluded.

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

### Study Examines Conditions of Animals in Purdue PetSafe Program



Recognizing that violence toward animals is closely associated with intimate partner violence, that abuse of companion animals can be a tool for terrorizing, threatening, intimidating, or controlling others, and that animals play important roles in the lives of the victims of intimate partner violence, particularly as substitutes for human interaction, the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine instituted a PetSafe program in 1995 to meet the short-term housing needs of pets owned by victims of intimate partner violence.

While similar programs have emerged worldwide, including at other veterinary teaching hospitals, there have been few studies detailing the conditions of the animals housed in such programs. A new study describes the number and species of animals sheltered, health problems encountered, typical duration of stay, and costs incurred by the Purdue program.

From 2004 to 2019, 229 animals were enrolled in the PetSafe program: 124 dogs, 95 cats, 6 ferrets, and 4 sugar gliders. 187 animals were returned to their owners, 37 were rehomed, and 5 were euthanized due to medical conditions. The most common health problems found were dental disease and dermatological complaints (flea infestation and fleabite dermatitis). The mean duration of stay was 22 days, with a range of 1 to 93 days.

Enabling survivors to escape with their pets appears to have prevented animals from being abused as part of the terrorizing behaviors used to threaten and control human victims. None of the animals had physical evidence of abuse, defined as any suspected nonaccidental injury that could not be explained or that was reported as a consequence of abuse by the owner. Open-ended questions asked during the intake history dealt with the possibility of the animal being harmed. Six owners voluntarily reported that others had threatened to hurt their animals or that their animals had been kicked previously.

There were no instances of any individual accused of committing violence approaching the college or causing any type of disturbance, either at the college or at volunteer caregivers, foster homes, or adoptive homes.

Over the 16-year period of the study, the number and species of animals cared for and the health problems encountered were relatively stable. The program was able to meet the relatively predictable financial costs incurred through existing sources of funding. The animals generally required no more care than animals held in a boarding facility and used no more resources than would be available at an independent veterinary hospital or animal shelter with regular veterinary services.

The PetSafe program offers three weeks of boarding, vaccinations and external parasite treatment at no charge to the owners. Owners must be working with a local social service agency, and the program reserves the right to refuse any animal on the basis of temperament. Any animals accepted into the program must allow themselves to be handled by kennel staff and students. Visits by family members other than the individual accused of causing violence are allowed. If owners cannot pick up their pets within three weeks, the pets are placed in foster homes until they can be claimed. If an owner cannot reclaim a pet, adoption is facilitated. Information about the program is regularly disseminated through agencies that assist the homeless, local domestic violence intervention and prevention programs, animal

control officers, religious congregations, and police and fire departments. These agencies act as intermediaries between the animal owners and the PetSafe program at Purdue.

The study concludes that given the barriers veterinarians face in recognizing and reporting abuse – including a low index of suspicion when presented with an injured animal and a lack of confidence in pursuing further action -- the establishment of safe havens in veterinary teaching hospitals, like the PetSafe program at Purdue, could potentially help in training veterinarians to recognize and report animal abuse.

-- Valiyamattam, G.J., Kritchevsky, J., & Beck, A.M. (2021, Nov. 18). *Demographics and outcome of dogs and cats enrolled in the PetSafe program at the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine 2004-2019. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.* <https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.20.09.0522>

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

### **300 Calgary Police Officers Receive Link Training**



**CALGARY  
POLICE  
SERVICE**

Over 300 sworn or civilian members of the Calgary Police Service in Alberta, Canada, have been trained on The Link, thanks to the work of Police Constable Dennis Smithson, veterinarian Margaret Doyle, and Calgary Humane Society Senior Manager for Animal Cruelty Investigations Brad Nichols.

Data gathered by Smithson has shown a high correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence: 93% of offenders charged criminally with intentional animal abuse were also domestic abusers and 85% were involved in an average of three to four other criminal offenses. By providing training on the Link, police officers are able to intervene earlier before offenders escalate to more serious offences, recognize victims of violence, and have the tools needed to find ways to further protect communities.

The training program includes a section on veterinary forensics to explain what signs to look for at an animal abuse call. Another section utilizes information from the Crown Prosecutor's office on what they need for successful completion. Other professionals whose work can intersect with the Link, including veterinary clinics, Child and Family Services and Calgary Housing, are being provided vital information on their responsibilities and the signs to look for.

A half-day training on the Violence Link and animal abuse investigations, hosted by the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police, has been so successful, with such positive feedback, that the Association is hoping to schedule four additional trainings in 2022.

### ***Permission to Reprint***

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

### ***For Additional Information***

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

## ***SOCIAL WORK and THE LINK***

### **Applications Invited for Three Social Work Assistant Professorships**



Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania is inviting applications for three full-time, tenure-track Social Work Assistant Professors in the Department of Public Health and Social Work, especially applicants who have an interest in human-animal interactions. The nine-month appointments start in August, 2022. Two professorships will involve conducting research and teaching four classes across the generalist and/or advanced (clinical) social work curriculum in both the BSSW and MSW programs. Additional details and application procedures for these two positions are available from [Slippery Rock University](#).

The third position is for a Social Work Director of MSW Field Experience. In addition to providing administrative oversight of Field Education, this position involves teaching courses and field seminars in the MSW and BSW program. [Additional details and an application](#) for this position are also available from the university.

## ***COVID-19 and The LINK***

### **Study to Examine Animal Shelter and Pet Owner Challenges**

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health are looking for volunteers or employees of animal shelters, animal rescues, or animal control organizations to participate in a survey about organizational challenges and pet owner struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of this research is to better understand the circumstances surrounding these events from the perspectives of animal care organization workers and to effectively support them and their organization operations. The well-being of racial/ethnic pet-owners is of high interest for this study, due to these populations facing pre-existing public health stressors and well-being disparities compared to White populations. The study will examine if these populations of pet-owners may especially be struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. For questions or concerns please contact the research team at [cowelf@jhu.edu](mailto:cowelf@jhu.edu). To participate in this study, click the following link to complete the online survey: [www.tinyurl.com/2kw7s6ut](http://www.tinyurl.com/2kw7s6ut)



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

### **Suspected Serial Cat Killings Found to Be Caused by Natural Predators**

When 300 cat mutilations riveted public attention and media hype in London, U.K. between 2014-2018, there was concern that a single person, dubbed the “Croydon Cat Killer,” was on the loose. Citing the Link between animal abuse and domestic violence, a new study identified the cause of mutilation in 32 of the cats to rule out possible human intervention. Using a combination of DNA testing, computed tomography imaging, and postmortem examination, no evidence was found to support any human involvement. Instead, a significant association between cat carcass mutilation and the presence of fox DNA was demonstrated. Together these findings supported the theory that the cause of mutilation was postmortem scavenging by red foxes. This study, citing several Link authorities, highlights the value of a multidisciplinary approach to fully investigate cases of suspected human-inflicted mutilation of animals.

-- Hull, K.D., Jeckel, S., Williams, J.M., Ciavaglia, S.A., & Webster, L.M.I., et al. (2021). Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) involvement identified in a series of cat carcass mutilations. *Veterinary Pathology*. DOI: [10.1177/03009858211052661](https://doi.org/10.1177/03009858211052661)

## ***RAISING LINK AWARENESS***



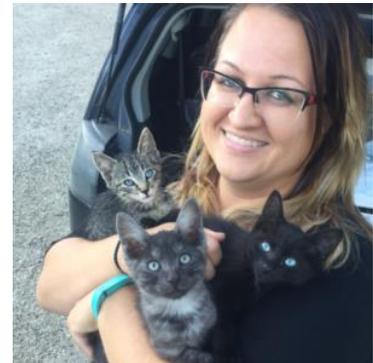
Joye Keeley

### **IN KENTUCKY...**

Joye Keeley of the Kentucky Link Coalition gave a presentation on “The Link: Commonalities of Sexual Assault Between Species” to the Animal rescue Roundtable in Radcliff, Ky., on Nov. 5. The program attracted animal rescues, shelters, advocates, and legislators. As a result of the presentation a CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) organization invited Keeley to speak to their group in the future.

### **IN ALBERTA...**

The Alberta SPCA in Canada has a periodic podcast which brings in experts to spotlight issues in animal welfare. On Oct. 29, the SPCA’s AnimalChat podcast was dedicated to the Violence Link in recognition of Family Violence Awareness Month. Patricia Mamak, who directs the One Family Welfare program at the Alberta SPCA (*see the [November 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*), discussed the research Linking animal abuse and human violence and described the SPCA’s program of helping people and pets in crisis by offering temporary care for the animals. The One Family Welfare program partners with more than 30 animal care organizations and 40 family violence agencies across the province. The podcast is [available online](#).



Patricia Mamak

### **ACROSS NORTH AMERICA...**



Wendy Lyons Sunshine

The National Link Coalition, the ASPCA, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T), DomesticShelters.org, and the Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Research Group (AIPARG) at the University of Windsor were featured in a *Psychology Today* [blog](#) on Dec. 22. “Domestic Violence Affects Pets, Too” brought to wider public attention how researchers and public safety officials are increasingly seeing significant overlap between domestic abuse, intimate partner violence and animal cruelty. Writer Wendy Lyons Sunshine described new laws that are protecting both pets and people from abuse and pet-friendly housing options that are becoming available.

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

The 2021 legislative sessions saw a record number of bills introduced (132!) and enacted addressing animal abuse and its Links with other forms of family violence. Here’s a recap of the bills that were enacted into law, and a list of bills pre-filed so far for consideration in 2022 or still active in multi-year state legislative sessions.

<b>2021 LINK VICTORIES WE’RE CELEBRATING</b>		
<i><b>Domestic Violence</b></i>		
 <p><b>Arkansas HB 1724</b> 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.” <b>It became law on April 30.</b></p>	 <p><b>California SB 320</b> codified inconsistent inter-agency communications and enforcement of provisions prohibiting individuals under domestic violence restraining orders (which may include pet protection provisions) to surrender ammunition as well as any firearms. <b>It was signed into law on Oct. 8.</b></p>	 <p><b>District of Columbia B23-0181</b>, the Intra-familial Offenses and Anti-Stalking Orders Amendment Act, clarifies how individuals or their animals who are victims of intrafamily offense, sexual assault or child sex trafficking, can petition for a civil protection order. “Intrafamily offense” includes 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. <b>It took effect May 18.</b></p>
 <p><b>Maine LD 535</b> requires courts adjudicating the dissolution of marriages to consider the well-being of companion animals in the disposition of property. The law <b>went into effect in October.</b></p>	 <p><b>Maryland SB 159/HB 281</b> 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 Link between animal abuse and domestic violence. The bills <b>were signed into law on May 18.</b></p>	 <p><b>Missouri SB 71</b> allows full and ex parte child and adult protection orders to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening abuse against a pet. The order may include custody of the pet and funds needed to cover the pet’s medical costs. The bill <b>took effect on Aug. 28.</b></p>
 <p><b>New York A5775/S4248</b> requires courts to consider the best interest of a companion animal when awarding possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills <b>were signed into law on Oct. 25.</b></p>	 <p><b>The Ohio Supreme Court</b> finally included a prohibition against respondents removing, damaging, hiding, or disposing of companion animals in the standard protection order form. The Court <b>closed this gap on April 15.</b></p>	 <p><b>Canada Bill C-3</b> requires 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 <b>was enacted by Royal Assent on May 6.</b></p>

## *Animal Sexual Abuse*

 **Hawai'i SB 343/HB1085** makes sexual assault of an animal a Class C felony, or Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Offenders must surrender all sexually abused animal(s), reimburse 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. **It took effect June 7.**

 **Wyoming HB46** defines and creates the misdemeanor crime of bestiality. **It took effect on July 1.**

## *Cross-Reporting*

 **Florida SB 96/HB 7039** requires 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 took effect July 1.**

 **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, with immunity for civil liability. **It took effect June 28.**

 **New York A 5823-A/S 5023-A** requires 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 allows the disclosure of patient records. (Prior law allowed voluntary reporting.) They were **signed into law Oct. 30.**

 **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.**

## *Child Maltreatment*

 <p><b>Arkansas HB 1497</b> expands the use of certified facility dogs for child witnesses to also include witnesses with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and expands the areas where these dogs may assist witnesses to include law enforcement investigations, children’s advocacy centers, prosecutors’ offices, and offices of court-appointed special advocates and guardians ad litem. <b>The bill was signed into law on April 21.</b></p>	 <p><b>Florida SB 96 / HB 7039</b> requires cross-reporting between child protective and animal services. Child protective investigators must report known or suspected animal cruelty with criminal, civil and administrative immunity. Animal control officers must report suspected child abuse to the state hotline. DCF and the Florida Animal Control Association will jointly develop a one-hour training module. <b>It took effect on July 1.</b></p>	 <p><b>Maryland HB 186/SB7</b> expanded the “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 include Veterans Treatment Courts. The program was also renamed as the “Court Dog Program.” <b>It was signed into law on May 18.</b></p>
 <p><b>Missouri SB 71</b> allows full and ex parte child protection orders, 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. <b>It took effect on Aug. 28.</b></p>	 <p><b>Texas HB 1071</b> allows courts to permit qualified facility dogs and therapy animals and their trained handlers to accompany witnesses if the presence of the dogs would assist the witness in testifying. <b>It was signed into law on June 3 and took effect on Sept. 1.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Psychological Evaluation of Offenders</i></p>  <p><b>Texas SB 48</b> allows courts to require defendants convicted of certain animal cruelty and animal fighting crimes to undergo psychological counseling or other appropriate treatment programs. <b>It took effect Sept. 1.</b></p>

## *Elder/Disabled Abuse*

 <p><b>Maryland SB 159/HB 281</b> 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. The bills were <b>signed into law on May 18.</b></p>	 <p><b>Maryland HB 234/SB 607</b> 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. <b>It took effect Oct. 1.</b></p>	 <p><b>Missouri SB 71</b> allows full and ex parte adult protection orders 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. <b>It took effect on Aug. 28.</b></p>
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## Current Link Bills We're Watching:

### *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**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.)



**Florida HB 121** would define the 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, aggravated child abuse, or aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and "evinced a depraved mind." The bill is in the House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee.



**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.



**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.



**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 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.



**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.



**Pennsylvania HB 1903** would allow courts to issue an Extreme Risk Protection Order barring an individual from possessing a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a substantial risk of suicide or death or serious bodily injury to another person; factors which may be used to determine the individual’s risk include a history of domestic violence or animal cruelty. The bill is in the House Judiciary 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.



**Florida HB 121** would define the 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating aggravated child abuse, sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, or aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and “evincing a depraved mind.” The bill is in the House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee.



**Florida HB 435** would make it a 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony to cause or allow a minor under age 18 to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Subcommittee.



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



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



**Pennsylvania HB 1836** would add to the Crimes Code a new crime of “child torture,” which would include physical or sexual abuse, unreasonable confinement or restraint, starvation, and “terrorizing or threatening death or harm to the child, a loved one of the child or a pet or loved object of the child for the purpose of causing significant emotional distress.” It was laid on the table in the House Judiciary Committee.

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



**Florida HB 121** would define the 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person, sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, or aggravated child abuse. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and “evincing a depraved mind.” The bill is in the House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee.



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

 **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 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.

 **Florida HB 341/SB 692** would amend the definition of “sexual bestiality” to replace “vagina” with “genitals” when describing illegal sexual contact with an animal. The bills are in the House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Subcommittee and the Senate Criminal Justice, Rules, and Children, Families & Elder Affairs Committees. **SB 878** would replace “vagina” with “female genitals.” **SB 420** would increase the penalty for sexual activities involving animals from a 1<sup>st</sup>-degree misdemeanor to a 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree felony. It is in the Judiciary, Criminal Justice and Rules Committees. **HB 435** would further expand the definition of “sexual contact with an animal” to include actions for the purpose of abuse or financial gain as well as sexual gratification and prohibit the filming, distribution or possession of pornography with an animal; convicted offenders could be barred from being around animals for 5 years following conviction. It is in the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Subcommittee.

 **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.

### *Animal Hoarding*

 **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 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.



**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.



**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.



**Pennsylvania HB 1903** would allow courts to issue an Extreme Risk Protection Order prohibiting persons from owning or controlling a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a substantial risk of suicide or death or serious bodily injury to another person. A history of animal cruelty and/or domestic abuse are among the factors the court may consider in determining whether to issue an ERPO. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

## *Cross-Reporting*



**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.



**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 5780 and S 7401** would permit mandated reporters of child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, with immunity from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reports. The bills are in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families and the Senate Rules Committee.

## *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*



**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. **A 8443** would require courts to order a mental health evaluation for persons convicted of animal fighting or aggravated cruelty to animals. 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.

### *Court-Appointed Special Advocates for Animals*



**Florida S 172, pre-filed for 2022**, would allow for the appointment of an advocate for “the interests of an animal” in civil and criminal court proceedings regarding the welfare, care or custody of an animal. Advocates could be appointed upon the court’s initiative or upon request from a list of designated attorneys and certified legal interns provided by the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar Association. The bill has been referred to the Agriculture, Judiciary and Rules Committees.



**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.



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



**From left, Ethan, James & Jennifer Crumbley**

### **Michigan School Shooting Suspect Had Tortured Animals, Prosecutors Say**

The 15-year-old student accused of killing four students and wounding seven others in the deadly Oakland County, Mich. school massacre on Nov. 30 also had a disturbing history of torturing animals, according to new court documents revealed recently.

[USA Today](#) reported that the parents of Ethan Crumbley, who is facing terrorism and first-degree murder charges, ignored numerous “red flag” warning signs that their son was depressed, including animal abuse.

“Their son was torturing animals, even kept a baby bird’s head in a jar on his bedroom floor, which he later took and placed in a school bathroom,” the prosecutor’s filing states. “Meanwhile, the parents were focusing on their own issues, things like extramarital affairs, financial issues and substance abuse.”

Previous media reports had noted that the parents, James and Jennifer Crumbley, gave misleading statements about the location of the gun that she had purchased for their son four days before the massacre as an early Christmas present. The parents have been charged with involuntary manslaughter in a novel case that seeks to hold them responsible for enabling the shootings.

The new court filings stated that the parents ignored his fascination with guns and knew that Ethan was depressed, had been researching ammunition while at school and was seen watching violent videos of shootings on the morning of the massacre. “The defendants had information long before [the shooting] that their son’s only friend moved at the end of October, that the family dog died, that their son was sadder than usual, and that he was sending his mother disturbing texts about his state of mind,” the prosecution wrote, according to *USA Today*. “Instead of paying attention to their son and getting him help, they bought him a gun.”

Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald also alleged that during this same time period, the Crumbleys spent their time at a barn caring for their horses three to four nights a week for up to three hours at a time, and “seeking other relationships, including [the] mother’s extramarital affairs.”

On Nov. 29, a teacher at Oxford High School reportedly observed Ethan searching ammunition on his cellphone during class and told school officials, who left a voicemail and email for Jennifer Crumbley. She allegedly exchanged text messages with her son where she wrote, “LOL I’m not mad. You have to learn not to get caught.”

On Nov. 30, a teacher reportedly found alarming drawings on Ethan Crumbley’s desk. That led to a 10 a.m. meeting with the parents and Ethan. A school counselor retrieved the drawings of a gun and a bloody figure, along with the words “Help me,” “My life is useless,” “The world is dead,” and “Blood everywhere” scratched out. The parents were required to get Ethan into counseling within 48 hours. They left the building without removing Ethan. The massacre occurred shortly before 1 p.m. that day.



## Former Cop Suspected of Child Pornography and Bestiality

A former Paris, Ky. police narcotics officer is facing federal child pornography charges after he was arrested for allegedly sending explicit images on an instant messaging service, and is also suspected of being engaged in bestiality. The [Lexington Herald-Leader](#) reported that Christopher Wayne Livingood, 50, who was charged with production and distribution of visual depictions involving a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, allegedly admitted to investigators that he sent the images.

**Christopher Livingood** Livingood, who had worked for the Paris Police Department from 2000 until 2010, was arrested as part of a two-year investigation that started with an Indiana offender named Diana Roe, who was convicted earlier this year on child pornography charges and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Roe was being investigated by FBI's Indianapolis division who alerted FBI's Louisville office that someone in Kentucky was sending explicit images to Roe via the Kik instant messaging service. According to court records, Roe also produced and sent images of bestiality, and Livingood also sent Roe images indicating he engaged in bestiality.

## Mother Charged with Child Neglect and Animal Cruelty; Florida DCF Criticized for Inaction

A woman living in a squalid motel room filled with feces, urine and garbage in Satellite Beach, Fla., who Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey said "shouldn't be allowed to care for a pet rock, much less a 6-year-old child, four dogs and five cats," was charged with three counts of aggravated animal cruelty and one count of child neglect. Kristen Willoughby, 26, was personally escorted into the jail by Ivey as part of the sheriff's zero-tolerance policy for animal and child abusers. In a pointed video on [WKMG-TV](#), Ivey also singled out the Department of Children & Families for failing to turn the boy over to his grandparents, and the motel owner for allowing crimes to occur on the premises. According to investigators, the smell of ammonia was so powerful that it was wafting past the closed door of the motel room which was in a disturbing and deplorable state of mess, filth and disarray. At least three animals were allegedly malnourished and emaciated when law enforcement arrived. When Willoughby was questioned about the condition that she, her son and their pets was living in, Ivey said she replied, "Well, I haven't had time to clean up." "You have a \$60,000 bond and I hope you sit right here," Ivey told Willoughby as he marched her into the detention center. "Unfortunately, the cage you'll be in is a little bigger."



## Police Investigating Murder-Suicide that Also Claimed Life of Family Dog

Police in Troy, Mich., were investigating what is believed to be a murder-suicide in which an unidentified man killed his twin brother and the family dog and wounded his father before taking his own life. The [Troy Times](#) reported that a 62-year-old man called 911 shortly after midnight on Dec. 27 to report that he had been shot by his 23-year-old son. A call was also received from a neighbor who reported that a vehicle had crashed into a tree. Police found the twin brother of the suspect shot dead in the basement. A 62-year-old woman in the house was unharmed; the father was in critical but stable condition at a hospital. The suspect was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in the crashed vehicle; the family dog was also found shot dead in the back seat.

## Texas Man Killed as Thieves of Stolen Dogs Try to Claim Reward

Sheriff's deputies in Harris County, Texas were looking for three suspects who had allegedly stolen dogs from a breeder or a kennel and then shot and killed a friend of the dogs' owner as they were meeting with him to claim a reward for returning the dogs. [Newsweek](#) reported that the shooting occurred on Dec. 28 at a gas station in a Walmart parking lot in Wallisville, Texas. Homicide detectives responding to calls of a shooting found the unidentified man, believed to be a friend of the dogs' owner, had been shot in the leg. He was taken to a hospital and pronounced dead. "There was a little bit of showing, and then the guns came out," said Lt. Robert Minchew with the homicide unit.

## 7 Arrested in Shootings of Police Officers Answering Barking Dogs Complaint



**Darius Sullivan & Xandria Harris**

Darius D. Sullivan, 25, of Bourbonnais, Ill., and Xandria Harris, 26, of Bradley, Ill., were charged with murder and attempted murder in the shooting of two police officers – one fatally – who were responding to a complaint about barking dogs. The [Kankakee Daily Journal](#) reported that Bradley, Ill. police Sgt. Marlene Rittmanic, 49, was shot and killed when she and officer Tyler J. Bailey, 27, responded to a complaint about barking dogs in an unattended vehicle in a Comfort Inn motel parking lot in Bradley. The officers reportedly went to a hotel room where the dogs' possible owner may have been staying when they were attacked and shot at. Bailey was reported to be in critical condition. Sullivan fled to Indiana where he was arrested along with Daniel Acros, 19, of Kankakee, in a residence where numerous drugs and weapons were allegedly found. Four other individuals were arrested in Illinois and Indiana on charges of illegal weapons and narcotics, possession of stolen property, obstruction of justice, and resisting arrest in connection with the search for Sullivan and Harris. Rittmanic was a 14-year member of the Bradley Police Department and previously had served as an Iroquois County sheriff's deputy.

## ***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.**

**Jan. 11 – Reno, Nev. (online):** Maureen MacNamara and Rosa Figarola will present "Child Abuse and Animal Abuse: Child Welfare Professionals as Partners in a LINK-Informed Judicial Response" as part of the webinar series, "What Judges Need to Know about Animal Cruelty Issues in Juvenile and Family Law Cases" for the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#).

**Jan. 13 – Sacramento, Calif. (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a Link workshop for the [California Animal Welfare Association](#).

**Jan. 19 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online):** Allie Phillips will conduct a [webinar](#) on "Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)<sup>®</sup>" for the Saskatchewan SPCA.

**Jan. 20 (online):** Linda Fielder and Emily Lewis will present "Partners in Investigating Animal Crimes" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

**Jan. 25 (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.

**Jan. 26 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online):** The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

**Jan. 26 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online):** The Saskatchewan SPCA, the provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and STOPS to Violence will conduct a [webinar](#) on “Becoming Pet Friendly: Guidance for Domestic Violence Shelters” for the Saskatchewan SPCA.

**Feb. 1 – Reno, Nev. (online):** Judge Katherine Tennyson, Stephanie MacDonald and Amy Buchanon will present “Animal-Related Relief in Protection from Domestic Abuse Orders” as part of the webinar series, “What Judges Need to know about Animal Cruelty Issues in Juvenile and Family Law Cases” for the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#).

**Feb. 5 – Washington, D.C.:** The National Sheriffs’ Association’s [Animal Cruelty and Abuse Committee](#) will meet.

**Feb. 9 – Ithaca, N.Y. (online):** Phil Arkow will speak on “The Cruelty Connection: Practical Guidance for the Effective Recognition and Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence” to the Class of 2025 at [Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

**February 9 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online):** The Saskatchewan SPCA will present a [webinar](#) on “Take Action: Here’s How You Can Assist the Victims of Domestic Violence and their pets.”

**Feb. 11 (online):** Jennifer Woolf will present on “Introduction to The Link and Identifying Animal Abuse,” Jim Crosby will present on “Dog Bite Injuries and Behavioral Projections,” and Kathie Nurena & Linda Randall will discuss helping people and animals move beyond trauma at the IAABC Foundation and the Fenzi Dog Sports Academy’s [Lemonade Conference](#).

**Feb. 17-18 – Columbus, Ohio:** Phil Arkow will present “Recognizing, Recording and Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse and Neglect” and “All in This Together: Pooling Limited Shelter Resources to Help People and Animals,” and Anna Garrett will present on “Animal Cruelty and Violent Crime in Ohio” for the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#). Several additional programs will train veterinarians, their staffs, and humane agents on recognition of equine and farm animal cruelty.

**March 3 – Myrtle Beach, S.C.:** A panel discussion will discuss “A Case Study: Animal cruelty and Violent Offenders” at the [Carolinas Unite](#) Animal Welfare Professionals Conference.

**March 4-5 – Orlando, Fla.:** The Florida Department of Children & Families will review procedures under Florida’s new cross-reporting law in a presentation on “Cross Reporting: New ACO Required Training.” and Mary Lou Randour will present on the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System. Daniel Ettinger will present on “The Relationship between Animal Abuse and Family Violence.” Amina Chardhry will present on “Family Violence and Animal cruelty: How Shelters Can Help Survivors of Family Violence by Providing a Safe Haven for Pets.” All of these are at the [Florida Animal Control Association Conference](#).

**March 15 (online):** Ken Shapiro and Kimberly Spanjol will offer a 6-hour CE webinar on “The Identification, Assessment and Treatment of Adults who Abuse Animals: The BARK Diversion Program.” Register at [Core Learning, Inc.](#)

**March 28 – April 1 – Honolulu, Hawai’i:** Paul Needham will include Link issues in presentations on “APS Ethics and Hoarding: Weighing the Ethical and Practical Issues of Hoarding,” and “Risk Factors and Challenges Concerning Elder Abuse and Neglect” at the Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma’s 19<sup>th</sup> [Hawai’i International Summit](#).

**April 6 – Pullman, Wash. & Ft. Collins, Colo. (online):** Phil Arkow will lecture on animal abuse’s Link to human violence for the [Human Animal Interaction Research course](#) co-taught by Washington State and Colorado State Universities.

**April 21 – Wilmington, Del.:** Phil Arkow, Diane Balkin and Rosa Figarola will join a multidisciplinary team in an all-day, multidisciplinary Link training for the [Delaware Family Courts system](#).

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

**May 4 (online):** Phil Arkow will present on “Connecting the Dots: Animal Abuse’s Links to Other Family Violence in Military and Civilian Families” for the [National Victim Assistance Academy](#)

**July 19 (online):** Emily Lewis will present “The Complexities of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

**Nov. 10 (online):** David Rosengard of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present “Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs” 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  
Boone, N. Car.

**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  
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**Kristin Burki, M.S., AP.S.W.**

Director, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life  
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**Steve Dale**

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author  
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**The Hon. Rosa C. Figarola**

Retired Circuit Probate Judge, 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
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CEO, National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges  
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**Mark Kumpf, CAWA**

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Consultant, ASPCA  
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**Paul Needham**

Chair, Education Committee,  
National Adult Protective Services Association  
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Director,  
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Retired District Judge, Children's Court Division  
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