



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

The LINK-Letter Vol. 15, No. 4 April 2022

A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



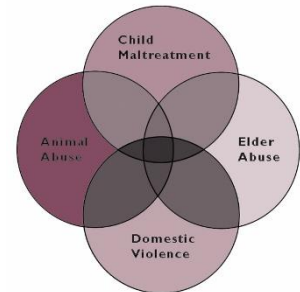
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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Happy Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week!

DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

PAWS Act Receives Full \$3 Million Funding for 2022

The passage of the federal government's FY 2022 budget in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 included funding, for the third consecutive year, for the landmark, bipartisan Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act and finally brings the grant funding up to the fully-authorized \$3 million in support.



Office for Victims of Crime
OVC

The \$3 million authorized for the PAWS Act in 2022 represents a \$500,000 increase in funding from 2021, up to the fully-authorized amount. Funding for 2020 was \$2 million.

Domestic violence shelters across the U.S. will be eligible to apply online for grants in the coming months, and additional details about the application process will be forthcoming from the U.S. Department of Justice, which administers the grant program. This continued funding follows the success of the FY 2020 and FY 2021 Emergency Transitional Pet Shelter Housing and Assistance Grant Programs, which awarded approximately \$2 million to six organizations in six states in 2020 and \$2.42 million to five organizations in 2021.

Future grants will provide emergency and transitional shelter and housing assistance or short-term shelter and housing assistance for domestic violence victims with pets, service animals, emotional support animals, or horses. Grants may also be used for programs that provide support services designed to enable someone fleeing domestic violence to locate and secure safe housing with their pet, safe accommodations for their pet, or related services such as transportation and other assistance.

Funding for the program in 2022 is a significant step to enable more domestic violence shelters to become pet-friendly so that victims of domestic violence and their pets may seek safe shelter together.

Demand for the federal grants has continually surpassed the funding available for the program, leading to bipartisan calls to further increase funding in 2022. Bipartisan efforts of 204 Representatives, led by Rep. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), and 43 Senators, led by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.), requested this critical funding be allocated for FY 2022.



Justice Renu Mandhane

Groundbreaking Court Ruling Considers Animal Abuse as Family Violence Eligible for Civil Damages

In a groundbreaking decision, a judge in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Canada identified family violence – which can include acts of animal abuse – as entitling the awarding of compensatory, aggregated and punitive damages.

Torts are wrongful acts or infringement of rights that can lead to civil legal liability. In the decision, [Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia \(2022 ONSC 1303\)](#), Justice Renu Mandhane had to resolve four disputed divorce issues regarding property equalization, child and spousal support, and the mother’s claim for damages in relation to the father’s alleged abuse during the marriage. Mandhane awarded \$150,000 to the mother for the “tort of family violence,” plus \$50,000 in compensatory damages for the mother’s mental health difficulties and lost earning potential and another \$50,000 in aggravated damages due to the overall pattern of coercion and control and a clear breach of trust.

Under Canadian law, the Divorce Act prohibits family violence from being compensated through normal spousal support. The ruling recognizes that, in light of recent trends and research, family violence should be recognized as a tort and a social issue that, although already criminalized, should also have a corresponding civil remedy.

The case involved a couple who had married in India, emigrated to Canada, and later separated; the mother detailed 16 years of physical and emotional abuse and financial control which the father denied. Mandhane wrote that “allowing a family law litigant to pursue damages for family violence is a matter of access to justice. This is one of those rare circumstances where the common law should recognize a new foundation for liability for family violence. Recognition of the tort of family violence is consistent with the overarching imperative to remove the economic barriers facing survivors that try to leave violent relationships and access justice.”

Although there was no apparent reference to acts of coercive or threatened animal abuse during the marriage, Mandhane’s ruling stated that in order to claim a history of family violence, a plaintiff would have to establish that the other family member engaged in a repeated pattern of conduct as defined in the Divorce Act. Amendments to that law in 2021 now define family violence as including multiple incidents of “physical abuse, forcible confinement, sexual abuse, threats, harassment, stalking, failure to provide the necessities of life, psychological abuse, financial abuse, or killing or harming an animal or property.”

In recognizing a “new foundation for liability for family violence,” Mandhane, a former chief commissioner for the province’s human rights commission, wrote she came to this conclusion “based on the existing case law related to spousal battery, explicit recognition of the harms associated with ‘family violence’ in the Divorce Act, recent provincial legislation that removes other legal barriers facing survivors leaving violent relationships, developments in the American case law, and Canada’s international law obligations related to women’s equality.”



Zoë Agnew-Svoboda

Webinar Offers Advice on Safety Planning for Pets

Domestic violence advocates learned how to incorporate survivors' pets in their safety planning in a March 1 webinar conducted by [BestyBnB](#). The Kansas City organization's online platform Links social services agencies with pet care providers to enable domestic violence survivors to escape more easily ([See the February 2022 LINK-Letter](#)). Zoë Agnew-Svoboda, Director of Engagement and Program Development, described survivors' bonds with their pets and the unique challenges when leaving abusive relationships. She offered concrete guidelines for including pets in safety plans.

In addition to the other supplies and critical paperwork for themselves and their children that survivors should have ready to go at a moment's notice, pets' basic necessities should be immediately available:

- One week's worth of pet food
- Bowls for food and water
- A leash and collar
- Cat carriers
- Cat litter and a litter box. (A cardboard box and shredded paper, sand or wood shavings can serve as substitutes.)
- Vaccination records

If survivors have to flee without supplies, many animal shelters have pet food pantries.

"Check the pet's tech," she also cautioned. Leave pets' GPS or Apple Air Tag collar behind so the abuser cannot track you. Pets' microchip registrations should be changed to reflect only the survivor's name, otherwise the abuser might be contacted if the pet escapes. Make sure the emergency contact listed on the microchip is a safe person, she said. And if the pet is placed with a friend, neighbor or family member, make sure the pet's whereabouts aren't broadcast on social media.

Agnew-Svoboda offered several recommendations for survivors trying to reclaim their pets safely:

- **Use orders of protection**, which more include pets in 37 states. Pets can also be included in other states by being listed as the survivor's "property." Pet protection orders can also be enforced across state lines due to the Pet And Women Safety Act (PAWS) of 2018.
- **If an advocate goes to the abuser's home** to try to reclaim the animal, never go alone; use a company vehicle and try to have another staff member accompany you for additional safety. Ask for police assistance if possible and have the officer enter the house. Advise the officer if the abuser has a weapon, the hours he usually works, the types of vehicles owned, and the likelihood of the house being empty.
- **Animal Control** can pick up the pet and transport it to a safe location.
- **If the survivor needs to pick up the pet herself**, determine if she needs transportation since public transportation often won't accept animals. Identify a time when the home is likely to be empty.

She noted that extreme hot or cold weather can be dangerous times for homeless survivors with pets to live in their cars. Many large stores, including Home Depot, Lowe's, Tractor Supply, Old Navy, and pet supply stores allow pets to come in and warm up or cool off.

Surrendering the animal may be the only viable, albeit heart-wrenching, option. Do not pressure the survivor but have a hard and realistic conversation with her to determine if she realistically has the finances and housing to care for it once she leaves the abuser or the shelter. Putting the pet up for adoption may be complicated if the animal is old, has chronic medical conditions or behavior issues.

On March 22, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox signed into law [HB 175](#), making Utah the 37th state (plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.) to allow courts to include household animals within the scope of protection-from-abuse orders. The new law, one of the more comprehensive in the U.S., not only addresses pets in domestic violence, dating violence, cohabitant abuse, and child abuse protective orders, but also expands the existing inclusion of “emotional distress” resulting from harm to an animal in domestic violence cases to also include cases of stalking.



Crystal Giesbrecht (left), and Laura Zmud
Sheltering Network (SCN).

The [Saskatchewan SPCA](#) and the [Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan](#) have expanded their collaborative partnership, which has already developed extensive program and research resources for the human and animal victims of domestic violence (*See the [December 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [March 2020](#) and [September 2017 LINK-Letters](#)*), to launch the Saskatchewan Co-

Laura Zmud, Family Ties Coordinator at the Saskatchewan SPCA, and Crystal Giesbrecht of PATHS, are spearheading the network. The goal is to share information, create a support network, discuss challenges and successes, and assist more IPV shelters in becoming pet friendly. The network is meeting bi-monthly. Eight different Saskatchewan organizations are already participating.

The webinars are reaching out to human services providers, care workers and the general public as part of the Network's plan to assist shelters that want to become pet-friendly.

THE LINK in the LITERATURE

Link-Based Collaboration Most Effective Way to Protect Animals

A new research study analyzing the patchwork nature of animal cruelty investigations has identified three primary challenges to better animal protection efforts and argues that strengthened multi-sector collaboration, based in part upon The Link, will increase the effectiveness of animal protection, better protect vulnerable people, and augment public safety.



From left: Kendra Coulter, Bridget Nicholls and Amy Fitzgerald

Kendra Coulter of Brock University, and Bridget Nicholls and Amy Fitzgerald of the University of Windsor, in Ontario, identified three key challenges affecting both public and nonprofit agencies responsible for investigating and responding to animal abuse and neglect:

- An uneven availability of methodical veterinary and **forensic veterinary expertise** to help ensure the correct interpretation of what has been done to animals. Canada apparently lags behind the U.S. in the availability of practitioners formally trained in veterinary forensics.
- Uneven knowledge of and support from **prosecutors**. Canada similarly lacks an equivalent to a growing body of U.S. prosecutors dedicated to animal cruelty cases.
- Uneven **resources** to assist people with financial, mental health and other challenges. Problem-solving strategies for individuals with such conditions may be more empathetic and more effective, they write, but many parts of Canada are under-served by appropriate social services.

The need to take animals' well-being seriously is compounded by the well-established, evidence-backed facts of the human–animal violence Link. They note that four main interpersonal/interspecies abuse patterns may occur and that the harm can be successive or simultaneous:

- Abusers may begin by harming animals and move onto other antisocial and dangerous behaviors including violence towards other people, so animal cruelty can serve as a significant red flag.
- Abusers may abuse animals and people simultaneously.
- Abusers may begin by harming people and then abuse animals.
- Abusers may also threaten to harm or carry out acts of interspecies violence as another tactic of intimidation and as part of coercive control.

“For all of these reasons, animal protection is integral to community safety and worthy of greater attention, collaboration and investment, within and across sectors. Responding efficiently, effectively, and thoughtfully to the animal harm spectrum, including serious and violent crimes against animals, problematic but correctable behavior, and vulnerable animal caretakers who need additional assistance and resources, are all essential to promoting public safety in a full sense,” they argue.

“There is no single group or pathway that will protect animals and vulnerable people. Rather, it is collaboration that holds the most promise,” they conclude.

-- Coulter, K., Nicholls, B., & Fitzgerald, A. (2022), **Animal protection: Organizational constraints and collaborative opportunities**. *Journal of Community Safety & Well-Being*, 7(1), 16-19.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35502/jcswb.237>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

NCJFCJ Adds Link Webinars and Resources to Website

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has expanded its [website's extensive bank of resources on The Link](#) with the addition of several new resources and webinars on its Link landing page. The additions include three new recorded webinars, a letter encouraging judges to build Link coalitions in their local communities, and a link to the [National Link Coalition's Toolkit](#) to assist in these local efforts.



NCJFCJ'S web page, *Animal Cruelty and Family and Interpersonal Violence*, now features three additional recorded webinars:

- "Animal Cruelty & Interpersonal Violence: Veterinary Forensics and Evidence" was presented by Diane Balkin and Melinda Merck to explain the basics of veterinary forensics and the presentation of animal-related evidence in court.
- "Promoting Child Welfare Professional Awareness of Animal-Human Relationships" features Maureen MacNamara and Judge Rosa Figarola discussing the options that child welfare professionals have for responding to co-occurring child and animal abuse.
- "Animal-Related Relief in Protection from Domestic Abuse Orders" features Judge Katherine Tennyson, Stephanie McDonald and Amy Buchanan addressing the legal landscape of animal-related relief available in civil protection orders.

Earlier webinars in the series that are also available on the page include:

- "Animal Cruelty and Child Abuse"
- "Animal Cruelty and Juvenile Offending"
- "The Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence"
- "The Link Between Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse" and
- "Animal Hoarding: Issues in Family Law Cases."

The new resources include a [letter to judges](#) from Tennyson encouraging judges to form Coordinated Community Response (CCR) programs in their community that address The Link because identifying barriers helps courts and family-serving systems function better. She cites the National Link Coalition's Toolkit for starting local Link coalitions.

"Each state's Canons of Judicial Ethics define permissible use of authority and activities to ensure judges bring the appropriate impartiality and prudence to their public service, both on and off the bench," she advises. "Generally speaking, activities and efforts to engage in coalition building and education on such matters as the Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence fit squarely within your authority to promote the proper administration of justice and the effective functioning of the court system in your community." And, she adds, "When judges call meetings, people show up."

DAs in North Carolina, New York Add Animal Cruelty Units

Alamance County, N. Car., and Ulster County, N.Y., have become the two latest prosecutors' offices to establish dedicated animal crimes divisions to address the growing interest in The Link and bringing animal abuse offenders to justice.

Alamance County D.A. Sean Boone has established "a Crimes Against Animals team to provide dedicated legal support to local law enforcement in the investigation of animal cruelty offenses. This team, comprised of two Assistant District Attorneys and a victim services coordinator, will be responsible for advising law enforcement officers about appropriate charges, preparing animal cruelty cases for trial, and either personally prosecuting the cases or supervising them through disposition. The primary objective of this arrangement is to make sure that every animal cruelty case receives the attention and treatment necessary to hold offenders accountable, protect the animals affected, and secure justice for those animals for whom protection is no longer an option."



Sean Boone

Boone cited several reasons for establishing the team. "The first and most obvious is reflected in the strong bond shared between people and animals," he said, citing research into the human-animal bond and how pets are commonly recognized by their owners as a member of the family and dependent on someone for food, shelter, health, and general well-being.

"The criminal justice system is responsible for securing justice for victims of crime, a responsibility even more pronounced in cases where a helpless or vulnerable victim, including an animal, has been abused. To this end, one of our goals in developing a reliable structure for prosecuting crimes against animals is to maintain and strengthen public confidence in our court system," he added.

"A broader, more strategic purpose for establishing a Crimes Against Animals team is found in research showing a connection between animal cruelty cases and other crimes," he wrote, citing Link data and programs created by the National Sheriffs Association and the FBI.

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-- Sean Boone, Alamance County, N.C., District Attorney

"There is also a very strong link between animal cruelty crimes and more prevalent crimes that occur here in Alamance County, such as domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. Because these crimes all target the powerless, crimes against animals, spouses, children, and the elderly share common traits. Animal cruelty

investigations may assist in uncovering other forms of abuse that may otherwise go undetected," he said. "Prosecution of animal cruelty offenses, executed with an expansive view towards identifying all possible victims within the abuse environment, will inevitably yield evidence of unreported domestic violence and elder abuse crimes.

"While securing justice in animal abuse cases is the most immediate goal, our work also carries with it another far-reaching and very compelling goal: correcting behavior to prevent future instances of animal abuse by young offenders," he added. The Crimes Against Animals team consists of prosecutors who are

also responsible for juvenile court prosecution, due to the challenges when animal cruelty offenders are children.

Assistant District Attorney Felicia S. Raphael tells *The LINK-Letter* that she has been named the Animal Crimes prosecutor for the Ulster County, N.Y., District Attorney's office in Kingston, N.Y. She is in charge of the Animal Cruelty/Crimes Unit. The office also has a Family & Child Advocacy Center, a county-wide Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Initiative, and maintains an animal abusers' registry.

A bill in the New York State Assembly -- [New York A7267](#) -- would require each county to appoint an assistant district attorney to oversee the prosecution of crimes against animals, similar to a law enacted in New Jersey in 2019.

The National Link Coalition is aware of 59 animal cruelty programs in prosecutors, police and sheriffs' offices in 20 states. *LINK-Letter* readers are asked to let us know of additional such units and we'll add them to our list.

CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK

Ohio Cross-Reporting Bill Showing Positive Results

When Ohio's landmark [HB 33](#) took effect in April, 2021, mandating social workers, counselors and veterinarians to report suspected cases of animal abuse they encounter (*See the [January 2021 LINK-Letter](#)*), Link advocates expected the new law would result in an increase in the number of cases being reported. One year into the program, those expectations are being met.

[WKYC-TV](#) is reporting that the Friendship Animal Protective League in Lorain, Ohio, has been receiving calls from the newly-mandated reporters. "We're really proud of our adult protective services and child protective services who are taking advantage and reaching out to us in these cases," said Greg Willey, Executive Director.



Friendship Animal Protective League
OF LORAIN COUNTY

Noting that the partnerships and collaborations created by the cross-reporting system is highly beneficial, Willey added that the animals coming in from these referrals are often involved in more complicated cases and require more time in the shelter to recover.



The Lake Humane Society in Mentor, Ohio is receiving two to three calls per month from the mandated reporters. Executive Director Lori Caszatt echoed Willey's comments in noting that these referred cases tend to be more serious instances of neglect and abuse.

Lorain County Children Services Executive Director Kristen Fox Berki called HB 33 a "very positive piece of legislation" which helps both animals and children. She said that while her agency had reported abuse cases in the past, HB 33 makes the process more consistent and helps build good relationships with animal shelters.



Meanwhile, the passage of HB 33 helped boost Ohio's reputation regarding animal welfare; that state's ranking in the Animal Legal Defense Fund's annual ranking went from 30th to 24th.

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS

National Link Coalition Creates Timeline of Link History

We are pleased to announce the compilation of a history of key dates in the history of professional and public awareness of The Link. The chronology, which runs from the 13th Century to the current time, depicts key international publications, organizational engagements, academic research, legislation, and programs in the fields of animal, child, domestic, and elder abuse. [Click here](#) to see the Timeline, which is posted on our website's Resources page.

“Challenging Animal Cruelty” Program Raises Link Awareness in New Mexico

Recognizing that “animal abuse and neglect are unacceptable in their own right but it is now undeniable that animal cruelty is inextricably linked to other kinds of family violence,” Animal Protection of New Mexico has created a unique [Challenging Animal Cruelty program](#). While APNM is not authorized to investigate allegations of animal cruelty, the program hears the public's concerns about animal abuse statewide, helps to identify the root causes of abuse and neglect, and provides valuable information to help the public recognize and report it.

Program Director Alan Edmonds heads the initiative, which includes:

- A statewide [Animal Cruelty Helpline](#), with one staff person devoted entirely to answering calls and assisting in referring complaints to appropriate agencies.
- A guide to [Recognizing and Reporting Animal Cruelty](#), with a web page and leaflet offering realistic expectations of what local law enforcement needs and what they can and cannot do to investigate a complaint.
- Offering [Cruelty Case Rewards](#) up to \$10,000 to tipsters for information leading to arrests and prosecutions.
- Resources on [Animal Hoarding](#).
- Information on reporting complaints against [veterinarians, groomers and boarding kennels](#).
- A [digest of ordinances and laws](#) in 83 cities and 32 counties, plus guidelines on how laws get enacted and the state anti-cruelty statutes.
- Information on [training programs](#) for law enforcement and animal control officers on animal cruelty and animal fighting investigations, The Link, and therapeutic assessments for animal cruelty offenders.



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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 hyperlinks 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.



Allie Phillips

Podcast Spotlights Need for Pet-Friendly Domestic Violence Shelters

National Link Coalition steering committee member Allie Phillips has recorded a [podcast about animal abuse and pet-friendly shelters](#) for the Conference on Crimes Against Women. Phillips, Founder and CEO of [Sheltering Animals & Families Together](#) (SAF-T)[®], recorded the 54-minute podcast, “Animals: The Silent Victims of Abuse,” which went live on March 14.

Humane Society Online Course for Students Focuses on The Link

The Georgian Triangle Humane Society in Ontario, Canada, has designed a free, online course designed for students in grades 6-12 that focuses on how animals came to be pets, and how students can become animal advocates, with a focus on The Link between animal abuse and human violence.



The [Junior Animal Wellness Certification program](#) is a nine-unit series of online classes linked to curriculum that teach students about communication, the value of kindness, animal cruelty, and its Links to bullying and abuse.

After introductory units on “A History of Pets,” and “Responsible Pet Ownership,” the next unit focuses on “Violence Prevention and the Cruelty Connection.” Subsequent units address “Our Emotional Intelligence and Pet Communication,” “Be Kind and Make a Difference,” and “Helpful Resources About Animal Well-Being.”

Molly Freedman, Humane Education Coordinator for the Humane Society, tells *The LINK-Letter* that most of the area’s local school boards allow high school students to obtain community involvement hours from taking the course.

NCJFCJ Template Helps Judges Create Link PSAs

The National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges has developed a template to help local judges create TV Public Service Announcements that increase awareness and understanding of The Link, promote the safety and well-being of youths, families and their animals, and engage in community-specific collaborations with child-, family- and animal-serving practitioners. The PSA Template, developed with the assistance of the Animal Legal Defense Fund and modeled in part on a prototype developed in 2020 in Pulaski County, Va. ([See the February 2021 LINK-Letter](#)), features a sample script, guides on how to make a video, and ideas on why PSAs do or do not work.

A section on the [PSA Template web page](#) details: how to: know your audience; find resources; choose media for distribution; focus on the topic; use local data; create a storyboard; write the script; create and edit the PSA; and distribute and market it.

Mexican Senate Holds Forum on The Link

Awareness of The Link – and how a focus on how animal abuse impacts public safety – made significant inroads in Mexico on March 29 through a three-hour special session in the nation’s Senate. The Foro Bienestar Animal: Un Camino Hacia La Paz (Animal Welfare Forum: A Road to Peace) brought together a cadre of Mexican, American and Spanish authorities to encourage Mexican senators to support stronger animal welfare legislation.

Phil Arkow described the work of the National Link Coalition and how animal abuse is Linked to numerous interpersonal crimes. He referenced an incident, that coincidentally had occurred several days earlier where 16 men and three women were shot and killed at a clandestine cockfight in Michoacan, as emblematic of how animal abuse and violent crimes are often Linked.

Núria Querol described her Link work in Spain with the Observatorio de Violencia Hacia los Animales and VioPet, a nationwide co-sheltering program for the animal survivors of domestic violence; her work, and national studies about animal abuse’s Link with gender violence in Spain, were recently the subject of a [major article in the Catalan newspaper ara](#).

Claudia Edwards of Humane Society International’s Mexico branch described a One Health/One Welfare look at animal abuse. Maria Teresa Ambrosio Morales presented on signs of interspecies symbiotic aggression and violence. Other speakers described Mexico’s work in veterinary forensics and animal-based therapeutic interventions for children.

The forum was organized by the [Asociación Hidalguense para la Protección de los Animales \(AHPAAC\)](#) and PRI Sen. Nuvia Magdalena Mayorga Delgado, who represents the state of Hidalgo. The event was [recorded on YouTube](#).



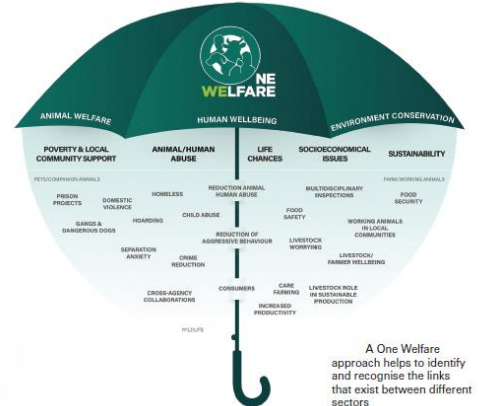
Japanese Article Discusses Impact of Witnessing Animal Abuse

Japan’s Animal Literacy Research Institute has added to its growing collection of Japanese-language Link resources with the publication of what is believed to be the first [article in Japanese](#) on the harmful effects upon people of exposure to animal abuse. “Is Animal Abuse Bad for People Witnessing It?” (無料記事19 動物虐待の目撃、見ている人に悪影響?) is article #19 in a series. The article addresses how animal abuse has adverse effects on mental health, habituates people to accept acts of violence, and provides opportunities for people to learn to be violent. It concludes that in order to realize a society that is friendly to both humans and animals, serious attention must be given to the treatment of animals.



One Welfare World Conference Proceedings, Video Spotlight The Link

The One Welfare World Conference, an international gathering of One Health/One Welfare authorities in September 2021, has published the [Proceedings](#) of the conference and English and Spanish versions of [YouTube recordings](#) of many of the 69 presentations. Phil Arkow, National Link Coalition Coordinator, was one of several presenters who discussed The Link between animal abuse and human violence.



Other presentations included: measuring children's attachments to pets and their role in cases of childhood animal harm; the veterinary forensic expert center in The Netherlands; concerns over accessing veterinary care during COVID-19; nine presentations on human-animal relationships during the pandemic; and multiple sessions addressing the social implications of improved animal welfare, food security and sustainability, disaster response, and animal-assisted interventions.

One Welfare describes the interconnection between animal welfare, human well-being and their physical and social environment; animal abuse and human violence are represented several times under the One Welfare umbrella.

News from LINK COALITIONS

Chicago Safe Haven Network Seeks Executive Director

Chicago's [Safe Haven Network](#) is seeking a part-time, volunteer Executive Director to help lead the organization and take it to the next level of strategic impact in the community. The nonprofit Network focuses on supporting domestic violence survivors and their pets in the Chicago metro area. By providing a dedicated service focused on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse, the Network offers safety options, support and peace of mind for the whole family as they escape abuse and heal together.



The Executive Director will work 5-10 hours per week and will be responsible for overseeing the organization's administration, programs and strategic plan. Other key duties include fundraising, marketing and community outreach. The position reports directly to the Board of Directors and sits on the Board as a non-voting member. Interested parties can send resumes to safe@thesafehavennetwork.org.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

Southeast Texas LINK Coalition Expands

After a brief hiatus following its organizational meetings ([See the November 2020 LINK-Letter](#)), the Southeast Texas Link Coalition has been revitalized featuring a [new website](#) and a growing list of partners and counties in its service area, Gary Poon, Executive Director of the Houston Humane Society, tells *The LINK-Letter*.

The coalition is working in 18 counties in Southeast Texas: Harris, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Grimes, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Orange, San Jacinto, Waller, Wharton, Jackson, Austin, Walker, and Hardin.



Gary Poon

Members of the Coalition include: Houston Humane Society; Fort Bend Women's Center; Harris County and Fort Bend County District Attorney's Offices; Fort Bend Crime Victim Response Team; Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation; the Children's Assessment Center; and the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work.

The website includes information about The Link, research into animal abuse and human violence, and guidance as to how to report animal, child, elder, and domestic abuse in Southeast Texas.

SafePet Ontario Program Under New Leadership

The SafePet Ontario program in Canada, which supports veterinarians who recognize their critical role in addressing The Link, has been transferred from the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association to OVMA's longtime partner [Link Coalition Toronto](#). The transfer, which took place on March 18, is helping the Toronto coalition to expand its work province-wide safely and sustainably.



SafePet Ontario was created by OVMA in 2002 to enable veterinarians to assist individuals experiencing family violence to find a safe location for their pets. Link Coalition Toronto has been operating a SafePet program in the greater Toronto area since 2017 and has worked closely with OVMA to develop their regional and provincial initiatives.

"The OVMA has been at the forefront of innovation for supporting survivors of family violence by ambitiously establishing this program and expanding it provincially. We are thrilled to be able to inherit the program and we sincerely look forward to assisting survivors of family violence and their pets throughout the province," said Hayley Glaholt, Executive Director of the Coalition. "For the past six months we have been accepting pets from across Southern Ontario, to fill the gap while the OVMA finalized their plans for the transfer of SafePet Ontario. We have had intakes from Windsor, London, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Durham Region, and we have been contacted by stakeholders from throughout the province who are enthusiastic about joining the program. The program had been on pause for the past year or so, and we're seeing a real need for province-wide coordination on SafePet, which we're excited to take on."

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

As the 2022 legislative season rolls along, growing awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence has already resulted in **129 bills** introduced in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress. Here are the ones that we know of so far; please [let us know](#) of any legislation not included in this list:

Current Link Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Arizona HB 2365 would allow victims to petition a court to issue a severe threat order of protection against an individual who committed cruel mistreatment of an animal; such an order would prohibit the respondent from possessing a firearm. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



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, **where the measure died**. **SB 344** and **SB 513** 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.)



Colorado HB 22-1041 would add animal control officers and employees of the State Bureau of Animal Protection to the list of "protected persons" who, as victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, can petition to have their personal information removed from official records on the Internet if revealing such information poses an imminent and serious threat to the safety of the person or the immediate family. The bill was sent to the Governor on March 18.



Delaware HB 264 would allow a person who has been the victim of non-consensual sexual conduct or sexual penetration, including with an animal, to apply for a sexual violence protective order if the person has a reasonable fear that the perpetrator will harm the petitioner in the future. A sexual violence protection order would be available only for victims lacking a family or dating relationship with the perpetrator, as they can already request a protection from abuse order. The bill is in the House Appropriations Committee.



District of Columbia B24-0560 would modify the pure property disposition of a pet in a divorce so that the court could assign sole or joint ownership of a pet based upon the care and best interest of the animal. The measure is in the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.



Florida HB 121 died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-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."



Hawai'i SB 2396, recognizing that children residing in homes marked by domestic violence are also psychologically harmed and more likely to externalize antisocial behaviors, would grant children standing to file a petition for an order of protection or temporary restraining order (which includes provisions that protect pets). The bill is in the Senate Judiciary 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.



Illinois HB 4368 would expand the definition of domestic violence abuse to include "coercive control behavior," a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a household member's free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit intimidating cruelty to animals. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



Indiana HB 1137 was signed into law on March 18. It provides that orders for protection (which include protecting pets from the respondent) will be enforced indefinitely if the respondent is required to register as a lifetime sex or violent offender.



Indiana HB 1370 would require the state Office of Judicial Administration to establish a domestic violence registry for individuals convicted of domestic violence or who is subject to an order of protection; Indiana includes acts of cruelty to a family member's animals as a "crime of domestic violence." The bill is in the House Committee on Courts and Criminal Code.



Iowa SF 512/HF 825 would amend the law that allow pets to be included in domestic violence protection orders and consent agreements to remove current provisions that domestic abuse or sexual abuse must occur before the court issues a consent agreement. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Kentucky HB 319 would include violence against an animal when used as coercive conduct within the definition of "domestic violence and abuse" and "dating violence and abuse" and allow judges in both types of cases to aware possession of a shared domestic animal to the petitioner. It was approved by the House and Senate and sent to the Governor.



Kentucky HB 709 would deny offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they have served at least 50% of their sentence if the animal abuse was committed as part of domestic violence or in the presence of a minor child; such acts of animal cruelty would be classified as Class D felonies. The bill is in the Committee on Committees.



Maine LD 1696 would expand Maine's statutes (the oldest in the U.S.) allowing courts to direct the care, control and custody of pets in protection-from-abuse orders to further prohibit defendants from possessing any dangerous weapons if the defendant's abuse includes killing or threatening to kill any animal in the household. The recodified statute is based upon the recognition of domestic abuse as a serious crime against the individual and society that produces an unhealthy and dangerous family environment that is not conducive to healthy childhood development. The bill is in the Joint Judiciary 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.



Mississippi SB 2022 died in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It would have allowed courts in issuing protection orders to order respondents to not harm, abuse, transfer, or dispose of any companion animal, and to grant possession of companion animals to the petitioner.



New Jersey S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of domestic violence, child and elder abuse, and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons' animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy 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 A3724 would amend existing provisions which allow courts, during a divorce proceeding, to award custody of pets in the animals' best interests to also allow courts to require the parties to properly care for animals prior to the court's determination of ownership of the animals. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary 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.



New York A8865 would expand provisions in residential programs for domestic violence provisions which allow them to have service animals and therapy dogs to also include companion animals. The bill is in the Assembly Social Services Committee.



Oklahoma SB 1446 would expand the definition of "domestic abuse" to include "coercive control," defined as unreasonably engaging in numerous acts including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to an animal that intimidates a family or household member. The bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.



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.



Rhode Island H7087 would create a custody procedure for domestic companion animals in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. The bill has passed the House.



Rhode Island HB 7573 would allow a person who possessed a pet while cohabiting with another person to seek equitable relief relating to contested ownership of the pet; district courts could consider the well-being of the pet in making a determination of ownership. The court could not award joint ownership, visitation privileges or financial support and could award ownership to an animal welfare organization if the court found that neither of the previously cohabiting parties could provide a safe and appropriate living environment for the pet. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H7088 would expand the existing law, which allows family courts to include household pets in domestic violence protection orders, to allow courts to award custody of the pets to the plaintiff and to order an enforcement remedy of a restraining order or other injunctive relief if necessary. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H 7360 was withdrawn at the sponsor's request. It would have modified the definition of domestic abuse to include "coercive control" of another person, a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates.



Utah HB 175 was signed into law on March 22. The measure modifies the definition of "emotional distress" related to the offense of stalking to include mental or psychological suffering resulting from harming an animal, and includes pets in dating violence and cohabitant abuse protection orders.



Virginia HB 713 was deferred until 2023 when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have defined "coercive control" for the purpose of issuing family abuse protective orders as a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates the other party.



Washington HB 1901/SB 5845 would add "coercive control," including harm to someone's pets, including by physical violence, to the definition of domestic violence. **SB 5845 died in committee** when the legislature adjourned but **HB 1901** passed the House and Senate and was sent to the Governor on March 10.

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.



Arizona HB 2324 would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor to allow a minor to attend an animal fight or cockfight or any facility where preparations are being made for an animal fight or cockfight. The bill was approved in the House and was sent to the Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee.



California AB 2274 would change provisions regarding mandated reporters, which include animal control and humane society officers and veterinarians. Current law makes the intentional failure to report suspected child abuse or severe neglect a misdemeanor. The bill would allow a case involving the failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect to be filed within one year, and not later than four years, after the offense. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



California AB 2085 would change existing law, which requires professionals, including animal control and humane society officers, who are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect, to report only suspected child abuse and “severe” neglect. “Severe neglect” would be defined as willfully causing or permitting harm or injury to a child or putting the child in imminent danger. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



Florida HB 121 died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-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 “evinced a depraved mind.”



Florida HB 435 died in the House. It would have made it a 3rd-degree felony to cause or allow a minor under age 18 to attend an animal fight.



Kentucky HB 709 would deny offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they have served at least 50% of their sentence if the animal abuse was committed as part of domestic violence or in the presence of a minor child; such acts of animal cruelty would be classified as Class D felonies. The bill is in the Committee on Committees.



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 S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of child and elder abuse, domestic violence and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.



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.



Oklahoma SB 1713 would expand existing domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders to also include petitions filed by or on behalf of victims of child abuse. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



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



Washington HB 1292 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have created a new crime of "providing harmful material to a minor" which would include bestiality, excretory functions, or sexual acts that are violent or destructive, including but not limited to human or animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture.

Animal Abuse and Elder/Disabled Abuse



Florida HB 121 died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-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 "evinced a depraved mind."



Illinois HB 4368 would expand the definition of abuse of a disabled adult to include “coercive control behavior,” a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a household member’s free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit intimidating cruelty to animals. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



New Jersey S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of elder abuse, abuse of persons with a disability, domestic violence, and child abuse to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.



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.



District of Columbia B24-0560 would close a loophole in the law and would prohibit sexual contact between a person and an animal, including the advertisement, offer of sale, or dissemination of photographs or video footage of bestiality. The bill is in the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.



Florida SB 692 would amend the definition of “sexual bestiality” to replace “vagina” with “genitals” when describing illegal sexual contact with an animal. The bill has passed the House and the Senate. **SB 878 died in the Criminal Justice Committee.** It would have replaced “vagina” with “female genitals”; **SB 420 died in the Judiciary Committee.** It would have increased the penalty for sexual activities involving animals from a 1st-degree misdemeanor to a 3rd-degree felony and clarify that oral sex with an animal is prohibited. **HB 435 died in the House.** It would have further expanded 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 have been barred from being around animals for 5 years following conviction.



Idaho SB 1325 became law on March 22. It replaces the archaic law against “the infamous crime against nature committed with mankind or with any animal” with a more contemporary crime of “sexual abuse of an animal,” punishable by up to 5 years in prison and registry as a sexual offender. No convicted offenders can be released on parole without a psychiatric or psychological examination and risk assessment. Offenders can be barred from operating a child day care facility.





Kansas HB 2009 and HB 2223 would continue to define sex with animals as “sodomy,” but remove sex with an adult member of the same sex from the definition of sodomy. The bills are in the House Committee on Corrections and Criminal Justice.



Kentucky HB 709 and SB 125 would allow peace officers and animal control officers to seize victims of animal sexual abuse. **HB 709** is in the House Committee on Committees and **SB 125** was approved by the Senate and sent to the House Committee on Committees.



Louisiana HB 142 would allow individuals to sue for damages commercial entities that publish or distribute pornographic materials harmful to minors, including depictions of bestiality. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure.



Maryland SB 22 would repeal duplicative Criminal Law statute §3-322, a prohibition against having sex with animals, as similar prohibitions exist in §10-606 as Aggravated Cruelty to Animals. The bill is in the Senate Standing Judicial Proceedings Committee.



Missouri SB 980 would add causing injury or suffering to a female dog, causing injury to the sexual organs of a female dog, and needlessly causing pain during artificial insemination of a female dog to the definition of animal abuse.



New York A614 would make sexual contact with animals a felony if serious injury or death to 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.



Virginia SB 249 and HB 672 would modernize the prohibition against a person who “carnally knows any brute animal” into a more contemporary prohibition of “sexual abuse of animals,” a Class 6 felony, and prohibit convicted offenders from owning any animals for up to five years. Offenders could be ordered to obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling and treatment. **SB 249** was approved by both the Senate and the House and was sent to the Governor; it will become law unless the Governor vetoes it by April 11.

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 referred for interim study.



New Jersey S 1144 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.



West Virginia HB 2095 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have defined animal hoarding as the possession of a large number of companion animals, the failure to provide adequate food, water, shelter, veterinary care and humane care, and the inability to understand the conditions of the animals and the deleterious impact on the animals and the owner's health and well-being. Animals found living under these conditions would be confiscated and turned over to an animal shelter for proper care and relocation.

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.



Alaska HB 51 would allow criminal courts to impose a sentence above the presumptive range if various aggravating factors are present. Existing law includes a history of repeated instances of cruelty to animals as an aggravating factor; the bill would add the defendant's targeting the victim due to that person's sexual orientation, gender identity or citizenship. The bill is in the House State Affairs Committee.



Georgia SB 512 would add cockfighting to provisions of the law outlawing gambling on dog fights and create a "misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature" to allow a minor child to attend an animal fight. It passed the Senate and was sent to the House.



Illinois HB 3531 would expand 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 450 would require peace officers to receive law enforcement training on the identification, investigation, response, and reporting of animal abuse violations and on The Link between animal abuse and offenses against people, including: abuse, neglect and sex crimes against a minor; child pornography; abuse, neglect and exploitation of a vulnerable adult; and domestic and dating violence and abuse. The bill is in the Committee on Committees.



Louisiana SB 327 would allow a district attorney to obtain a court warrant to search for and seize any firearms belonging to a person who recently committed acts of animal cruelty where there is probable cause to believe that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Minnesota HB 208 would establish a Minnesota Companion Animal Board to protect and promote the welfare, social well-being, and physical and mental health of companion animals; one member of the Board would “represent public human health and welfare issues and the relationship between companion animal and human health and welfare.” The bill is in the Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee.



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 2328 would expand the state’s annual grants to local law enforcement agencies to enforce illegal gambling to include investigations of animal fighting and possession of animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Committee on Gaming Oversight.



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.



Utah HB 112 would change “dog” to “animal” in statutes prohibiting the training or exhibition of animals for fighting other animals, and repeal the cock fighting statute. The bill is in the House Rules and Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice Committees.



Wisconsin SB 536/AB 540 died. The bills would have prohibited offenders convicted of homicide, felony battery, sexual assault, and controlled substance felonies from possessing, controlling or residing with a dangerous dog.

Cross-Reporting



Connecticut SB 235 would require veterinarians to report to local law enforcement agencies when they treat dogs that they believe have been used in animal fighting. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Environment.



Iowa SF 2135, HF 2429 and HF 623 would grant veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil and criminal liability, and remove the normal confidentiality requirements, for making good-faith reports or assisting in the investigation of suspected animal maltreatment or rescuing a threatened animal. **SF 2135** and **HF 2429** are in the Senate Judiciary Committee; **HF 623** passed the House and is in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



Louisiana HB 842 would grant veterinarians and veterinary technicians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting, in good faith, suspected animal cruelty or neglect and for releasing confidential information. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure.



Massachusetts S.2672 would permit child protection workers and personnel protecting elders and the disabled to report suspected animal abuse at any time, rather than just during the course of their investigations and evaluations. The bill is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



Missouri SB 1182 would mandate veterinarians, animal control officers and animal humane investigators to report abuse and neglect of children, the elderly and other vulnerable persons. Certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel would be mandated to report companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association. Newly-mandated reporters would receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect. The bill is in the Senate Seniors, Families, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee.



New Jersey A 2709, citing Link research, would require DCF child abuse and neglect investigators to report suspected neglect or cruelty of livestock and non-livestock animals, with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability and administrative sanctions. The bill is in the Assembly Human Services Committee.



New Jersey S 1789 would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, domestic violence investigators, employees of the Department of Children & Families, employees of the Department of Human Services, Division of Aging, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities to report suspected animal cruelty to an appropriate law enforcement officer with civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.



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 respective Children and Families Committees.



New York A 5642 would require the Attorney General to establish a 24-hour toll-free animal abuse hotline and make reasonable efforts to inform the public about the hotline, which would then refer reportable incidents to the appropriate state or local law enforcement or SPCA agency. The bill is in the Assembly Governmental Operations Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



Mississippi SB 2261 died in the Judiciary Committee. “Buddy’s Law”) would have required youths who have been adjudicated as delinquent for committing cruelty against a domesticated dog or cat to receive psychiatric evaluation and counseling or treatment.



New Jersey S 1144 would establish the crime of animal hoarding and require mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty and hoarder offenders. It is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee. **S 1153 (“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** and **A 1558** 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 respective Agriculture Committees.



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 Advocates for Animals



Florida S 172 died in the Judiciary Committee. It would have allowed the appointment of an advocate, upon the court’s initiative or request, from a list of attorneys and certified legal interns provided by the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar Association, for “the interests of an animal” in civil and criminal court proceedings regarding welfare, care or custody.



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 passed the Senate and is in the House Rules Committee.



New Jersey A 1965/S 2211 would create a two-year pilot program to allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the best interests of, and justice for, animals in cruelty cases. It was reported out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



New York A 5315/S 3525-A would allow courts to appoint volunteer lawyers and law students to advocate for living animals’ interests and to help ensure their well-being in civil and criminal animal welfare proceedings. The bills are in the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees.



Rhode Island S 2227/HB 7678 would authorize the potential appointment of pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to act as animal advocates in cruelty and abuse cases, at the court’s discretion, to serve the interests of justice. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

12 Convicted in Multi-State Cocaine-Trafficking and Dogfighting Ring

Twelve defendants in a multi-state dogfighting and cocaine-trafficking network have been convicted. The federal investigation into the network, based out of Georgia with operations in Alabama and Florida, executed 15 residential

search warrants, seized more than 150 dogs being used for organized fighting, and handed down 136 indictments according to a [release](#) from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Georgia.



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

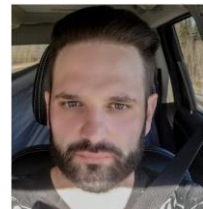
The co-conspirators, all of whom pled guilty to various dogfighting, conspiracy and narcotics charges, are:

- Lee Benney, 55, of Reynolds, Ga.: 21 months in prison, 3 years of supervised release.
- Shapuille Bentley, 27, of Roberta, Ga.: 4 years in prison.
- Jason Carter, 39, of Phenix City, Ala.: 97 months in prison.
- Reginald Crimes, 39, of Preston, Ga.: 2 years in prison, 3 years of supervised release.
- Lekey Davis, aka Kee Boo, 46, of Talbotton, Ga.: 210 months in prison.
- Bryanna Holmes, 25, of Fort Valley, Ga.: 3 years of probation.
- Jarvis Lockett, aka J-Rock, 41, Warner Robins, Ga.: 10 years in prison, 3 years supervised release.
- Shelley Johnson, aka Gold Mouth, 40, of Macon, Ga.: Sentencing scheduled for June 7.
- Derrick Owens, aka Doomie, 38, of Woodland, Ga.: 10 years in prison.
- Christopher Raines, aka Binky, 51, of Talbotton, Ga.: 135 months in prison, 5 years supervised release, \$10,000 fine.
- Vernon Vegas, 50, Suwanee, Ga.: 5 years in prison, 3 years of supervised release, \$10,000 fine.
- Rodrick Walton, aka Rodrie Walton, 42, of Shiloh, Ga.: 2 years in prison.

Jealous Father Gets 3 Years in Prison for Killing Ex-Wife's Dogs

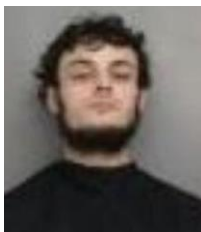
A Calgary, Alta. father who was jealous of his then-wife's attention to her two dogs was sentenced to three years in prison. John Gieck, 40, was convicted on two counts of animal cruelty in the brutal killings of "Sophie," a basset hound, and "Tyler," a Chihuahua, the [CBC reported](#). When the two dogs died suddenly within three days of each other, the wife, Joanna Smith, asked the Calgary Humane Society to investigate.

Necropsies showed the animals had died from severe trauma. Police took Gieck into custody under a mental health warrant after he told them he had had suicidal thoughts. Smith testified there had been two prior incidents where she had had concerns about Gieck's abuse toward the dogs.



John Gieck

S.C. Man Charged with Screwing His Dog to a Wall, Drug Offenses



Tyler Jerdo

Union County, S.Car., sheriff's deputies arrested Tyler Austin Jerdo on charges of "ill treatment of animals," illegal possession of methamphetamine and resisting arrest for allegedly screwing his dog to a bathroom wall. [WYFF-TV](#) reported that the arrest warrant said Jerdo had screwed his dog to the wall with a power drill through the paws using two three-inch screws. Deputies reportedly found the bathroom door blockaded with a birdbath and an air conditioning unit. A report said Jerdo resisted arrest, fought with officers, had to be Tasered twice while being handcuffed, and still managed to escape through the back of the patrol car. There was no word on the dog's condition.



Richard Chinappi

Police Officer Gets Prison Sentence for Shooting Ex-Fiancée's Dog

A Richmond, Va. police officer who killed his then-fiancée's dog and gave a false report about how the dog was killed – and later was charged with making profane and threatening phone calls to her – was sentenced to prison. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported that Richard R. Chinappi III, 27, of Powhatan, Va., received a five-year prison term for felony animal cruelty, with four years suspended, plus a six-months suspended sentence for filing the false police report. He was scheduled to appear in court on March 30 on misdemeanor charges related to the telephone calls. Police reports said that Chinappi, who was off-duty at the time, had claimed he accidentally shot "Lola," a beagle-hound mix, while trying to stop a bear attack in his home. Investigators reportedly found signs of intoxication in the home and no evidence of a bear's intrusion.

Woman Charged with Throwing Boyfriend's Dog Off 7th-Floor Balcony



Shelley Vaughn

Shelley Nicole Vaughn, 46, of Clearwater, Fla., was charged with animal cruelty, battery and criminal mischief for allegedly throwing her boyfriend's dog off a 7th-floor condominium balcony. The *Tampa Bay Times* reported that Vaughn's boyfriend, Eric Adeson, had called Clearwater police following a domestic argument. The dog, a 3-year-old pug named "Bucky", died from the fall. The following day, Adeson filed a civil complaint against Vaughn claiming she had entered his home and was apparently intoxicated, verbally abusive, and started throwing his cellphone and car keys over the balcony railing. "I would encourage people to love their pets and appreciate their pets and hug their pets tonight because you don't know that they'll be there tomorrow," Adeson told the newspaper.

LAPD Arrests Man Who Allegedly Shot at Two Witnesses Trying to Stop Him from Beating a Dog

Police in Los Angeles arrested Saalih Mousa, 21, on charges of attempted murder for allegedly shooting at two people who reportedly saw him beating a dog. *KCBS-TV* reported that the two were walking in the Hollywood area when they saw a man on an apartment balcony beating the dog. The LAPD said that when the witnesses yelled at the suspect to let go of the dog, he argued back then pulled out a firearm and shot at them, wounding one witness. The victim who was shot was listed in stable condition at a hospital. Two French bulldogs at the residence, "Cash" and "Dinero," were released to the custody of a friend of Mousa's girlfriend.

Louisiana Man Charged with 176 Counts of Child and Animal Pornography

Michael Lofton, 35, of Bossier City, La., who had been arrested in January on 13 counts of child pornography and 20 counts of animal sexual abuse, was subsequently charged with an additional 39 counts of child pornography and 104 counts of animal sexual abuse in an ongoing investigation, according to the *Bossier Press-Tribune*. Bossier Sheriff's detectives seized his electronic devices which reportedly contained numerous files containing images of child sexual abuse and bestiality. It is unclear whether the case is related to an earlier investigation of former Bossier City K-9 cop Terry Yetman, who was sentenced to at least 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to six of the 71 counts of animal sexual abuse and child pornography with which he had been charged (See the [December 2021 LINK-Letter](#)).



Michael Lofton

Drug Gang Massacre Claims 26 Victims at Mexican Cockfight

Three U.S. citizens were killed and a fourth was critically wounded during a drug cartel retaliatory shootout on March 27 at an illegal cockfight that left 20 people dead and six injured. Mexican authorities believe that the shootings, which occurred about seven hours after the first of some 40 cockfights being staged at the Rancho El Paraíso in Zinapécuaro, Michoacán, were carried out in revenge for the massacre of 17 people at a funeral on Feb. 27. Among the dead were: Jose Abiel Alvarez, Sr., of Phoenix, Ariz., who reportedly owned the cockfighting arena; his son Salvador Alvarez; and Melissa Silva, 36, of Watsonville, Calif. Her younger sister, Arleth Silva, 16, of Chicago, was critically wounded. The executions were apparently well planned, with the armed gunman storming the arena in a stolen food truck while using a stolen bus to block the exit, then fleeing the scene in the victims' stolen cars, according to [Reuters](#).



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.

April 17 – Tokyo, Japan (online): Sakiko Yamazaki will lecture on “What in the ‘LINK’? The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence” in a [webinar](#) for the Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Good Canine Citizens.

April 20 – Pittsfield, Mass. (online): [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network – will hold its regular meeting.

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](#).

April 21 – Orlando, Fla.: Shelbi Waters and Devon Krusko will present “The Forgotten Pets of Domestic Violence” at the HSUS [Animal Care Expo](#).

April 27 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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

May 3 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): Jo-Anne Dusel of the Provincial Association of Transition Houses will present “Domestic Violence: What to Know, Say and Do” on a [webinar](#) for the Saskatchewan SPCA.

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](#)

May 18 (online): Phil Arkow will present “The Link in ‘Covidian Times’: An Aberration or the New Abnormal?” at the 15th Annual International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association [conference](#).

May 24 – Villanova, Pa.: A workshop on “Children, Families and Pets: Considerations for the Needs and Safety of Vulnerable Victims” will be held at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys’ 4th National [Domestic Violence Prosecution Conference](#).

May 25 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 22 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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

July 27 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

July 30 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Nicole Forsyth and Amanda Landis-Harris will present “The ‘Link’, One Welfare and Trauma-Informed Care at the [AVMA Convention](#).

Aug. 3 – Denver, Colo.: Phil Arkow will present “The Animal-Human Violence Link: How Pet-Inclusive Victim Assistance Can Better Protect Vulnerable Family Members” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [48th Annual Training Event](#).

August 24 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Sept. 28 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Oct. 26 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Nov. 10 (online): David Rosengard of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present “Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Nov. 23 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Dec. 28 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.



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.*



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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The Latham Foundation
Etowah, N. Car.

Lesley Ashworth

Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
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