



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

The LINK-Letter Vol. 15, No. 10 October 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

SUBSCRIBE – It's Free!!



THE LINK in the LITERATURE

Is There a Link between Human Violence and Hunting?

The question is often asked as to whether there is a Link between animal cruelty and violence against humans in the context of hunting. Research in this area has been minimal, but a 2014 paper written by Australian psychologist and Link author Eleonora Gullone on this topic recently came to our attention.



Gullone described increasing awareness and anecdotal and empirical evidence of The Link between violence against humans, animal cruelty, criminal behaviors, and welfare concerns for children and their families, particularly intimidating domestic violence. In asking where hunting fits in this co-occurrence hypothesis, Gullone noted that animal cruelty can, in part, be explained by compromised empathy development. "It is not unreasonable to argue that killing animals in the form of hunting for purely recreation purposes is a demonstration of compromised empathy since deriving enjoyment from a behavior that causes suffering and harm must be devoid of compassion.

"It is also likely that children's witnessing of such behaviors by their significant others is conveying a message that harming and killing sentient beings for pure sport is acceptable. Following from this, it is likely not a coincidence that hunting is performed predominantly by males who, as a group, have also been consistently demonstrated to have lower levels of empathy compared to females," she added.

She observed that the number of licensed hunters was on the decline in both Australia and the U.S., despite increases in the number of licensed gun owners. Hunters represent a clear minority of the Australian adult population, she wrote, suggesting that shooters themselves are aware of changing community attitudes and feel the need to justify and protect their position.

Gullone noted that contrary to perceptions that hunting is a sport, many animal activists and feminists consider hunting to be another form of violence and male domination. Anecdotal data suggest that there is a co-occurrence between domestic violence and hunting and that that legal violence (e.g. hunting) can generalize or "spill over" into illegal violence (e.g. domestic violence), she wrote.

"Related to this, it can be argued that the endorsement of hunting through its legal status provides societal endorsement to engage in acts of cruelty and violence. Such endorsement is likely to manifest in

a circular manner both by being acted upon by those with compromised levels of empathy and by increasing individuals' levels of desensitization to others' suffering through such legally endorsed acts of cruelty," she wrote, examining the phenomenon of kangaroo shooting in Australia by both commercial and non-commercial hunters and humane issues that surround the shootings despite rigid regulations.

She concluded that given increasing evidence of a significant co-occurrence between animal cruelty and human violence, that deriving pleasure from killing or causing suffering to other sentient beings is predictive of low empathy levels in hunting behavior, that hunting can desensitize young children to the suffering of others, and that only 5.2% of the adult Australian population hold hunting licenses, it is fair to ask whether it is still appropriate for hunting to be considered socially acceptable behavior. "Are societies that legally endorse hunting as a source of recreation unintentionally promoting 'criminal' behaviors through the continued legal status of such activities?" she asked.

-- Gullone, E. (2014). *Co-occurrence of human violence, criminal behaviour and animal abuse: Implications for legalized hunting behaviour*. Monash University Department of Psychology [unpublished paper].

Human-Animal Work Seen as Improving Prosocial Behaviors and Workplace Productivity

One of the few research studies to examine human-animal interactions in the context of human resources and organizational management is reporting that employees who work with animals are more likely to develop prosocial behaviors that translate into increased work performance. This phenomenon occurs, the authors posit, because these employees are more likely to develop compassion and awe.

The researchers conducted cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary studies with: the Singapore Zoo; animal welfare fundraisers and animal-assisted therapists in Hong Kong; and U.S. humane educators, petting zoos and conservation ecologists. They report that because there are ample opportunities to observe distress and suffering these employees experience compassion, which can spillover to affect how one treats others more generally. "Human-animal work also can evoke feelings of astonishment, wonder and connectedness as employees come to realize the incredible species-specific abilities exhibited by animals that they work with, as well as the unique insights that they learn from these specific work interactions," they write.

Compassion is more readily experienced in human-animal work where animals are considered fully-fledged organizational members as opposed to mindless commodities because, in sharp contrast to typical human-to-human coworker interactions, human employees are often motivated to hide their sufferings at work lest they be perceived as weak or incompetent. Through repeated work-related interactions with animals, there are considerable opportunities for employees to notice suffering and hence develop a sense of compassion.

While noting that people who are already more compassionate by nature may self-select to go into human-animal work, and that employees in these fields share many different attitudes regarding animals, the authors suggest that additional research is needed to explore whether the mere presence of animals in any workplace, such as Bring Your Pets To Work Days, can have the same environmental softening effects of producing prosocial and productive behaviors.

-- Yam, K.C., Tang, P.M., & Lam, C. (2022, May 10). *Working with animals: Implications for employees' compassion, awe, prosocial behavior, and task performance*. *Personnel Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12517>

Bans on Circus Wild Animal Acts Seen as a Link Concern

Amid ongoing controversy and legislation regarding the ways in which wild animals are trained and housed in circuses, often depriving them of basic social, spatial, behavioral, and health welfare needs, a new paper has taken this issue of animal abuse and reviewed the international trend of abandoning animal performances in the circus industry as being a Link issue as well as an animal welfare concern. A study of the Czech Republic's process by which that nation joined 15 other European countries in legislating full or partial bans of wild animals in the circus industry notes that as a widespread phenomenon with serious implications for animal welfare, individual and societal well-being, animal abuse as exhibited in circuses is demonstrably associated with interpersonal violence and public health issues. The impact on children is especially noted: "The trend is to reflect the unsuitability of circuses for pedagogical and educational purposes. Rather, the fact that circuses can have a negative impact on children's relationship with animals, both inside and outside circuses, is promoted in legislation in the form of bans," the author writes.

-- Novotný, L. (2021). Legal aspects of the prohibition of wild animal circus training: Evidence from the Czech Republic. *Hungarian Journal of Legal Studies*, 62(4), 281-296.

Animal Hoarding Issues Explored in England and Australia

What may be the first study of England animal hoarding's implications for public health services reports that British findings are broadly consistent with those from other countries. In a study of 66 cases between 2015 and 2020, researchers from Northumbria University found that females (64%), those living alone (71%), and those with a mean age of 49 were well represented. Cats (61.5%) and dogs (60%) were the most commonly hoarded species. There was a mean of 44 animals per case and dead or animals requiring euthanasia were found in 53% of cases. Key characteristics of the areas where cases were found to be urban and densely populated with high levels of deprivation. Evidence of recidivism was evident in 39% of cases, suggesting that prosecution is not an effective rehabilitator.

-- Wilkinson, J., Schoultz, M., King, H.M., Neave, N., & Bailey, C. (2022, Aug. 30). Animal hoarding cases in England: Implications for public health services. *Frontiers in Public Health* 10:899378.

A new article from Australia examining the empirical research on squalor among older people and ethical considerations for applying appropriate interventions has found that older people living in squalor have a higher prevalence of frontal executive dysfunction, a higher risk of morbidity and mortality, used more medical and social resources, and negatively impact others around them. More critically, this review highlighted insufficient research on the effectiveness of interventions, recidivism rates and harm caused by intervention in the management of squalor in older people. The study cites several reports involving animal hoarding, including the adverse health effects on the animals, and the need for greater intervention from mental health services. The findings that older adults living in squalor can place a burden on families, caregivers and care workers, neighbors, animals and the wider health system have implications for the principle of justice, the authors conclude.

-- Lee, S.M., Martino, E., Bismark, M., & Bentley, R. (2022). Evidence to guide ethical decision-making in the management of older people living in squalor: A narrative review. *Internal Medicine Journal*, 52, 1304-1312.

Link Between Animal and Domestic Abuse in Brazil Analyzed

The objectives of this study were to characterize the cases of animal abuse and violence against women, and to verify the existence of an association among these cases, in the city of Pinhais, Paraná, Brazil. Analyzing reports of animal abuse and violence against women between January 2017 and January 2019, neglect of moderate severity was the type of animal abuse that most occurred. The downtown neighborhood had the highest prevalence in all types of neglect and the feline species was the most affected. In cases of violence against women, the main aggressor was the ex-partner, with an average age of 39.15 years old. Victims had an average age of 38.44 years old and with a higher frequency of incomplete fundamental schooling and being employed. The most common violence was psychological, and the Alto Tarumã and downtown neighborhoods presented the highest prevalence. Case prevalence of animal abuse and violence against women per neighborhood showed an inconclusive relation. The authors concluded that a joint evaluation of cases involving animal abuse and interpersonal violence is indispensable, establishing communication among institutions for an effective confrontation network and reinforcing the need for public policies that recognize The Link.

-- Rocha, Y. da S. G., Galdioli, L., Alencar, A. L. F., Ramos, M. G., & Matuda, N. da S., et al. (2022).

Characterization and analysis of the association between animal abuse and violence against women in the city of Pinhais, Paraná, Brazil. *Research, Society and Development*, 11(11), 1-12. DOI: 10.33448/rsd-v11i11.33159.

Three Human-Animal Bond Research Positions Available

The University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine is inviting applications for three full-time, research-focused, tenure-eligible faculty positions (open-rank) focusing on human-animal interactions. The college is particularly interested in candidates who focus on interactions with domestic species and research questions related to the human-animal bond. A full description of these positions and application instructions can be found [online](#).

ASPCA Announces Research Positions and Publishing Grants

The ASPCA's Department of Strategy and Research has announced several remote work opportunities for researchers in the animal protection field:



- [Director, Research](#) (2 openings – one focused on animal behavior research, the other on research in increasing access to veterinary care).
- [Senior Manager, Project Management](#) (this role also has a research component).
- [Internships in Applied Animal Welfare Research](#), Spring 2023 and Summer 2023 (that these internships are now paid).

In addition, funding applications remain open on a rolling basis for the ASPCA [Open-Access Publishing Fund](#), which covers the cost of article processing charges to make high-quality research papers on animal welfare topics available to broader audiences.

SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Chapter Criticizes Social Work's Systemic Ignoring of Animal Abuse in Education, Policy and Practice



Two Canadian researchers, writing in a chapter in a new social work textbook, are highly critical of the profession's reluctance to expand animal-informed social work education and practice and to incorporate The Link between animal and human violence within social work.

Cassandra Hanrahan, left, and Darlene Chalmers
Associate Professor of Social Work at Saskatchewan's University of Regina, write extensively about the significance of the human-animal bond, the positive therapeutic benefits of animal-assisted interactions and the roles that social workers can play in these areas. They position animal-informed social work as a therapeutic approach that when conducted in a mutually beneficial way contributes to the health and well-being of individuals and their surrounding communities – across species. They describe animal-informed social work as a beginning framework for expanding the scope and depth of social work so that companion animals are integrated into research, education and practice because of their interconnectedness with humans.

But they are also highly critical of individual and institutional resistance to human-animal bond scholarship. This absence, they write, is perplexing given the profession's history of eclecticism, commitment to intersectional analysis, and mission to respond to diversity. Social work's general silence contradicts its avowed commitment to context and environment, they write.

Hanrahan and Chalmers describe The Link between animal cruelty and other forms of human violence as one focus that social work should include on both the micro and macro levels. "While the links between violence to humans and violence to other animals are documented, such connections have yet to translate into systemic education, practice and policy," they write. They cite the lack of service coordination between child welfare and animal protection agencies and the absence of cross-sector training and reporting despite "the prolific research correlating interpersonal violence and family breakdown with child and adult animal cruelty. This disconnect ignores how violence to animals is a known indicator of other forms of human violence, often concurrent with domestic violence."

In noting the profession's traditional anthropocentric focus, they emphasize that "fundamentally, to ignore animal oppression and cruelty is to ignore human violence."

They contend that in order to fulfill the professional obligation to promote the welfare of society as well as human and non-human animals, social workers must attend to humans' relationships and other interactions with non-human animals and the environment.

-- Hanrahan, C. & Chalmers, D. (2020). *Animal-informed social work: A more than critical practice.*
In C. Brown & J. MacDonald (Eds.). *Critical clinical social work: Counterstorying for social justice,* (pp. 195-224). Canadian Scholars' Press.



“Greening” Social Work Addresses Violence Against Humans and Other Animals

Another Canadian researcher is exploring reasons as to why shifting the social work profession to be more inclusive of environmental or ecojustice has been slow and challenging, or not happening at all. Jasmine Ferreira, a doctoral candidate at York University, told the [2022 Educators for Animals Conference](#) that new directions in interdisciplinary critical animal studies and trans-species social justice have started to recognize this gap in social work and are beginning to call for a foundational shift based, in part, on “significant insight into how violence against animals is connected to all forms of oppression.”

Speaking about “Challenging Anthropocentrism and Speciesism in ‘Greening’ Social Work Education,” Ferreira discussed ways to challenge anthropocentrism and speciesism in social work education. She is hopeful that this marks a directional change in social work toward the alleviation of suffering for humans and non-humans alike. Social workers can address more than just the human members of families or the impact of climate change on humans. “We bring a unique perspective to our work because we often look across many dimensions of someone’s life,” she said.

Her doctoral studies focus on “greening” social work and social work education to address changing climate. “This consideration of the non-human world is relatively recent,” she said, and social work has been addressing it but largely through an anthropocentric view of how it affects human well-being. She sees the need for such “greening” as addressing a nexus of social and ecological justice: climate change impacts people disproportionately depending on their age, race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

She cited calls for social work to transform human consciousness away from its embedded anthropocentric biases towards a new ecocentric orientation that promotes environmental sustainability and ecological practice in social work curricula and a respect for “all beings.”

A more expansive concept of justice recognizes that continued subjugation and violence against animals is connected to all forms of oppression and violence. Seeing this Link is necessary in order to seek justice and well-being for all, she concluded.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Kentucky Pet Protection Order Forms Now Available

Kentucky enacted **HB 319** last April 8 (*See the [May 2022 LINK-Letter](#)*) which included violence against an animal when used as coercive conduct within the definition of “domestic violence and abuse” and “dating violence and abuse” and allowed judges in both types of cases to award possession of a shared domestic animal to the petitioner in [temporary](#) and [permanent](#) orders of protection. In July the Court of Justice revised the necessary forms for seeking a protection order and they include specific line items identifying the animals involved. Other states seeking to revise their forms may wish to see the Kentucky forms for ideas.

COVID-19... and THE LINK

Domestic Violence Increased or Decreased During COVID Depending on Whether Dogs Were Removed from the Home Voluntarily



A new study is reporting intriguing findings about the impact of pet ownership and domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown orders. In 2020 Dallas County, Texas – like so many others -- ordered residents to shelter in place for 52 days. During the pandemic reports of domestic violence increased across the U.S. as victims were forced to remain home with their abusers.

Erika Davies and Zachary Rodriguez of Union College found that during Dallas' shelter-in-place orders, the removal of pets from the home affected family violence in two different ways. When owners were able to surrender their dogs to an animal shelter, there was a decrease in reported cases of domestic violence possibly because victims were now more free to leave abusive

Erika Davies
relationships. Alternatively, when pets were confiscated from the home domestic violence reports increased, suggesting a preexisting elevated level of violence which may affect the target of violence once a pet is removed. When they computed the lag in in-home violence, they reported that the removal of a pet from the home affected family dynamics between three days to a week later.

The authors noted that their results align with the family violence literature by identifying a victim's dependents as a main deterrent to escape. If more women's shelters accommodated pets, victims would leave their abusers sooner. They encouraged further research on the demand for pets and the effect of in-home pets on family decision-making, financing and spillover behaviors such as violence.

"Any policy intended to decrease family violence ought to include animal shelters, women's shelters, and police departments. Together, these offices can identify potential abusers, decrease in-home violence, and ensure the safety of families and pets," they concluded.

-- Davies, E., & Rodriguez, Z. (2022, Aug. 29). *Pandemic pets: How the demand for dogs affects in-home domestic violence during COVID-19*. Research Square (pre-print). <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1983761/v1>

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Veterinary Detection and Reporting of Dogfighting Encouraged

A research article examining the global phenomenon of dogfighting provides a comprehensive overview of dogfighting and the role of veterinarians. The authors, based in Mexico, Italy, France, and Australia, place particular emphasis on the long-term effects of pain in dogs and note the often-overlooked emotional consequences as well. They cite numerous reasons why veterinarians do not report suspected animal fighting: dogfighters take their injured animals to veterinarians but lie about how the injuries occurred; few veterinarians have been trained to recognize the telltale traumas of dogfighting; many countries lack mandated reporting requirements; confidentiality concerns; and fear of litigation. Citing "the well-recognized Link between human and animal violence," they advocate for stronger reporting mandates and better training in detection, identification and diagnosis of injuries incurred during dogfights and in veterinary forensic techniques.

-- Mota-Rojas, D., Mariti, C., Marçet-Rius, M., Lezama-García, K., & Gazzano, A., et al. (2022) > *The welfare of fighting dogs: Wounds, neurobiology of pain, legal aspects and the potential role of the veterinary profession*. *Animals*, 12, 2257. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12172257>



Study Examines UK Practitioners' Experiences in Treating and Reporting Animal Abuse

A new study in Scotland that examined veterinarians' experiences of treating cases of nonaccidental injury (NAI) and other forms of animal abuse and that assessed their support needs and barriers to reporting such cases found, similar to studies from other countries, that veterinarians showed high concern about animal abuse but varied in their confidence to intervene and perceived barriers to reporting. The researchers found that practitioners' experience of animal abuse is common, and veterinarians feel a strong moral duty to act, but can lack confidence in intervening. Because abuse cases affect stress levels and compassion fatigue, additional support and training are needed, they wrote.

Joanne M. Williams, Laura Wauthier and Monja Knoll of the University of Edinburgh collaborated with the Scottish SPCA to survey 215 veterinarians. 53% reported treating cases and 9% reported suspected cases of abuse in the last 12 months. The most commonly affected animals were dogs, cats and rabbits, and the most common forms of abuse were neglect and physical abuse. Case studies focused on physical abuse, but neglect cases more often resulted in death.

Respondents could submit details from up to three case studies. The three most common case characteristics that made the practitioners suspect abuse were the nature of the injury (27.7%), having reported or witnessed the abuse (10.3%), and an inconsistent history (9.9%). Other common characteristics included: suspicious behaviors, lack of an explanation or a changing story, recurrence, knowledge of violence in the home, animal fear, old fractures, and a high rate of pet turnover.

While 20% of respondents did not report the case, 80% did to a colleague or practice manager, animal welfare organization, police, or social services agency.

Barriers to reporting included:

- concerns about breaking client confidentiality;
- fear of litigation;
- lack of knowledge of available resources;
- lack of accepted standards in identifying NAI;
- a perception that no action would be taken;
- inexperience in dealing with clients providing misleading information;
- fear of compromising a victim's safety;
- fear of physical retaliation by the perpetrator;
- and fear of driving the client away or eroding the practice's client base.

-- Williams, J.M., Wauthier, L., Scottish SPCA, & Knoll, M. (2022). Veterinarians' experiences of treating cases of animal abuse: An online questionnaire study. *Veterinary Record*, e1975. <https://doi.org/10.1002/vetr1975>.

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

Study Links Bullying with Abusing and Witnessing Animal Abuse

What may be the first Link research to come out of Greece is confirming earlier findings from other countries that bullying behavior and peer victimization are associated with both direct abuse of animals and witnessing violence against animals.¹⁷⁴ elementary school students were surveyed about animal abuse, bullying/victimization, empathy, self-control, and peer interactions. Witnessing animal abuse and being victimized by peers were seen as positive predictors of bullying. However, empathy, self-control, and peer interactions failed to predict school bullying. The researchers discuss theoretical mechanisms linking bullying/victimization and animal abuse as well as directions for future research.

“Cruelty to animals is all too often a part of the landscape of violence in which children participate or witness. Therefore, intervention programs should give greater emphasis to training about animal abuse and its overlap with other forms of violence,” they wrote.

“Moreover, the discovery of animal abuse should prompt further enquiry about other problems that children may have, especially bully-victims who appear to be the most maladjusted of the children involved in school bullying. Teachers should be aware of possible links of bullying and victimization at school and cruelty towards animals. Addressing cruelty to animals as a significant form of aggressive and antisocial behavior can be beneficial to both understanding and preventing school bullying.”

-- Andreou, E., Vasiou, A., Xafakos, E., & Korona, A. (2022). Animal abuse and bullying/victimization in a community sample of school-age children. *Society & Animals*, 1-18. doi:10.1163/15685306-BJA10104

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Although many state legislatures have adjourned for the year, growing awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence has already resulted in **157 bills** introduced in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress – **15 of which** have already been signed into law! 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



U.S. H.R. 2377, the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2022, would allow family members, domestic partners and law enforcement officers to petition for a “red flag” federal Extreme Risk Protection Order prohibiting a respondent to acquire firearms or ammunition when there is cause to believe the respondent poses a risk of imminent personal injury to self or another individual. In determining whether to issue an ERPO, courts shall consider factors including a recent act of animal cruelty by the respondent. The bill has passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



U.S. H.R. 8074, the PUPP Act (“Providing for Unhoused People with Pets”), would authorize HUD to award grants to modify and upgrade structures to serve as interim and permanent housing to accommodate unhoused individuals with pets, including domestic violence survivors. Grants could be used for acquiring, renovating, rehabilitating, re-purposing, retrofitting, or constructing a property, and for pet-related operational costs. Facilities would have to provide basic veterinary care and behavioral support for pets, plus supportive mental health, employment, substance use disorder, and wellness services for human residents. Animal shelters could partner with eligible entities to provide interim or permanent housing. The bill is in the House Committee on Financial Services.



Arizona HB 2365 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed 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 have prohibited the respondent from possessing a firearm.



California 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. Both bills are the Assembly Appropriations Committee. (It is not clear whether these bills would cover homeless persons who are fleeing domestic violence.)



Colorado HB 22-1041 was signed into law on March 24. It adds animal control officers and State Bureau of Animal Protection employees to the "protected persons" who, if they are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, can petition to have their personal information removed from official records to reduce an imminent and serious threat to the safety of the person or the immediate family.



Colorado SB 22-183 was signed into law on May 19. The law creates a \$35 million Crime Victim Services Fund and a \$6 million Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Fund to award grants to non-governmental or Indian tribe domestic violence and sexual assault programs and coalitions that provide services to crime victims, including "attending to the needs of animal companions."



Delaware HS1 for HB 264 would allow a person over age 18 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 was sent to the Governor on June 23.



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 committee. It would have defined the 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. It 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 and HB 2209 died when the legislature adjourned. The bills recognized that children residing in homes marked by domestic violence are also psychologically harmed and more likely to externalize antisocial behaviors. They would have granted children standing to file a petition for an order of protection or temporary restraining order (which could have included pets).



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 died when the legislature adjourned. It would have required 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 already includes acts of cruelty to a family member's animals as a "crime of domestic violence."



Iowa HF 825 became law on May 2. The new law amends domestic violence protection orders (which can include pets) and consent agreements to allow courts to approve a consent agreement without a finding that the defendant has engaged in sexual abuse.



Kentucky HB 319 was signed into law on April 8. It includes violence against an animal when used as coercive conduct within the definition of "domestic violence and abuse" and "dating violence and abuse" and allows judges in both types of cases to award possession of a shared domestic animal to the petitioner.



Kentucky HB 709 died in committee. It would have denied offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they had 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 have been classified as Class D felonies.



Maine LD 1696 was signed into law on April 20. It expands 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.



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 a study order requested by the Senate Rules Committee.



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 A4229/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 bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



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 and A10013 ("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 are in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.



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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have expanded 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.



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 was tabled.** It would have allowed 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 could have been used to determine the individual's risk included a history of domestic violence or animal cruelty.

 **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 passed the House and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

 **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 House Judiciary Committee requested it be held for further study.

 **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 House Judiciary Committee requested it be held for further study.

 **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 was signed into law on March 31.** The new law adds "coercive control," including harm to someone's pets, including by physical violence, to the definition of domestic violence. It takes effect July 1, 2022.



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 Committee on Education and Labor.



H.R. 4159/S.2121, the Courtroom Dogs Act, would develop best practice guidelines for the use of dogs in federal courts and grand jury rooms to provide support for defendants, complainants and witnesses. The bills are in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.



Arizona HB 2324 was signed into law on April 14. It makes 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.



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 passed the Assembly and Senate and was sent to the Governor on Aug. 30.



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 passed the Assembly and Senate and was sent to the Governor on Aug. 30.



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 died in committee. It would have denied offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they had 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 have been classified as Class D felonies.



Massachusetts H.1716/S. 2672 would expand the ability of Department of Children & Families employees and contractors to report suspected animal abuse. Current law allows them to report “during any investigation or evaluation.” These bills would allow them to cross-report at any time. The bills are in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



Massachusetts S.2846/S.104 would expand the list of mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect to include all employees, volunteers and contractors in animal control. Currently, only animal control officers are mandated to report. The bill is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



New Jersey A 4229/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 bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & 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 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have made it a felony to permit a person under age 18 to attend or participate in any dog- or cock-fighting.



Oklahoma SB 1713 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have expanded domestic violence protection orders to include petitions filed by or on behalf of victims of child abuse.



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 “evincing 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 A 4229/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 bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & 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 the state’s criminal bestiality statutes to define “sexual act with an animal” as including penetration, and exempt acts done by persons dispensing care to an animal in the interest of improving that animal’s health.



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 and SB 1798 were signed into law. SB 692 amends the definition of “sexual bestiality” to replace “vagina” with “female genitals” when describing illegal “sexual bestiality” with an animal. The more extensive **SB 1798** incorporates provisions that were in **SB 878, SB 420** and **HB 435** which had died earlier in the legislative session.





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 died in committee. The bills would have continued to define sex with animals as “sodomy,” but remove homosexual sex from the definition of sodomy.



Kentucky HB 709 and SB 125 died in committee. They would have allowed peace officers and animal control officers to seize victims of animal sexual abuse.



Louisiana HB 142 was signed into law on June 15 and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2023. The new law allows individuals to sue for damages commercial entities that publish or distribute pornographic materials harmful to minors, including depictions of bestiality. The preamble notes that internet-based pornography “is creating a public health crisis and having a corroding influence on minors.”



Maryland SB 22 died in committee. It would have repealed 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.



Missouri SB 980/HB 2446 died when the legislature adjourned. They would have added 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.



New York A8647-A/S8027 would increase the penalty for “sexual misconduct,” which includes sexual conduct with an animal, from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class E felony, if the victim is a corrections officer. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.



Oregon Ballot Initiative 13, proposed for 2022 was withdrawn. It would have added breeding domestic, livestock and equine animals to the definition of sexual assault of an animal.



Pennsylvania SB 354 would add “sexual intercourse with animals” to the definition of “sexual violence” awareness programs that institutions of higher education and private licensed schools must teach. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee.



Virginia SB 249 was signed into law on April 11. The new law modernizes 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 prohibits convicted offenders from owning any animals for up to five years. Offenders could be ordered to obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling and treatment.



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.

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.

Cross-Reporting



Connecticut SB 235, tabled when the Legislature adjourned, would have required veterinarians to report to law enforcement treating dogs believed to have been used in animal fighting.



Iowa SF 2135, HF 2429 and HF 623 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. The bills would have granted 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.



Louisiana HB 842 was signed into law and becomes effective Aug. 1. The new law grants veterinarians and veterinary technicians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting, in good faith and with reasonable cause, suspected animal cruelty or neglect and for releasing confidential information pursuant to a subpoena, court-ordered disclosure, or with written consent of the animal's owner or legal representative.



Massachusetts S.2672/S.943 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 died when the legislature adjourned. It would have mandated 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 have been mandated to report companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association. Newly-mandated reporters would have received one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect.



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 A 4229/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 bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & 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 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.

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 and is in the Senate Environment and Energy 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 respective Judiciary Committees each recommended the bills be held for further study.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



U.S. S. 4743/H.R. 8659, the AVERT Act of 2022 (Animal Violence Exposes Real Threat of Future Violence), would direct the U.S. Attorney General to order the National Institute of Justice to conduct a \$2,000,000 study on the underlying factors that contribute to people committing acts of animal cruelty and an analysis of animal cruelty as a predictor of future violence against humans. It would also authorize \$10,000,000 for the Stop Future Violence Grant Program to assist local governments and tribes, courts, and organizations "to develop and strengthen effective detection strategies, and early intervention or diversion resources, to stop acts of animal cruelty and rehabilitate offenders." The bills are in their respective Senate and House Judiciary Committees.



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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed 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 have added the defendant's targeting the victim due to that person's sexual orientation, gender identity or citizenship.



Georgia SB 512 died when the legislative session ended. It would have added 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.



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 died in committee. It would have required 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.



Louisiana SB 327 died when the legislature adjourned. The bill would have allowed 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.



Minnesota HF 208 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have established a Minnesota Companion Animal Board to protect and promote the welfare, social well-being, and physical and mental health of companion animals; one member would "represent public human health and welfare issues and the relationship between companion animal and human health and welfare."



New Jersey A3841 would prohibit offenders convicted of animal cruelty from possessing a firearm or being issued a permit to purchase a handgun. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary 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 A558 would prohibit individuals convicted of serious felony offenses against animals from possessing firearms. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A999/S7876 would prohibit the release of or failure to control an animal with the intent of preventing a police officer or peace officer from performing his or her lawful duties, as assault on a police officer in the second degree, a Class C felony. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.

-  **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 was tabled.** It would have allowed 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 were among the factors the court could consider in determining whether to issue an ERPO.
-  **Pennsylvania SB628** would make it a Second-Degree felony to seriously injure or kill a police animal while perpetrating or being an accomplice to a felony crime. The bill is in the senate Judiciary Committee.
-  **Pennsylvania SB 814 became law on July 18 without the Governor's signature.** It is now a 3rd-degree felony to kill or seriously injure a police animal while evading arrest or attempting to escape detention for an underlying felony or misdemeanor, or a 2nd-degree misdemeanor if the police animal suffers bodily injury. Convicted offenders will have to make restitution to the officer or the agency for veterinary bills, replacement costs for the animal, and the salary for the time the handler's services are lost to the agency.
-  **South Carolina S378 died when the legislature adjourned.** It would have required offenders who harm or injure a police dog or horse in the performance of its duties to make full-cost restitution to the law enforcement agency for the replacement of the animal and be subject to increased fine and imprisonment penalties and/or 500 hours of community service with an animal-related organization.
-  **Utah HB 112 died when the legislature adjourned.** It would have changed "dog" to "animal" in statutes prohibiting the training or exhibition of animals for fighting other animals, and repeal the cock fighting statute.
-  **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.

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.

Oct. 14 – Knoxville, Tenn. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Nine Career Opportunities where Pet-Inclusive Social Work Can Improve Delivery of Family Violence Victim Services” for the 7th International [Veterinary Social Work Summit](#).

Oct. 14 – St. Paul, Minn. (online): Andrew Campbell, Ann Olson, Phil Arkow, Victor Vieth and others will present on The Link at Minnesota’s Inaugural Conference on Family Violence, organized by [Safe Passage for Children of Minnesota](#).

Oct. 18 – New Britain, Conn. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Civil and Criminal Justice: Protecting People by Focusing on Animal Abuse” in a webinar for the [Animal Law Section](#) of the Connecticut Bar Association.

Oct. 21-22 – Alpharetta, Ga.: Animal cruelty law enforcement, veterinarians’ responsibilities, and animal hoarding are among the topics to be addressed at the Animal Protection Society’s [23rd Annual APAW Expo](#).

Oct. 25 – Auburn, N.Y.: Maya Gupta will present “The Link: The Connection between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse” at the New York State Animal Protection Federation’s [Seminar](#) on The Link Between Animal Crimes and Domestic Violence.

Oct. 26 – Indianapolis, Ind. (online): Phil Arkow, Vicki Deisner and Andrew Campbell will present at a [training](#) for the Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, sponsored by the Animal Welfare Institute.

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

Oct. 27 – Bowling Green, Ky.: Joye Keeley will present on The Link at the [Kentucky Bar Association](#)’s legal update training.

Oct. 27 – Orangeburg, N.Y. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Animal Abuse and Family Violence Prevention: Connecting the Dots in Criminal Justice and Psychology for Safer Communities” at [Dominican University](#).

Nov. 2 – Louisville, Ky.: Joye Keeley will teach a class on The Link at the University of Louisville for the department of Urban and Public Affairs.<mailto:joye@kylinkcoalition.org>

Nov. 4 – Virginia Beach, Va.: Phil Arkow and John J. Romero will present at a statewide [conference on domestic violence](#) for Virginia judges.

Nov. 10 (online): David Rosengard of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present “Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs: Approaching Animals as Quasi-Party Crime Victims” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Nov. 15 – Frankfort, Ky.: Joye Keeley will speak on The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse at the [Kentucky Court of Justice's Administrative Office of the Courts](#)' Judicial and Clerk Symposium.

Nov. 17 -- Paducah, Ky.: Joye Keeley will present on The Link at the [Kentucky Bar Association](#)'s legal update training.

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

Nov. 24-25 – Quebec City, Que., Canada: The Link will be featured prominently at Humane Canada's 2022 [Prosecution of Animal Abuse Conference](#).

Nov. 25 – Charlottetown, PEI, Canada (online): Kendra Coulter will conduct a [Violence Link PEI webinar](#) on "Communication and Cross-Reporting: Collaborating to Better Protect People and Animals."

Nov. 29 (online): Andrew Campbell will present "Someday Never Comes: Breaking Generational Cycles of Familial Abuse" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Dec. 13-15 – Nashville, Tenn.: The [11th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#), sponsored by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will feature workshops on "Coercive Control," "Animal Sexual Violence/Crush Cases," and "In the Shadows: Elder Abuse and Animal Abuse."

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

Jan. 19, 2023 (online): Kathleen Wood of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present "Bodies of Evidence: Issues Arising from Search and Seizure of Animal Bodies in Cruelty Investigations" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) Webinar Series.

Feb. 22, 2023 (online): David Rosengard and Jessica Chapman of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present "Towards a More Humane Society: A One-Health Approach to Addressing Criminal Cruelty for Everyone Involved" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) Webinar Series.

June 22, 2023 (online): Emily Lewis of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present "Stand Up for the Animals with a Case You Can Stand Behind" to explain how to give prosecutors what they need in a program for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) Webinar Series.

Aug. 24, 2023 (online): Linda Fielder of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present "Lessons from the Field: How One Community Transformed Its Response to Animal Cruelty through Collaboration" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) Webinar Series.



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.**

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS



Man Gets Three Years for Killing Girlfriend's Puppy

Gary Moore, 39, of Camden, N.J., was sentenced to three years in state prison for killing his girlfriend's puppy. [The Press of Atlantic City](#) reported that Moore admitted in court that the incident had occurred in Atlantic City; when he was angry with his then-girlfriend he killed her Yorkshire terrier puppy. Moore was also ordered to pay restitution to the Atlantic County prosecutor's office for fees incurred while

Gary Moore conducting a necropsy on the dog, and to complete community service. The case was a joint investigation between the Atlantic City Police Department and the prosecutor's Animal Cruelty Prosecution Unit.

Man Obsessed with Q-Anon Shot by Police After Killing Wife and Family Dog

A man whose daughter said his mental health had declined in recent years due to his obsession with Q-Anon conspiracy theories was killed in a shootout with law enforcement officers shortly after he gunned down his wife and dog. The

[Detroit News](#) reported that Igor Lanis, 53, of Walled Lake, Mich., opened fire on deputies when they responded to a 4 a.m. call from a woman who said she had been shot by her father. The man's 56-year-old wife was shot multiple times in the back as she was apparently trying to fall out of the front door; the family's pet great Pyrenees was similarly shot multiple times. Another daughter was recovering from severe traumatic injuries from a shotgun blast to her back and legs.



Igor Lanis



Memphis Man Charged with Shooting Dog in Front of Child

Colby Pugh, 19, of Memphis, Tenn., was charged with aggravated cruelty to animals and assault, reckless endangerment and being a convicted felon in possession of a handgun for allegedly shooting and killing a dog while a 9-year-old child was feeding it.

[WREG-TV](#) reported that Pugh was walking down a street when he allegedly shot the family dog. He was being held in the Shelby County Jail on \$25,000 bond.

Colby Pugh

Permission to Reprint

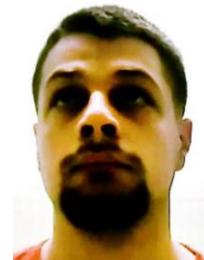
The news contained in *The LINK-Letter* are intended to disseminate as widely and as freely as possible information about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Permission is hereby granted to re-post these articles in other newsletters, websites, magazines, and electronic publications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

Prosecutor Cites Link as Husband Gets Prison for Killing Wife's Dog

"Violence against an animal is often used as either a substitute for violence against a domestic partner, a practice/warm-up, or a coercive measure designed to instill fear", said Columbus, Ga. Assistant District Attorney Kimberly Schwartz in reaching a plea agreement in which a man was sentenced to three years in prison for killing his wife's dachshund. The [Columbus Ledger-Enquirer](#) reported that Charles Van Pelt, 27, was seen on a backyard security camera video walking calmly into a backyard kennel to catch and mercilessly stomp the 9-year-old dog, "Penny," to death while other dogs watched. Van Pelt received the maximum sentence of five years for aggravated cruelty to animals, with the first three years to be served in prison followed by two years on probation, plus a \$1,000 fine, \$761.92 in restitution to his estranged wife, mandatory psychological evaluation, and a ban from owning or being in the presence of any domesticated animal.



Charles Van Pelt

Schwartz said Van Pelt had been previously charged with sexual assault against a developmentally challenged victim in Alabama and had exhibited emotionally abusive and manipulative behavior toward his wife and her pets before he critically injured the 17-pound dog. Van Pelt had remarked to his wife that he could not wait for the dog to die; told her once he had kicked the dog "like a football" and he had hit the pet with a water bottle; and often commented to his wife and others that she loved the dogs more than him. "Hopefully we have intervened with Mr. Van Pelt before he starts acting out against humans, and this sentence will interrupt any future behavior in that regard," said Schwartz.

Florida Man Accused of Sexually Molesting Children and Bird

A Miramar, Fla. man is facing four felony charges of molesting three children amid allegations that he also committed a "sex act on a bird." [CBS Miami](#) reported that three juvenile victims told their older brother and father that Angel Giovanni Nazario, 26, sexually assaulted them in 2016 and 2017 in his house while his mother babysat them after school. The arrest report said Nazario would expose himself and have the children touch him and that one victim told police that Nazario also committed a sexual act on a bird. Nazario reportedly gave the children video games in return.



Angel Nazario

Police Find Abused Elderly Woman and 35 Animals in Stolen U-Haul

A New Hampshire man who reportedly failed to pay for or return a U-Haul truck for over a month was arrested in New Port Richey, Fla. where police officers allegedly found 35 cats, two dogs and an injured elderly woman in the stolen truck. The Pasco County Sheriff's Office reported that Steven Martel, 36, was charged with felony negligence of an elderly or disabled person, felony theft, and 35 misdemeanor counts of cruelty to animals. During the arrest, Martel allegedly told officers he was operating an unlicensed animal shelter in the back of the U-Haul, [WMTV](#) reported. Police said the animals were living in extremely poor conditions with urine-stained fur and paws. The woman was taken to a hospital after officers saw large open sores on both of her legs.



Steven Martel

Ex-con Charged with Animal Cruelty for Allegedly Slamming Cat to the Ground

A man with a history of a murder conviction and other offenses was charged with animal cruelty after a doorbell camera allegedly caught Christopher Pozzi, 51, of West Deptford, N.J., slamming a cat to the ground multiple times and throwing it in a dumpster. [KYW-TV](#) reported that the incident occurred outside Taylor Olive's apartment, who was concerned when she saw droplets of blood. Miraculously, the cat, named "Eileen," survived although her jaw was broken in two places. Department of Corrections officials said Pozzi spent nearly 20 years in jail in Florida after pleading guilty to second-degree murder and has a number of past charges in New Jersey.



Christopher Pozzi



Woman Charged with Child Abuse Had Been Charged with Animal Cruelty One Month Earlier

A Boynton Beach, Fla. woman who had bonded out of jail on two animal cruelty charges one month earlier has been charged with child abuse for allegedly hitting a child with a bottle and punching her. [CBS-12 News](#) reported that Joanne Maxis, 42, got into an altercation with the unnamed victim over a cell phone, which the victim said she needed to be able to call her probation officer. A physical fight ensued resulting in the victim breaking free and running naked to someone else's car. Maxis had been booked on July 25 when an anonymous caller reported four emaciated pit bulls foraging for food. Officers found a feces-encrusted dog crate and a putrid stench of feces and urine permeating the area. The dogs were taken to an animal shelter where they rapidly gained weight.

12-Year-Old Girl Dies, Father Hospitalized After Suspected Murder-Suicide plot

In our [September LINK-Letter](#), we reported on an academic study of "peticide" – family pets killed as collateral damage in murder/suicide plots. From Weatherford, Texas comes the latest, and perhaps most bizarre such case we've encountered, in which a 12-year-old girl apparently killed herself after shooting her father. The [Weatherford Democrat](#) reported that the unnamed girl had plotted for weeks to murder her family as well as their pets, and then planned to run away to Georgia with another 12-year-old girl from Lufkin, Texas. The other girl, who also had plans to murder her father but did not go through with it, was charged with criminal conspiracy. The father, 38 suffered a gunshot wound to the abdomen and was hospitalized.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family



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.
Denver, Colo.

Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

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

Steve Dale

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author
Chicago, Ill

The Hon. Rosa C. Figarola

Retired Circuit Probate Judge, 11th Judicial Circuit
Miami, Fla.

Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

(ALTERNATE)
Senior Director of Research,
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research
Woodstock, Ga.

Joey Orduna Hastings

CEO, National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
Reno, Nev.

Helen Holmquist-Johnson, MSW, Ph.D.

Director, Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC)
Colorado State University School of Social Work
Ft. Collins, Colo.

Kendall Houlihan

Assistant Director, Animal Welfare Division
American Veterinary Medical Association
Schaumburg, Ill.

Mark Kumpf, CAWA

Director, Detroit Animal Care & Control
Detroit, Mich.

Ann Laatsch, J.D.

Justice System Coordinator
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life
Milwaukee, Wisc.

Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Consultant, ASPCA
Falls Church, Va.

Paul Needham

Chair, Education Committee,
National Adult Protective Services Association
Shawnee, Okla..

Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.

Director, Research
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research
Chicago, Ill

Allie Phillips, J.D.

Director, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)
Lansing, Mich.

Gale Rasin, J.D.

Retired Associate Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court,
Chestertown, Md.

Chelsea Rider, J.D.

Director, Professional Development & Outreach
National Sheriffs' Association
Dallas, Texas

The Hon. John J. Romero, Jr.

Retired District Judge, Children's Court Division
2nd Judicial District, Albuquerque, N. Mex.

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

President, Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC
Veterinary Services Director, Div. of Animal Care & Control
Boston, Mass.

John Thompson

Executive Vice President
Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association
Alexandria, Va.

Kathleen Wood

Staff Attorney, Criminal Justice Program
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Portland, Ore.