



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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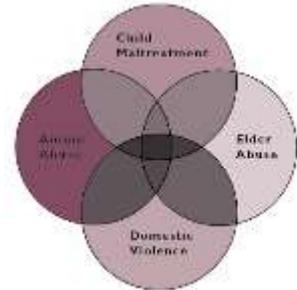
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Indiana Social Workers Learn the Significance of Cross-Reporting

The Link message and the importance of cross-reporting animal and human abuse was spread to Indiana and beyond through a day-long webinar designed for Indiana social workers. The [Animal Welfare Institute](#), funded by the Winley Foundation, staged Safer Together: Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services. Social workers were eligible for CE credits through the Indiana chapter of NASW.

AWI State Government Affairs Representative Vicki Deisner described the provisions of Indiana's 2018 law, SEA 431, which permits Adult Protective Services (APS) and Department of Child Services (DCS) personnel to confidentially report suspected animal abuse with immunity from civil and criminal liability. It includes all vertebrate animals, such as horses in rural areas, and not just companion animals. Cross-reporting animal, domestic, child, and elder abuse is especially important in the wake of the pandemic which saw domestic violence fatality rates increase in Indiana and elsewhere. Concurrently, many animal shelters, especially in rural areas, saw increases in animal intakes, many of which were victims of domestic violence, she said. "Because of The Link, when you help an animal you often help save the rest of the family."



Vicki Deisner

Deisner noted that Indiana has already added additional tools to address family violence with the passage of laws establishing pet protection orders, defining coercive-control animal abuse as felony-level acts of domestic violence, and banning bestiality. "However, animal abuse needs to be reported to utilize these legal tools," she said. SEA 431 is another such tool that was enacted on the premise that reporting abuse leads to safety and stability.

She described many of the telltale physical and environmental signs of suspected animal abuse and neglect, and the mechanisms by which Indiana APS and DCS workers can report. "Concern for safety of the pets is a true barrier to seeking safe shelter and a valid concern for victims of domestic violence," she said. "Pets are often used to lure or force victims back to their abuser."

IMPLEMENTING THE LINK IN INDIANA CROSS-REPORTING



Phil Arkow

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow presented the keynote address, “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycle of Family Violence by Preventing and Cross-Reporting Animal Abuse.” He emphasized the importance of cross-reporting in a state like Indiana where cats and dogs outnumber children and where two unique statutes define intimidating animal cruelty in a domestic violence scenario as felony-level cruelty and a domestic violence crime. He provided lengthy lists of implementation ideas for social workers and advocates for children, elders and domestic violence survivors regarding how they can introduce Link concepts into their work.

Arkow also presented the webinar wrap-up, “Creating Enhanced Collaboratives Locally,” with a step-by-step guide to establishing and sustaining community Link coalitions with ideas from the National Link Coalition’s [Toolkit](#) for creating such collaboratives.

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Hannah Fisher, Director of Animal Welfare Operations for the Indiana State [Board of Animal Health](#), described animal abuse and human violence from humane law enforcement’s perspective. Fisher, a former animal control chief in the Boone County Sheriff’s Department, said a lot of her prior work involved working with child and elder abuse, domestic violence, and traditional law enforcement agencies. “We all really need to interface more,” she said.



Hannah Fisher

Fisher described the “silo” effect of animal welfare, law enforcement, child and elder protection, and domestic violence agencies. “Everyone staying in their own lanes has done more harm than good,” she said. “There are times when people should stay in their own lanes but when it comes to victimization nothing could be farther from the truth.”

She showed an example of Andrew Campbell’s maps depicting significant geospatial overlaps of domestic violence and animal control cases. “We know there’s an overlap, there’s a connection, and there’s no denying. So why are we still staying in our silos?”

Fisher noted how one type of investigation often opens the door to other issues. Child pornography cases often uncover cases of bestiality; officers serving civil papers discover animal neglect; traffic stops often reveal abused animals in the vehicle; and investigations of animal bites often reveal child neglect. She urged participants to make connections with multidisciplinary agencies in advance. “Breaking down these silos and establishing those relationships is so important,” she said. “There are so many people who can build bridges and build a multidisciplinary effect.”

WHY THE LINK IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILD WELFARE

Sandy Runkle, Director of Programs at [Prevent Child Abuse Indiana](#), described “Why a Greater Understanding of The Link is Important in Child Welfare.” “For us, if you have pet abuse going on in a home where there are children, that is a form of child maltreatment.” While that may not match the legal definition of child maltreatment, PCA-IN sees it as a common-sense statement because the risk of harm to the child goes on.



Sandy Runkle

Because of the emotional connections in families where pets are so vitally important in the home, even the threat of violence toward a pet can be enough to intimidate or coerce an adult or children living in that abusive situation. Abusers can exploit that weakness to wreak psychological harm, she said. Meanwhile, children often model the behaviors they see in their adult role models and consequently may be more likely to be abusive when they get older. Most children who are abused do not grow up to be abusers themselves but it is a risk factor, Runkle advised.

Runkle said it was an eye-opener when a study in Boone County revealed that 40% of alleged animal cruelty perpetrators were juveniles as young as 8 years old. Other research has found that children in homes marked by domestic violence are 15 times more likely to be victims of maltreatment themselves. She encouraged cross-training for animal control officers in Indiana, where everyone is already a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse, and for DCS staff to learn about animal abuse. “We desperately need cross-training around this issue,” she said,

EXPLORING RISKS FOR CHILDREN AND PETS IN ABUSIVE HOMES



Indianapolis-based researcher [Andrew M. Campbell](#) detailed the intense emotional bonds children have with their pets and how harm or threats to pets by abusers – especially in the supposed safety of the child’s home and in scenarios where domestic violence is also present – are magnified.

Andrew M. Campbell

Presenting “Stuck in the Middle with You: Shared Risks for Children and Pets in Abusive Homes,” Campbell shared his personal experiences as a survivor of abuse and how his dog, “Shelby,” helped him survive. Pets may be a child’s only source for protection, comfort, friendship, a sense of purpose, acceptance, stability, hope, and entertainment and laughter. “They are important for emotional health and well-being,” he said. “They can get you through some pretty dark days. Because we outlive our pets, they’re not a permanent fix but they can be life-saving support.”

Pets are often targeted by domestic violence abusers because they represent everything that the abuser is not. “Abusers work to isolate you, to make you feel hopeless and helpless and that you’re unloved,” he said. “Pets work in the opposite direction, showing you that you are loved and that someone cares. That puts them at odds with perpetrators and makes them targets.”

He described the increased risks to children and animals in homes where domestic violence is prevalent, especially when the abuser is thinking of ending the relationship. Children experience physical injury as collateral damage, and emotional harm; between 33%-70% of children in these scenarios experience sexual abuse. Children are always much more aware of the violent family dynamics than their caregivers realize, he noted.

Campbell’s current research indicates that a review of reports for dog bite incidents often reveals that within three years of that incident domestic violence was also reported at the same address.

Campbell called it a “grave oversight” that although most people consider pets to be members of the family they are largely excluded from social services agencies’ family planning programs. A gap in services exists when domestic violence shelters exclude pets. “It makes no sense to ask people to leave a family member behind. It’s a package deal.”

THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

A panel discussion on the “Benefits of Positive Collaborative in Lafayette, Ind.” described the work of the Tippecanoe County Prosecutor’s Animal Advisory Board. The collaborative, launched in 2016, includes all local police departments, city and county animal control, the prosecutor’s office, the Purdue University College of Veterinary medicine, local practitioners, and animal shelters and rescue organizations. The Adult Protective Services Unit, which has found that almost 50% of cases of endangered or exploited animals have also uncovered animals in need, will be joining shortly. The group is trying to recruit social services partners.



Pat Harrington

Prosecutor Patrick Harrington noted that his office files charges and tracks some 15-20 cases per year involving both domestic violence and animal abuse. The Advisory Board resulted from a horrific animal hoarding case involving an individual with dementia, so there was already a social services connection. The 70 animals that were seized were sent to animal shelters across the country, resulting in much of the case’s evidence being lost.

The prosecutor’s office worked with the other agencies to build on each other’s strengths, to have multi-disciplinary peer reviews of serious cases, to educate the community on animal and social services issues, to advance legislation, and to strengthen the link between animal and human services agencies in addressing abuse.

Social services and animal control agencies can gain access to residences without the search warrants that law enforcement agencies require, so they can serve as additional eyes and ears in the community, Harrington said. He favors enacting mandatory cross-reporting as long as it includes mandatory cross-training.

“The Link is so obvious it can’t be ignored by prosecutors,” he said. “In our community through the collaboration we are working very hard to link this all together.” The more that multiple disciplines work on this with a unified voice, the bigger impact it has with legislators to show that it is a serious issue, he said. And all it takes is one idea to germinate a successful program.



Sharon Dull

Sharon Dull, of the Humane Society for Greater Lafayette, encouraged social workers who enter clients’ homes to specifically ask to see any animals and not have them sequestered; if they see issues or classic signs of animal abuse they need to be investigated. “It’s such a unique opportunity to see what’s going on in the household,” she said.

Lafayette Police Dept. Chief Animal Control Officer John Klumpe noted that as one of the responders “on the ground,” he sees Link cases all the time, and he admitted he is not an expert on elder or child abuse. “When my expertise runs out it requires other specialized groups of people. But it doesn’t require specialized people to see that something is wrong. When our gut instinct says something doesn’t seem right, we have connections with DCS and APS and we have no issue with calling them,” he said. “It’s a good collaboration.

“They don’t know exactly what they’re looking at and I don’t know exactly what I’m seeing from the animal side. But as a human being you know that something’s wrong.”

Klumpe gave participants a how-to primer on signs of animal cruelty and neglect and how to report it. He also encouraged legislators to enact laws mandating reporting of suspected animal abuse by human services workers. “There’s absolutely no reason why there shouldn’t be mandatory reporting already,” he said. “It’s one of those situations of when you see something say something.”



John Klumpe

Researchers Propose Including Human-Animal Interactions in Knowledge and Practice

With an increasing number of social work studies addressing the incorporation of animal presence in practice and improved understanding of the social support and therapeutic components that pets can provide, two researchers have presented a step-by-step approach for including knowledge and practice of human-animal interactions in teaching Yalom's principles and therapeutic factors of group therapy to social work students.



Alaina Rusu, left, & Rebecca Davis

Alina Simona Rusu and Rebecca Davis acknowledge that while designing and implementing a new interdisciplinary curriculum can be time-consuming, integrating human-animal interaction components in existing curricula can be efficient. Infusing research-informed examples and theories supporting the beneficial effects of human-animal interactions can augment the interdisciplinary understanding of Yalom's primary factors in the therapeutic process, such as: instillation of hope; corrective recapitulation of the primary family group; development of socializing techniques; imitative behavior; interpersonal learning; and group cohesion. They emphasize the added value of having animals in group therapy settings from the perspective of the dynamic of interspecific animal-handler-group social networks.

-- Rusu, A.S., & Davis, R. (2022, Oct. 12). *Interdisciplinary approach of Yalom’s group therapy factors: A theoretical model for including animal presence in social work education and practice.* *Frontiers in Veterinary Science.* <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.1024355>

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For Additional Information

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



New Social Work Textbook Addresses The Link

The Link between animal abuse and human violence – and its implications and applications for social workers – is featured in a new textbook on veterinary social work. *The Comprehensive Guide to Interdisciplinary Veterinary Social Work*, edited by Sana Loue and Pamela Linden, focuses on human and animal violence, animal-related grief, compassion fatigue, and conflict management. It features interdisciplinary authorship and content. Various chapters provide strategies for entry into the field and propose solutions to gaps in educational, legal, and policy contexts.

Unlike works that focus primarily the micro level, such as animal-assisted interventions, this volume is unique in its focus on issues arising at the micro, macro, and mezzo levels, encompassing human-animal issues and interactions at the level of individuals and family, groups, institutions, and communities. Accordingly, this comprehensive guide addresses the need to better prepare practitioners to work in interdisciplinary environments, whether in the context of theory, research, practice, or advocacy.

One chapter, “The LINK: Violence Toward People and Animals,” is specifically dedicated to the topic. The Link is referenced in many of the other 15 chapters in the book, which is divided into five primary sections: foundations of veterinary social work; the practice of veterinary social work; veterinary social work and the veterinary setting; veterinary social work education; and looking to the future.

-- Friedman, S.H., Sorrentino, R.M., Allgire, J., & Friedman, J.B. (2022). *The LINK: Violence toward people and animals*. In S. Loue & P. Linden (Eds.). *The Comprehensive Guide to Interdisciplinary Veterinary Social Work*, (pp. 91-106). Springer.

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK



Zidenberg (left) and Olver

Study Identifies Four Subscales of Zoophilia

Sexual interest in animals (zoophilia) is a scant investigated topic owing partially to several difficulties. Previous attempts to categorize zoophilia into classification systems require extensive clinical interviews and psychometric testing and lack clarity on how furryism (interest in anthropomorphized animals) may be related to zoophilia.

With no current validated psychometric measures of zoophilia, individuals with a sexual interest in animals are a challenging population to research and may be under-detected in clinical settings.

This study measured and correlated sexual attraction to animals through developing and refining psychometric and visual stimulus measures of animal sexual interest among 1,228 respondents (72% zoophilic and 35% furies; 67% men and 22.9% women) recruited from the online community.

The results indicated that a Sexual Interest in Animals-Self-Report (SIA-SR) scale had four distinct subscales with excellent discrimination for self-reported zoophilia. Moreover, endorsement of sexual interest in horses and dogs from visual stimuli was most common among the individuals in the sample, while dog and horse sexual and romantic attractiveness ratings also had the largest and most consistent associations with SIA-SR scores and self-reported zoophilia. The results contribute to a greater understanding of the sexual interest patterns for persons with zoophilia and have implications for theory, future research, and clinical practice.

-- Zidenberg, A.M., & Olver, M.E. (2022, Oct. 3). *Measurement and correlates of zoophilic interest in an online community sample*. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. doi: 10.1007/s10508-022-02429-x.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK Delaware Enacts “Boyfriend Loophole” Law That Also Includes Animal Sexual Abuse

The State of Delaware closed a loophole in its domestic violence protection law, often referred to as the “boyfriend loophole,” when Gov. John Carney signed HS1 for HB 264 into law on Oct. 11. The new law allows 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.



Gov. John Carney

The new sexual violence protection order is available only for victims lacking a family or dating relationship with the perpetrator, as they can already request a more traditional protection from abuse order.

Researcher Calls for Link Legislation in South Africa

Despite decades of research on how The Link details how companion animals and children can be used by perpetrators as weapons of coercion against women, forcing women to comply with the perpetrators’ desires in return for the safety of their companion animals or children, South African domestic violence law does not acknowledge companion animals as victims of violence in the home. A law degree thesis by a researcher at the University of the Witwatersrand argues that addressing this serious omission can help protect the individual companion animal and other human victims of violence in the home.



Sheena Swemmer

Sheena Swemmer, an attorney and head of gender justice programs at the university, advances what she calls a “Ubuntu/Feminist” philosophical lens (Ubuntu is a Bantu word used in South Africa to represent humanity toward others) which recognizes the value of companion animals and the familial relationships they share in the home. It provides an ethical basis for the proposed positive duty that individuals, communities and the state have towards companion animals. She describes multiple motivations for and results of domestic violence, child maltreatment and animal abuse, and compares laws in Arkansas and the Australian State of Victoria. She proposes that South Africa enact regulations that create an integrated response to violence in the home involving police, social development agencies and SPCAs, and cross-reporting among agencies.

-- Swemmer, S. (2022, October). [An Ubuntu/Feminist approach to the inclusion of companion animals in South African domestic violence law. \[Thesis for Doctorate in Human Rights Law\]. DOI: 10.13140/RG2.2.24683.62249](#)

ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK

Study Identifies Pet Care and Abuse Issues Among Elder Abuse Cases

The findings of a new study are adding to the limited evidence that perpetrators of elder abuse may use their victims' pets as a tool to manipulate and exert control over their victims. Jessica Bibbo, Research Scientist at the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging's Center for Research and Education in Cleveland, Ohio, and her colleagues encountered several examples of acts or threats of physical abuse on a companion animal to control a person, further substantiating earlier findings in the literature on domestic and interpersonal violence.



Jessica Bibbo

Although pets often factor in older adults' health behaviors and decisions, the degree to which issues related to pet ownership are encountered or addressed by professionals working with this population remains unknown. The aim of this study was to identify specific issues stemming from pet ownership professionals had encountered in their work with older adults, people living with dementia, and care partners.

While the study identified 12 particular issues, including inadequate care of pets and housing transition needs for people living with dementia, animal hoarding and people refusing care due to their pet, four participants described abuse that occurred to either the older adult or the pet. Two respondents described the pet being abused in order to inflict abuse on the older adult (e.g., "Sometimes in abusive situations, the individual that is exploiting the older adult will use the pet as a means of controlling the older adults. They have threatened to take the pet away or harm the pet."). One participant stated a person living with dementia had abused their own animal. Whether the abuse was intentional or unintentional could not be determined from the comment ("Person living with dementia neglecting and abusing a 17 y/o dog. not walking, kicking, pushing down, dragging on leash, and not cleaning urine/feces in the home").

The study underscored how the health and wellbeing of people and their pets are Linked. The results provided strong evidence that healthcare and social services professionals do encounter issues related to pet ownership. Including issues stemming from pet ownership into procedures, policies and programs is likely to have positive impacts on those served by and working in the geriatric workforce, they recommended.

"The abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults is a recognized public health crisis with critical implications for people's health and safety," they wrote. "Understanding how older adults' pets are exploited in these predatory and pernicious acts can help protect the welfare and wellbeing of older adults and their pets."

-- Bibbo J., Johnson, J., Drost, J.C., Sanders, M., & Nicolay, S. (2022) Pet ownership issues encountered by geriatric professionals: Preliminary findings from an interdisciplinary sample. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13:920559. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.920559

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK Study Describes Training and Responses to Animal Sexual Abuse



From left: Zidenberg, Sparks & Olver

While there is increasing training in veterinary forensics and diagnosing and responding to suspected animal abuse, practitioners' familiarity and comfort with responding to suspected animal sexual abuse appears to be much more limited. That is the premise of a research study (See the [August 2020 LINK-Letter](#)) which surveyed 88 American and Canadian veterinarians, technicians and nurses.

Results indicated that levels of knowledge and training were much lower for sexual than non-sexual animal abuse. Professionals also responded punitively toward individuals who have committed animal sexual abuse and supported long prison sentences and registries for offenders. Veterinary medical professionals were supportive of mandatory reporting of all types of abuse but did not feel prepared to testify in these cases should they go to court.

While likening veterinarians to pediatricians who may be the first professionals to recognize sexual abuse in their patients, the researchers noted that major deficits in preparatory and continuing education training on abuse have been reported in the United States, Australasia, and South America. 86.5% of respondents reported not having received any training on animal sexual abuse and 84% indicated that they had not received any information on animal sexual abuse reporting requirements for their jurisdiction. 86.3% of participants indicated that they would like to receive more information about the subject and the implications for their practice. Fewer than one-third and one-fifth of respondents reported handling a suspected or confirmed case of animal sexual abuse, respectively.

With respect to legal systems' responses to animal sexual abuse, therapy and incarceration were the most frequently endorsed options. 77.3% of participants agreed that individuals who commit acts of animal sexual abuse should be put in prison, with an average sentence length recommendation of 12.70 years. An even larger majority (79.2%) felt that the current criminal justice response to these crimes is too lenient. 97% felt that individuals who commit sexual offenses against animals should be barred from owning a pet or from working with animals.

The authors noted the ever-present ethical tension between whether the primary responsibility is to the animal patient that they are seeing or the human client who is paying for the service. "Therefore, veterinary medical professionals may face a conflict of interest in reporting their attitudes as they are paid directly or indirectly by the owners of the animals who may also be the perpetrators of the abuse," they commented.

"Results suggest that a lack of training may be limiting the amount of animal sexual abuse that is being reported," they concluded, adding that practitioners' willingness to learn more about animal sexual abuse and to support mandated reporting is a promising finding in veterinarians' taking a front-line stance against bestiality. "These results have implications for practice as they indicate that veterinary medical professionals are not receiving enough training on abuse – particularly animal sexual abuse – which could put their patients at risk of continued harm."

-- Zidenberg, A.M., Sparks, B., & Olver, M. (2022). A survey of veterinary medical professionals' knowledge, attitudes, and experiences with animal sexual abuse. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*. DOI: [10.1080/10888705.2022.2131430](https://doi.org/10.1080/10888705.2022.2131430)

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

California Extends Statute of Limitations on Mandated Reports

A new law in California extends the statute of limitations under which an individual who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect, including animal control officers, humane officers, and veterinarians and technicians, can be prosecuted for failing to report such allegations. **AB 2274**, which was signed into law on Sept. 27, allows 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.

California defines 49 categories of mandated reporters who are required to report whenever they, in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment, have knowledge of or observe a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. Failure by a mandated reporter to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect is a misdemeanor. Provisions of the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act generally required prosecution of a misdemeanor to commence within one year after commission of the offense.

The new law extends the statute of limitations for failure to report from one year to no later than four years after the commission of the offense. The bill was signed into law by the Governor on Aug. 30.



Blanca Rubio

The rationale for the bill, introduced by Assembly Member Blanca Rubio (D – Eastern San Gabriel Valley) was an issue with the one-year requirement to report. If a mandated reporter failed to protect a child by failing to report, and one year passed, the law was no longer enforceable. “The problem with this approach is that several cases have occurred where a child has been the victim of physical abuse or neglect and a mandated reporter was made aware of this, but for a variety of reasons, did not report this abuse to authorities. This lapse in time, sometimes months or years, creates a very difficult prosecution of the perpetrator due to lost evidence, and exposes the vulnerable child to an egregious situation of becoming an ongoing victim of preventable physical abuse or neglect,” noted the San Diego District Attorney’s Office, one of numerous law enforcement and prosecution agencies that endorsed the legislation.

“Many organizations ask their staff and employees to report suspected child abuse ‘up the chain’ as opposed to going to law enforcement and/or CWS. Doing both is absolutely acceptable under the law, but oftentimes, law enforcement and/or CWS are never notified, and the abuse or suspicion of abuse is kept in-house, where no independent investigation takes place, and those who do investigate internally do so using standards that are not consistent with the mandating reporting laws,” they added.

The new law does not increase the penalty of the “failure to report” crime; rather, it extends the statute of limitations to ensure mandated reporters take this legal responsibility seriously, specifically in cases of severe neglect. Mandated reporters are aware of their obligations, but because there is little to no enforcement many organizations develop a sense that there are no consequences or there exists a culture wherein the mandated reporting rules can be bent and altered by the specific organization.

“The bill helps ensure that mandated reporters take their roles seriously and can be held accountable for failing to protect the children they are trusted to supervise,” said Rubio.

Minnesota Child Protection Advocates Learn About The Link

Four prominent national and local authorities helped bring the Link message to Minnesota on Oct. 14 through Safe Passage for Children's [Inaugural Conference on Family Violence](#). All the presenters shared this message: "If one member of the family is being harmed the others are probably being harmed too."



SAFE PASSAGE
for Children of Minnesota

"Pets, which most people consider part of the family, play a central role in family violence," said Safe Passage Executive Director Rich Gehrman. "Sexual predators may tell children that if they reveal the abuse the perpetrator will kill their pet. Domestic violence offenders often threaten or kill pets to let the victim know 'you could be next.'"

"Animal abuse awareness should have a prominent role in social work training and practice because, among other benefits, when social workers ask children about their pets, it lowers their defenses and builds trust. Also, animal abuse is often the first form of family violence to be noticed by outsiders, which creates an opportunity to address child and domestic abuse earlier," he added.

The plenary session was led by Andrew Campbell, who shared his most recent research and publications focusing on the intertwined nature of child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and animal abuse. He discussed his work on animal abuse as an indicator of IPV and child maltreatment, and as a signal of risk to first responders. He promoted his latest book "Not Without My Pet", and the healing role that animals play in mitigating the impact of family violence.

Campbell led one of five breakout sessions, discussing the lingering impact of the COVID pandemic on child maltreatment and IPV. Another breakout session was conducted by Victor Vieth, Director of Education and Research at the [Zero Abuse Project](#) and noted child welfare author. He discussed the role of faith communities in identifying and addressing family violence.

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow introduced participants to the organization's 25 years of research and activism on the relationship among various forms of family violence with his presentation: "Connecting the Dots: Animal Abuse as a Risk Factor for Child Abuse and Other Family Violence."

Charles Hemeck, Executive Director of [AnnaMarie's Alliance](#) in St. Cloud, Minn., described how pet-friendly policies and space helps victims decide whether to remove themselves and their children from an abusive relationship. Anna Marie's Alliance recently renovated their domestic violence shelter which now includes space for sheltering pets.

Videos of the presentations are available on the Safe Passage conference website hyperlinked above.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK



Udi Zaken

Link Video Spotlights Kentucky Cases

A dramatic new 13-minute-long video is bringing attention to The Link between animal, child, domestic, and elder abuse by spotlighting two cases in Kentucky. Produced and directed by filmmaker and former psychiatrist Udi Zaken, “The Link,” [now available on Vimeo](#), references numerous Link studies over the past 35 years, the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s rankings which at the time described Kentucky as the worst state or territory in which to be an animal, and federal statistics giving the state the worst per-capita rate in the nation for child abuse cases three years in a row.

“Having practiced psychiatry for more than twenty years, I’m very well aware of the deep rooted mental health issues that a person who abuses/neglects or tortures an animal might suffer from and I think a great disservice that is done to all abuser and victims, animals/people, when we ignore crimes committed against animals,” says Zaken.

The video, which made its debut in Louisville on Nov. 5, describes the case of “Lad,” a collie that was shot in 2014 by his owner, Matthew Beauchamp, 28, and had to have his lower jaw amputated. Despite air ambulance service to get Lad to the University of California – Davis College of Veterinary Medicine, the dog succumbed to his injuries four months later. Beauchamp entered an “Alford Plea” – a process where the defendant does not admit guilt but concedes there is enough evidence to convict him – and got three years’ probation. The Daviess County prosecutor is heard laughing that because Kentucky law allows an owner to put his own suffering dog out of its misery, he did his job and avoided a media spectacle of outside animal activists flooding his courtroom.

“There’s no innocence involved in maiming a dog and walking away, regardless of the intent of why they did it,” says Joye Keeley, retired Louisville Metro Police Lieutenant and head of the Kentucky Link Coalition. Psychiatric evaluations for animal abusers, which might indicate a risk of future violence, are not mandatory in Kentucky.



Joye Keeley

The video also depicts the story of Kaitlyn Higgins, who shot and killed her 10-year-old son, Kyon, after trying to cut out his tongue. Although she had no criminal record, she had been visited by Louisville Metro Animal Services at least 25 times and cited three times for animal neglect. “Neighbors were interviewed by the media and reported that they should have known how she was treating her children by how she treated her dogs,” says Keeley.

In the video, Thom Ham, with The Arrow Fund, a Louisville-based animal rescue and rehabilitation program, appeals to viewers to talk to their state legislators that it’s not just an animal. “Talk to them about your concerns and about the connections between the animal abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, and spouse abuse. Tell them that we’ve got to stop this at the earliest stages,” he says.

A new ordinance enacted in Louisville in 2021 ([See the December 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) mandates law enforcement and animal services officers receive training on The Link and the creation of policies and procedures for cross-reporting between the two agencies. Keeley urges responding officers to keep The Link in focus so it becomes automatic for a police or animal control officer when they’re responding to a neglected dog chained up out back for them to see what else is going on inside the house. “There may be abuse and neglect going on inside.”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

Animal/Human Violence Link Spotlighthed at Prosecutors' Conference



The Link between animal abuse and human violence and its implications for prosecuting animal cruelty cases will be featured prominently at the [11th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#), Dec. 13-15 in Nashville, Tenn. The

conference is organized by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, in partnership with the [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#).

Among the 21 plenaries and breakout sessions scheduled over the 2-¹/₂ day conference are:

- **Understanding the Dynamics of Pet Abuse and Domestic Violence**, presented by Maya Gupta, Ph.D., Senior Director of Applied Research, ASPCA, & Mary Lou Randour, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, Animals & Family Violence, Animal Welfare Institute.
- **Police and Prosecutors Working Together**, presented by Nicoletta Caferri, Chief, Animal Cruelty Prosecutions Unit, Queens County N.Y. District Attorney's Office, & Lt. Adrian Ashby, Commanding Officer, Animal Cruelty Investigation Squad, New York Police Department.
- **Who Watched the Watchers**, presented by Gillian Deegan, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, Botetourt County Va. Commonwealth Attorney's Office, & Mark Kumpf, Director, Detroit Animal Care and Control.
- **Legislative Roundtable**, led by Nancy Blaney, Director of Government Affairs, Animal Welfare Institute, & Kathleen Wood, Staff Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund.
- **Animal Fighting: Painting the Picture**, presented by Michelle Welch, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Director of the Animal Law Unit, & Amy Taylor, Animal Law Unit Investigator, Virginia Attorney General's Office.
- **Anticipating the Defense**, presented by Diane Balkin, retired Chief Deputy District Attorney, Denver, Colo.
- **Paraphilia: A Case Study in Animal Crushing**, presented by Jeremy Hoffman, Detective, Fairfax County Va. Police Department.
- **In the Shadows: Elder Abuse and Animal Abuse**, presented by Jill Hollander, Chief Senior District Attorney, Atlanta Ga. Judicial Circuit.

The goal of the conference is to provide prosecutors, law enforcement and allied professionals with the requisite skills to strengthen links between the criminal justice system and the community by protecting the most vulnerable victims and to enhance prosecutors' ability to successfully identify and prosecute animal cruelty and animal fighting cases. The conference is intended for prosecutors, law enforcement and animal control officers, veterinarians, and related disciplines involved in the prosecution of animal cruelty crimes.

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 **156 bills** introduced in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress – **17 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 was signed into law on Oct. 11. The new law allows 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 is available only for victims lacking a family or dating relationship with the perpetrator, as they can already request a protection from abuse order.



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 “evincing 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 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 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 was signed into law on Sept. 27. The new law changes provisions regarding mandated reporters, which include animal control and humane society officers and veterinarians. Prior law had made the intentional failure to report suspected child abuse or severe neglect a misdemeanor and prosecution of that charge would have had to commence within one year. The new law allows 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 was signed by the Governor on Aug. 30.



California AB 2085 would change existing law, which requires professionals, including animal control and humane society officers, who re 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 individuals mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect to include all adult 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 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 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. It 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-B 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 was tabled in the Senate when the Legislature adjourned. The bill would have required veterinarians to report to local law enforcement agencies when they treat dogs that they believe 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 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-A/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.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

California Woman Charged with Killing Man Who Tried to Run Over Cat



Hannah Star Esser

Hannah Star Esser, 20, of Cypress, Calif., was charged with murder for allegedly killing a man by ramming her car into him after accusing him of trying to run over a cat in the street. The [Associated Press](#) reported that Orange County authorities said Esser was being detailed on \$1 million bail in the death of Victor Anthony Luis, 43, a father of five daughters. Esser and Luis both reportedly got out of their vehicles and following an argument Esser returned to her car, turned around, drove to Luis and hit him. A GoFundMe campaign was started to help pay for Luis’ funeral.

Minnesota Couple Commit “Pesticide” in Murder-Suicide Plan



Steven and Stacy Stearns

In another apparent case of “pesticide” (See the [September 2022 LINK-Letter](#)), a Minnesota husband and wife who were each battling cancer, and their two dogs, were found dead inside their rural home in what the Becker County Sheriff’s office called a murder-suicide. [People Magazine](#) reported that the bodies of Steven Alton Stearns, 45, and Stacy Lynn Stearns, 49, and their two dogs were found inside their home in Detroit Lakes. The couple had just celebrated their 21st wedding anniversary earlier that week. Steven was reportedly suffering from advanced lung cancer and Stacy was suffering from stomach cancer. A close friend said the Stearnses had confided in her about their plans to end their lives and that “they wanted to go together with their dogs.” The couple had no children and considered their dogs to be their kids.

Truck Driver Charged Under Federal “Crush” Video Law

An Ohio truck driver who allegedly created and distributed videos of at least four dogs being sexually assaulted and subjected to bodily injury was charged with a federal violation of creating and distributing “crush” videos. Lucas Russell VanWoert, 25, was arrested after a 51-year-old man in Australia was charged earlier this year with bestiality, aggravated animal cruelty and child exploitation. Multiple videos and photos were found on his devices, which investigators traced to VanWoert, according to court documents. GPS data reportedly connected the videos to a truck stop in Michigan and the videos appear to have been filmed in a semi truck. Court documents said VanWoert admitted to engaging in sex acts, beating and strangling a dog and putting the dog’s body in a dumpster, the [Detroit News](#) reported. VanWoert was originally from Grand Rapids, Mich., and moved to Ohio several months ago. The federal PACT Act (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) passed in 2019 expanded federal law which had made the distribution of “crush” videos illegal to also include the acts of animal cruelty and torture themselves also being illegal. There have only been a handful of prosecutions nationally under the expanded law (*See the [July/August 2022 LINK-Letter](#)*).



Lucas VanWoert



Sara and Samuel Myers

Couple Charged with Child Endangerment in Home with Dogs Kept in Squalid Conditions

An Austintown, Ohio couple were indicted by the Mahoning County grand jury for five counts of alleged child endangerment after a tip from a shopper led police to a feces- and urine-filled home in which three children were living in squalid conditions with matted and emaciated dogs. [WFMJ-TV](#) reported that a shopper outside a Target store jotted down the license number of an SUV in which a young teenage boy appeared to be bruised. The grand jury indicted Samuel John Myers, 31, and his wife Sara Marie Myers, 34, after police said the 13-year-old boy, who appeared to be malnourished and was barefoot, had bruising and scratches on both arms and cuts on his legs. The boy’s mother blamed the bruising on their dog; the tipster said that when she asked about the bruises the mother told the boy to say that the dog did it. The boy told police that his parents don’t intervene when the dog attacks because it was part of his punishment for acting out and stealing food. When police entered the home, they were reportedly hit with the smell of urine and feces throughout the home, including the kitchen and the children’s bedroom. The teen and two younger siblings said six dogs had taken over one of the rooms and that they had to sleep on the couch or with their parents. Police said the dogs were extremely skinny and one dog could not get up off the floor. The children were turned over to a relative and the dogs, plus two cats, were taken to animal welfare agencies. It was not clear if animal cruelty charges would also be filed.

Deputy Charged with Animal Cruelty After Arguing with Then-Girlfriend

A Pasco County, Fla. sheriff’s deputy was arrested on felony animal cruelty charges after allegedly having an argument with his then-girlfriend about issues he had with her cats. [WFTS-TV](#) reported that Tampa police arrested deputy Eric Harris who was upset about the cats going outside of their litter box and jumping on the counters and furniture. Police said that when the girlfriend returned home on Aug. 22 she found 3-year-old “Axel” in his crate with his toenails bloody and broken and unable to stand using his rear legs. Axel died later that day from his injuries which were determined to have resulted from blunt force trauma.



Nathan Kleffner

Colorado Man Charged in Louisiana Attempted Kidnapping and Child/Animal Pornography

A Colorado man who is accused of traveling to Metairie, La. to abduct an 11-year-old girl was charged with two counts of possession of pornography involving a juvenile and two counts of sexual abuse of an animal after investigators allegedly discovered images of a child engaged in sex acts with an animal on his cell phone. The [New Orleans Times-Picayune](#) reported that Jefferson Parish Sheriff's officers re-arrested Nathan Kleffner, 27, of Dacono, Colo., who had been arrested last

January in the attempted kidnapping case. Authorities said the child in the images was not the intended victim in the kidnapping. Authorities said Kleffner reportedly flew to Louisiana to meet with the girl who he met playing an online video game; although she claimed to be 18, Kleffner apparently did not stop communicating with her when he later learned she was only 11. He was accused of having at least 20 video chats with the girl, including one where he revealed his genitals.

Pennsylvania Man Charged with Shooting Ex-Wife's Beagle

Eric Rumbaugh, 51, of Bell Township, Pa., is facing felony charges of aggravated cruelty to animals, simple assault, recklessly endangering another person, harassment, and terroristic threats for allegedly shooting and killing a beagle he and his estranged wife had bought. Court documents said that as Rumbaugh and his ex-wife got into an argument their dog left the house and went into the yard. When she went into the yard to bring the dog back Rumbaugh allegedly raised a rifle and pointed it in the direction of the woman and the dog and told her to move, [WPXI-TV](#) reported. Court documents showed the woman refused to move because she was scared of what he might do to her. The woman went under the deck, and Rumbaugh was on the deck above her when he allegedly fired a round and struck the dog in the back. She then grabbed her belongings and left the house. She told police she later received a text message from Rumbaugh asking if he could bury the dog in a blanket.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NOTE: The pandemic has caused many in-person trainings to be canceled, rescheduled or converted into virtual formats. Click on the underlined hyperlinks for more detailed information.

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. 26 – St. Cloud, Minn. (online): Charles Hempeck and Caylee Gabel of Anna Marie's Alliance will describe how the pet-friendly practices at their domestic violence shelter help victims decide whether to remove themselves and their children from an abusive relationship, in a [webinar](#) for Safe Passage for Children of Minnesota.

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.

Nov. 30 (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Dec. 6 – Kansas City, Mo. (online): [BestyBnB](#) will host a free webinar on “People and Pets: Safe, Connected, Together.”

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

Dec. 18 – Tokyo, Japan (online): Sakiko Yamazaki will present “The Association Between Animal Abuse and Child Abuse: Protecting Children and Animals Comprehensively” in a webinar for the [Animal Literacy Research Institute](#).

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

Jan. 18, 2023 – (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.

Jan. 24, 2023 – Kansas City, Mo. (online): [BestyBnB](#) will host a free webinar on “Safety Planning with Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Pets.”

Feb. 15, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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.

March 8, 2023 – Ithaca, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will speak to students in the [Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#) about practitioners’ ethical responsibilities regarding The Link.

March 15, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

April 19, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

May 9-13, 2023 – Phoenix, Ariz.: The [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#) will hold its 16th Annual Conference.

May 10, 2023 – Alexandria, Va. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots: Animal Abuse’s Links to Other Family Violence in Military and Civilian Families” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [National Victim Assistance Academy](#).

May 17, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 21, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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.

July 19, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Aug. 16, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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.

Sept. 20, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Oct. 18, 2023 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Nov. 15, 2023 – (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

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.