



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



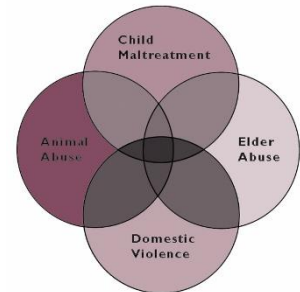
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

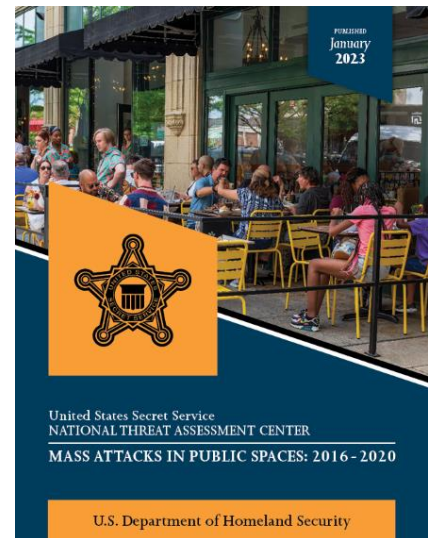
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MASS SHOOTINGS... and THE LINK **Secret Service Report Includes Animal Cruelty** **Histories in Report on Mass Attackers**

A [new report](#) from the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center which analyzed the risk factors for mass attacks and their perpetrators included several references to animal cruelty as a warning sign in a number of mass killers' histories.

While the majority of news coverage concerning the report focused on such findings as nearly half of the individuals had histories of domestic violence and/or misogyny, and half of the mass attacks were motivated by the attacker's perceived personal grievances, animal cruelty nevertheless appears as one of a constellation of concerning behaviors that should have been met with a response.



The study reported that many attackers had histories of physically aggressive or intimidating behaviors, exhibited by physical violence. Included within this category – but not quantified statistically in the report – were acts of cruelty to animals. 38% of attackers had faced prior charges for violent offenses including animal cruelty, domestic violence, aggravated assault, and robbery. **(Editor's Note: Recent data suggest that the percentage of mass shooters with animal cruelty histories is about 10%.)**

The study cited several incidents in which animal cruelty was a cause for concern: in all of these incidents there were multiple other warning behaviors:

- A 40-year-old man, who nine years earlier had pled guilty to aggravated animal cruelty and assault with a deadly weapon for stabbing the family cat and attacking his father, was killed by a security guard after he entered a bar and started attacking people at random with a large knife, killing one and injuring three.
- In 2018, a 19-year-old man killed 17 students and staff and injured another 17 at his former high school following a pattern of aggression that had lasted most of his life, including telling others how he enjoyed killing small animals and trained his dog to attack other animals.

- In 2016, a 14-year-old boy with a history of torturing small animals including birds and frogs opened fire outside his former elementary school, killing one and injuring two others.
- In 2016, a 20-year-old man, who had claimed to an ex-girlfriend whom he had sexually denigrated that he had abused his dog, fatally shot five people at random in a mall department store.

Other key findings included:

- 97% of incidents were carried out by lone perpetrators; 96% were males. 29% were described as withdrawn, anti-social or loners. 36% had a history of bullying or harassing others.
- 13% of attacks occurred on dates that had some meaning for the perpetrator.
- Most attackers had exhibited behavior to family, friends, neighbors, classmates and co-workers which elicited concern and, in many cases, fear for their lives.
- Most attackers used firearms, which were often obtained illegally.
- One-quarter of the attackers subscribed to a belief system involving conspiracies or hateful ideologies including anti-government, anti-Semitic and misogynistic views.
- Many attackers experienced stressful life events, such as family or romantic relationships, personal issues, employment, and legal issues, which were often triggers for the event.
- Over half of the attackers had prior mental health issues including depression, psychotic symptoms and suicidal thoughts.

The five-year study analyzed 173 targeted attacks, killing 513 and injuring 1,234 individuals, that occurred from 2016-2020 in such public spaces as schools, businesses, houses of worship, military bases, and other places, during which three or more people were injured or killed. It examines attackers' bullying behaviors, fixations, substance use and abuse, planning, and employment. By detailing the attackers' backgrounds, motivations and pre-attack behaviors, the report aims to guide prevention efforts. It encourages public safety agencies to review the information and apply it to their own practices for making communities safer.

The study emphasized that while there is no specific profile for the type of person who will commit an attack and that most individuals who exhibit these types of behaviors will not commit acts of targeted violence, the recommendations included:

- Communities must encourage and facilitate bystander reporting and be prepared to respond when reports of concern are received.
- Communities should not wait for a direct and specific threat before taking action.
- Individuals displaying an unusual interest in violent topics, especially past attackers, should elicit concern.
- Businesses should establish workplace violence identification, assessment, intervention, and prevention plans.
- Public safety, school, workplace, and community service professionals should develop strategies for resolving interpersonal grievances.
- Violence-prevention professionals must understand the impact of hateful and violent rhetoric, and of such "final communications" as suicide notes, calling people to say goodbye, and posting manifestos online, while protecting the constitutional right to free speech.

-- U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (2023, January).
Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020. Washington, DC: Author.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK



Sen. Carol Blood

Nebraska Legislature Considers Pet Protection Orders

A bill in the Nebraska Legislature would make Nebraska the 39th state to allow domestic violence victims to file for protection orders. Nebraska **LB 11**, sponsored by Sen. Carol Blood (D – District 3) would allow courts to direct the care, custody and control of household pets and enjoin the respondent from coming into contact with, harming or killing household pets. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

New Mexico Considers Pet Protection Orders, Coercive Animal Abuse as Domestic Violence

New Mexico could become the 40th state to allow pets to be included in domestic violence protection orders – and the 13th state in which animal abuse with the intent to harm or intimidate someone would be defined as a type of domestic abuse – with passage of a bill introduced on Jan. 26. Both provisions protect the human survivors of domestic abuse and their animals by facilitating their escape to safety. The bill is in the Senate Health & Public Affairs Committee.



Sen. Sedillo Lopez

SB 18, sponsored by Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez (D-Albuquerque) would rename the Family Violence Protection Act to become the “Protection Against Abuse and Violence Act” and make other changes to provide clarity and strength to definitions and other provisions. Part of SB 18 is a pair of measures that have been called “Misty’s Law” — that would recognize as well as ensure companion animals can be included in protective orders.

The bill would allow courts, in issuing an order of protection, to “grant to a party the exclusive or shared possession and control of any animal kept, owned or leased by either party or by the minor child or minor children residing in the household of either party. The court may order a party to stay away from the animal and may forbid a party from taking, transferring, concealing, mistreating, harming or disposing of the animal.”

The bill would replace the term “domestic abuse” with “abuse.” The new definition would include “harm or threatened harm to an animal to intimidate, threaten or harass a person.”

Grants Available for Pet Programs in Purple Ribbon Awards

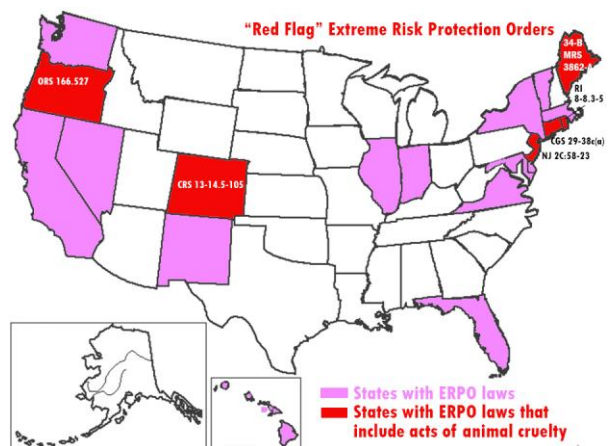
Up to [\\$30,000 in grants are being offered](#) in the annual Purple Ribbon Awards to identify the nation’s Domestic Violence Heroes. Grants are being offered by DomesticShelters.org, a service of [Theresa’s Fund](#), in 32 categories of service, people and programs, including a category for the Outstanding Pet Program.

Nominations for the awards will be accepted up to 3:59 pm ET on Feb. 28. The goal of the awards is to recognize domestic violence advocates, program executives, board members, businesses, survivors, and community support partners. Three Purple Ribbon medallions will be given in each of the 32 categories. All entries will be acknowledged with a certificate of recognition and select entries will receive grants totaling up to \$30,000.



Update: Animal Abuse as a Reason for Extreme Risk Protection Orders

In our [January LINK-Letter](#), we had an extensive article about the growing trend for states to issue “red flag” Extreme Risk Protection Orders against domestic violence offenders that would prohibit the respondent from possessing a firearm due to a suspected immediate and present danger of harming him/herself, an intimate partner, or someone else. At present 20 states allow ERPOs to be issued by courts, and we listed five states where acts of animal cruelty are included among the grounds for issuing an ERPO.



It has come to our attention that we inadvertently omitted a sixth state with similar animal cruelty provisions. In 2019, Maine enacted a law allowing the issuance of ERPOs. It refers to animal abuse as one of the factors for a judge to consider in determining whether a temporary order can be made permanent. 34-B MRS §3862-A(6)(C) reads, in part, “In determining whether there are grounds to extend the initial restrictions, the court shall consider all relevant evidence, including, but not limited to...recent acts of unlawful abuse of animals by the restricted person.”

Other grounds for extending an ERPO include: recent threats or acts of violence; reckless use of a dangerous weapon; histories of the use of physical force; prior custodial or psychiatric hospital confinement; prior protection orders; evidence of stalking behaviors, severe obsession or sexual violence; illegal use of controlled substances; and alcohol or drug abuse.

The other five states that include animal abuse histories in issuing an ERPO are Connecticut, Colorado, New Jersey, Oregon, and Rhode Island. Bills that would have enacted similar provisions were defeated in Arizona, Louisiana and Pennsylvania, and it is not yet known whether they will be re-introduced in the 2023 legislative sessions.

Canadian Volunteers Wanted for Research Study on The Link

The [Animal and Interpersonal Abuse Group](#) (AIPARG) at the University of Windsor in Ontario is conducting a Canadian study on the co-occurrence of animal abuse and intimate partner violence, its impact on help-seeking, and the advantages/disadvantages of various models of pet safekeeping programs.



They are recruiting volunteers to participate in a survey of domestic violence shelter staff, clients, and survivors/victims of gender-based violence who are utilizing non-residential services.

If you are interested in participating or are able to share the call for participants, please [email AIPARG](#) directly for more information. Participants will receive gift cards as a token of AIPARG’s appreciation.

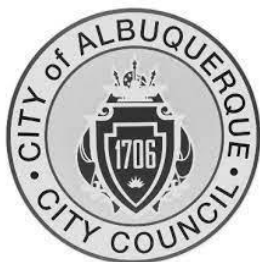


Protocol Being Developed to Prosecute Animal/Domestic Abuse Cases in Mexico City

A new Link initiative is being developed in Mexico City, where the Deputy Attorney for the Environmental Attorney's office is working with the Mexico City prosecutor's office to develop a protocol to act jointly in cases of domestic violence where there is also abuse of animals. Edda V. Fernández Luiselli, Subprocuraduría Ambiental de Protección y Bienestar a los Animales for the environmental attorney's office, tells *The LINK-Letter* she is working with the General Justice Attorney of the Mexico City government to develop and implement the protocol. This is believed to be the first such program of its kind in our southern neighbor.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

Albuquerque's HEART Ordinance Addresses The Link



While much Link-related legislation is enacted at the statewide level, occasionally the Link between animal and human violence is cited in municipal ordinances. Such is the case in Albuquerque, N. Mex., where in 2006 the city enacted the [HEART \(Humane and Ethical Animal Rules and Treatment\)](#) ordinance.

The law is a comprehensive omnibus ordinance addressing everything from animal fighting, pet microchips, and animal noise to care, maintenance, housing, and restraint of mammals and birds on residential properties. The premises of the ordinance – to prevent animal suffering and “the criminal acts of callous individuals” – are based on City Council findings that “the people of Albuquerque should treat animals as more than just lifeless inanimate chattel property and recognizes that the relationship between human beings and animals is a special relationship that improves people's lives and reflects basic humanitarian beliefs.” The law was passed because “the public mind-set toward animals must shift to the more progressive, humane, and compassionate attitude evident in other jurisdictions with stricter animal laws.”

Included in these findings is Sec. 9-2-1-2(K): “The Council further finds that animal abuse has a direct and significant correlation with domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. The Council finds that there are several obvious indicators of animal abuse and neglect that should be much more vigorously investigated and prosecuted by the City in order to help uncover other abuse occurring in the family. In many abuse situations, the victim is not willing to leave behind an animal that will almost certainly become the next victim of abuse. Although domestic violence and emergency shelters provide an invaluable service, they are not able to accept animals. The Albuquerque Animal Care Center is in the position to help with this problem.”

Also of note is a provision that “The Council further finds that judges have a significant role in the disposition of animal cases and respectfully asks our courts to strictly enforce animal cases to the fullest extent of the law, to treat animal abuse as a serious offense, because all types of abuse have a direct correlation and must be unacceptable behavior.”

SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Two recent research studies – one in the U.S., the other in Canada – are exploring the challenges faced by animal care and control workers when animal-related issues need the assistance of social workers and social services personnel working in the human services sectors. By increasing engagement with the community, animal protection and shelter staffs – who have traditionally worked in isolation from the social services fields -- can improve the welfare of animals and people:

One Welfare Model Can Help Animal Shelters to Help Pet Owners



Katie Koralesky, David Fraser, and Janet Rankin

The One Welfare concept, which bridges the commonalities between human and animal health with a recognition of the human-animal bond, has implications for animal shelter and social services workers in addition to medical professionals. However, little research has focused on the actual work that such initiatives involve for animal shelter staff and animal protection officers.

A new Canadian research paper using the One Welfare model suggests opportunities where social workers and other social services personnel can collaborate more effectively with animal shelter staffs to help preserve the benefits that accrue to both people and pets when they have the opportunity to continue to live together.

Meanwhile, although officers and animal shelter staff are increasingly expected to provide support to vulnerable owners, standard procedures and criteria for intervention have not yet evolved; hence the work is largely left to the judgment and ingenuity of personnel. Further complicating their ability to provide such services or referrals, the necessary collaboration between animal welfare workers and human social services staff and social workers is made difficult by the different expectations and different institutional processes governing such activities.

Those are the conclusions of an ethnographic research study of animal protection officers and shelter staffs in British Columbia. In cases where an animal's care was deficient but did not meet the standard for legal intervention, officers used their own ingenuity to provide people with supplies for their animals, refer them to low-cost or free veterinary care, and provide emergency animal boarding. This work was time-consuming and was sometimes done repeatedly without lasting effect and was often constrained by animal owners' limited housing, cognitive decline, mental health, and other factors.

"Collaboration between animal and human social services is bound to be complex," wrote Katie Koralesky and David Fraser, of the University of British Columbia and Janet Rankin of the University of Calgary. "Frontline staff in human social services must follow their own matrix of institutional processes and regulatory texts while supporting people who may be elderly, of low income, disabled, or have mental or physical health problems. Moreover, the interests of the animals can be in competition with the interests of their human owners who also need support."

Such complexities might be resolved, and protocols established, through the work of social workers who are attuned to solving the issues facing compromised people with animals. For instance, social workers can help organize pet food banks, coordinate referrals to social services agencies, organize pro bono or low-cost veterinary care, and assist in finding pet-friendly supportive housing.

Such work is considered “alternative measures,” remedial work intended to avoid activating the legal processes and sanctions of anti-cruelty laws when animals’ situations do not necessarily meet the threshold warranting filing criminal charges or are exacerbated by the owners’ financial or social conditions. “In many cases, alternative measures achieve positive outcomes for the organization and officers. Supporting a person to keep their animal reduces demands on shelters and saves time and financial resources for officers as they do not need to organize the removal of the animal,” they wrote, noting that providing alternative measures can also benefit the animals and their owners.

Officers typically learn about community resources only by word-of-mouth, on-the-job including talking and gaining work experience over time. In the absence of any formal training about community resources and referrals, social workers could enhance protection officers’ existing knowledge about animal rescue organizations by coordinating referral protocols with child protection services, mental health agencies, and other social services in multi-agency collaborations. Such collaborations are already included in the BC SPCA’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

Such interagency collaboration can be of particular value when emergency boarding of animals is needed when owners fall ill, flee from violence, lose housing temporarily, or face other difficulties. It is also valuable when working with animals in low-income communities or homeless populations, and in hoarding cases.

-- Koralesky, K.E., Rankin, J.M., & Fraser, D. (2022). The everyday work of One Welfare in animal sheltering and protection. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9, 430. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01455-3>



Liana Moss, left, and Sloane Hawes

Overcoming Challenges to Community Engagement in Animal Care & Control

In the U.S., researchers at the University of Denver’s Graduate School of Social Work interviewed animal control and field services officers. They reported that while the animal welfare field has made progress on approaches to address access to pet support services over the last five years, there is little to no evidence informing best practices for effective and culturally responsive community engagement on animal cruelty and

neglect issues, despite the fact that effective community engagement strategies are critical to addressing the underlying causes of animal cruelty and neglect. “Because animal cruelty and neglect can be affected by community-specific definitions, practices, and barriers to accessing pet-supportive services, its resolution could benefit from effective community engagement approaches,” they wrote.

There does not appear to be a standard definition of community engagement in the animal control and field services field. Many officers explained that good and effective community engagement primarily consists of officers simply knowing the community they work in and asking for help from the community. Officers frequently noted the importance of building informal relationships and often described “being out in the community” and talking with the community.

However, they described numerous personal and institutional challenges impeding their ability to conduct such engagement. Many of these obstacles might be ameliorated not through law

enforcement, but rather by collaboration with social workers, mental health care providers or survivor advocates to calls involving individuals in crisis. Such strategies can include returning stray and lost animals to their owners, support for community cat colonies, wildlife interactions, cruelty/neglect complaints, dangerous dogs, community events, social media, and pet support services such as pet food pantries, veterinary services, dog houses, and building fences.

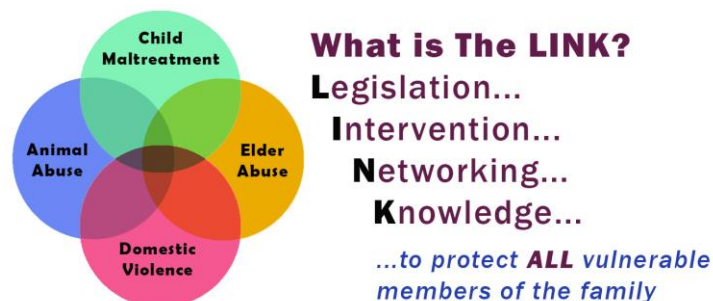
The officers identified many challenges including: verbal hostility; physical harm; mental health challenges; exposure to human and animal harm and neglect; being under-funded, under-resourced and under-valued; a lack of comprehensive, standardized training; and challenges with working with animal welfare advocates, other local organizations, government agencies, and elected officials.

Other challenges included developing and maintaining partnerships with other community-based organizations, which should be another way to improve community engagement. Examples of these partnerships included working with law enforcement to train people on The Link between harm to animals and harm to people, building relationships with key community members who “see everything” in the community, and participating in various community task forces. Some officers conveyed a need for better cooperation and communication across animal welfare and animal control to achieve more unity and to reduce confusion, misinformation, and variation in operations. “They felt that the more they connect, network, and share with other organizations, the better the animal welfare field will be for animals and humans,” they write.

Of particular note, the growing diversity of the U.S. population paired with historic and ongoing social and economic marginalization increasingly calls for nuanced approaches to public safety and well-being, and greater understanding of how community demographics may impact how people view their animals, which the officers may not be fully prepared to offer.

“An effective shift to prevention-focused policing requires a true organizational transformation in the values, mission, training, policies, and performance evaluations of the enforcement agency, and not just the basic procedures for service delivery,” they concluded.

-- Moss, L.R., Hawes, S.M., Connolly, K., Bergstrom, M., O'Reilly, K., & Morris, K.N. (2023). Animal control and field services officers' perspectives on community engagement: A qualitative phenomenology study. *Animals*, 13(1), 68: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13010068>.



Social Work Journal Flags Animal Abuse as Warning Sign of Antisocial Behavior

An article in an Indian social work journal is reporting that animal abuse is one expression of antisocial behavior. Author Tanu Girotra writes that aggression and violence towards people in most cases begin with the abuse of animals. Animal abuse is associated with bullying, behavioral problems, experiences of abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual), and juvenile delinquency. The link between animal abuse and human behavior needs considerable attention and it is critical for social workers to be aware of the associations between cruelty to animals and human behavior.



Tanu Girotra

A fascination with cruelty to animals is a red flag in the backgrounds of many serial killers and rapists. Acts of animal abuse are symptomatic of a deep mental disturbance. Research in psychology and criminology shows that people who commit acts of cruelty on animals do not stop there; many of them move on to their fellow humans. Animal abuse needs to be looked at as a significant indicator of human aggression and violence. People who abuse animals are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors and commit violence against people. People who abuse animals tend to commit more crimes and engage in criminal activities. Antisocial behaviors like abusing animals usually originate from a traumatic childhood and should be considered a significant warning sign. There are deep psychological issues that lead to violent crimes against people. We should surely address the Link between animal cruelty and human aggression and violence to prevent and cure conduct disorders in children.

-- Girotra, T. (2021). *Understanding the inter-relation between animal abuse and human aggression and violence. Social Work Chronicle, 10(1), 25-34.*

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK

New Mexico Legislation Would Finally Ban Bestiality



Sen. Brenda McKenna

New Mexico is finally taking a step toward the outlawing of sex with animals with the introduction of **SB 215**.

Championed by a strong bipartisan team of sponsors, Sen. Mark Moores (R-Albuquerque) and Sen. Brenda McKenna (D-Corralles), the Animal Sexual Abuse Act would establish crimes of bestiality and aggravated bestiality, which would provide felony-level penalties upon conviction. Additionally, those convicted of these crimes would be registered as sex offenders, would be banned from keeping or caring for



Sen. Mark Moores

animals, and may be ordered to submit to psychological assessment and counseling. The bill is in the Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee and has already received favorable newspaper and [TV news coverage](#).

"Because animal sexual abuse not only harms animals but also is connected to sexual abuse of children and adults, outlawing bestiality in New Mexico will provide a tool for health professionals, law enforcement, and the courts to address this and prevent other harmful behavior," reminds [Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico](#), the legislative arm of Animal Protection of New Mexico. West Virginia is the only other state that has not yet made bestiality a crime.

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

Italian Study Examines Children's Attachment to, and Abuse of, Pets



Selene Mezzalira

A new literature review coming from Italy observes that pets have often been regarded as attachment figures that can aid children in socialization and growth processes. They have been called “social catalysts” that can facilitate human relationships, thus increasing prosocial behaviors. However, on the dark side of the pet-child interaction, childhood abuse of animals tends to be associated with behavioral and emotional problems that have been thought of as underlying psychopathology (e.g., conduct disorder and antisocial personality traits). Childhood cruelty to animals seems to accompany emotion dysregulation, poor social information processing, and low empathy.

Selene Mezzalira and her colleagues at the Universities of Calabria and Naples conclude that since the child-pet relationship has substantial implications for the individual's mental health and for the potential development of psychopathology, addressing children's attitudes toward animals can aid in understanding the affective and emotional dimensions of their interpersonal experience.

-- Mezzalira, S., Scandurra, C., Santaniello, A., Mezza, F., & Saturnino, C., et al. (2022).

Affiliative bonds and cruel behavior in childhood interspecific relationships: A conceptual framework on the psychodynamics of affect regulation. Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology, 10(3).
<https://doi.org/10.13129/2282-1619/mjcp-3547>.

Courtroom Therapy Dog Inducted into Veterinary Hall of Fame



John Otto, DVM, Amber Dodson, and “Willa”

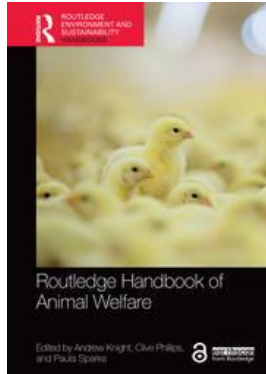
The use of therapy dogs in courtrooms to help console child sexual abuse survivors while they testify in front of their abusers has been gaining increasing recognition and acceptance, but one therapy dog in Oklahoma has received an extraordinary distinction. “Willa,” who had been born in a puppy mill and mistreated her entire life before she was trained as a therapy dog at a correctional center, was inducted recently into the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association's Hall of Fame.

Willa works today for the Cleveland County District Attorney's Office where Amber Dodson, her handler, took her to the Human Animal Link of Oklahoma (HALO) for advanced therapy training at the unusually old age of 8. “She was an older dog with a lot of baggage,” HALO President Terri Smith told the [Norman Transcript](#). “Willa was very quick to learn. She has the ability to reach into the human psyche and heart and knows where her boundaries are.”

Dodson said she is surprised that Willa could overcome her own trials the way she has to support others with a calming presence. “She's very sweet and gentle. She can walk into a room with kids and know exactly what she is there for.”

Children have the option to hold on to Willa's leash and walk into the courtroom with her, and to have her sit with them on the witness stand. “The response has been overwhelming,” said Dodson. “They have loved her. It has been comforting for our kids who have to talk about probably the hardest things they will have to talk about.”

THE LINK in the LITERATURE



Animal Welfare Handbook Includes Link References

Two chapters in a new international resource book on the global and multi-species status of animal welfare include references to The Link between animal abuse and human violence.

In a chapter on canines and felines, Heather Bacon reviews such issues as breeding, free-roaming vs. animals living as companions in homes, behavioral issues resulting from sourcing of puppies and kittens, convenience surgeries, veterinary considerations, population control, quality of life, and working and service animals. She addresses the issues of abuse, neglect and animal sexual abuse. “There is also a connection between abuse and neglect of animals, and

that of people, as the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of people and animals may be committed by the same group of perpetrators,” she writes. She adds that while the “Macdonald Triad” of childhood animal cruelty, bedwetting and fire setting has been challenged as a reliable indicator of later violence or aggression, “there is a clear link between animal cruelty in childhood and abusive behavior as an adult.

“Conversely, research also indicates that positive human–animal relationships may help with the development of empathy, compassion, and prosocial behaviors in children. This highlights the importance of recognizing the connection between human and animal abuse, and the opportunity for promoting evidence-based rehabilitation strategies that may positively impact the lives of both people and animals.”

In a chapter on animal welfare education and communication, Ruth De Vere notes that beginning in the 1990s, “The Link between animal abuse and societal violence, whether that be domestic abuse or violent crime, began to be well documented, with significant studies showing Links between children who perpetrated cruelty to animals that then go on to perform aggressive, antisocial behavior towards humans.” She reviews studies that report that witnesses and victims of violence in the home may themselves be cruel towards animals. “Therefore an additional benefit of animal welfare education is that widespread attention to the treatment of animals, and taking the abuse of animals seriously by professionals in positions of power (including teachers), can lead to interventions at a critical stage. Teaching subjects that foster compassion can build empathy, promote prosocial behavior, diffuse violence and potentially reduce bullying.”

The 36 chapters in this wholly comprehensive global look at animal welfare issues address such topics as: moral and ethical aspects of animals; animal welfare in animal farming and transportation; animals in entertainment, zoos and aquaria, science and education; hunting, fishing and whaling; species-specific issues; climate change, human-wildlife conflict and biodiversity loss; animal welfare and human health; animal disaster management; and animal law in the U.S., Australia, China, Europe, India, and South Africa.

- Bacon, H. (2022). Canines and felines. In Knight, A., Phillips, C., & Sparks, P. (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Animal Welfare* (pp. 241-256). London: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781003182351-22
- De Vere, R. (2022). Animal welfare education and communication. In Knight, A., Phillips, C., & Sparks, P. (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Animal Welfare* (pp. 480-491). London: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781003182351-43

Link Explored in Bogotá, Colombia

One of the few Link research studies to come out of Colombia is reporting that violence and abuse towards humans and companion animals in Bogotá is a complex phenomenon of multiple interactions between the individual's culture and the structural social dimensions that must be taken into account in considering public policy for animal welfare. Myriam Acero Aguilar, a veterinarian and public health professor at the National University of Colombia, writes that while violence in Colombia is widespread with many manifestations, violence and abuse towards animals requires additional research. She explored violence and abuse towards companion animals in Bogotá as a social phenomenon through 23 ethnographic and multidisciplinary interviews and surveys. These revealed the complexity and incipient visibility of animal abuse within the social and political contexts of structural conditions, anthropocentric speciesism and impunity and within the economic contexts of social inequity and the commercialization of companion animals.

-- Acero, M. (2021). *La violencia y el maltrato hacia los animales de compañía en Bogotá (Colombia): Una aproximación a sus contextos explicativos*. [Spanish] *Tesis Psicológica*, 17(1), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.37511/tesis.v17n1a3>

CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK

Missouri Bill Would Link Human & Animal Services Cross-Reporting

Two comprehensive cross-reporting bills introduced in the Missouri State Legislature would require cross-reporting between child and elder abuse caseworkers and animal care and control officers, with mandatory training on each other's forms of abuse and neglect.

Missouri **SB 91**, sponsored by Sen. Tracy McCreery (D – St. Louis County), and **HB 300**, sponsored by Rep. Lane Roberts (R – Joplin) would require animal control officers and animal humane investigators to be mandated reporters in cases of abuse and neglect **Rep. Lane Roberts & Sen. Tracy McCreery** of children, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons. Animal control officers and animal humane investigators would be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons.



The bills would similarly also create a mandated reporting requirement for certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel to report cases of companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association. Protective services employees with direct contact with children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons would likewise be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in companion animals.

Human services workers reporting suspected animal abuse or neglect in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. A mandated reporter who fails to make a report would be subject to discipline by his or her professional licensing board, as well as a fine. **SB 91** is in the Senate Health & Welfare Committee.

The measures are similar to recent laws that have been enacted. Florida ([See the July 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) enacted **SB 96** which mandates full cross-reporting between child protective services workers and animal control officers, with joint training developed by the Department of Children and Families and the Florida Animal Control Association. Ohio enacted **HB 33** ([See the January 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) which requires cross reporting among child and adult protective services, humane society agents, dog wardens, veterinarians, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists.

Full two-way cross-reporting was previously enacted in Connecticut, Illinois and West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

New Jersey Considers Three Cross-Reporting Measures

A more limited cross-reporting bill has been introduced in New Jersey, where **A 4936** would allow – but not require -- employees of the Division of Children Protection and Permanency who investigate child abuse and neglect and have reason to believe that an animal has been subjected to, or who witness an act of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect, to report the incident. The bill stipulates that employees who make a report, provide records or information relating to the report, or testify in any judicial proceeding arising from the report, are immune from liability for any actions taken in good faith. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee.



The bill would allow the Departments of Agriculture and Children & Families **Michele Matsikoudis** to develop and implement a training and education program on the identification of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect and the relationship between animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect, child abuse, and child welfare case practice. The program, if developed, will be made available to DCPD employees who investigate child abuse and neglect.

The premise for the bill notes that over the past 20 years, there has been a growing recognition of the link between cruelty to animals, domestic violence, and the maltreatment of children and that animal abuse may be a red flag indicative of family violence in the home.

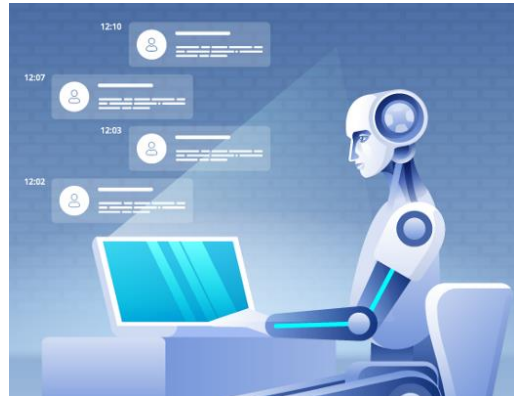
It is the intent of the bill's sponsor, Assemblywoman Michele Matsikoudis (R – New Providence), to provide a framework which allows for the cross-reporting of acts of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect and child abuse and neglect, similar to Massachusetts and California law, without placing an additional mandate on an already overburdened child protective services system.

Two stricter and more comprehensive cross-reporting bills are also working their way through the New Jersey legislature. **A 4229** and **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.

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Link Awareness is Growing – Even in Artificial Intelligence!

In a further sign that information about how animal abuse is often a precursor to or indicator of other forms of community and family violence, this message appears to be spreading to the world of artificial intelligence. National Link Coalition steering committee member Randy Lockwood tested the ChatGPT AI text generator by giving it the prompt, “Describe the connection between cruelty to animals and violence against people.” Here’s what came back – in 30 seconds:



“There is a well-established link between cruelty to animals and violence against people, also known as the ‘linkage hypothesis.’ Studies have shown that people who abuse animals are more likely to also commit acts of violence against humans. This link is particularly strong in the case of child and adolescent offenders. For example, in one study of children who had committed acts of animal cruelty, nearly 60% were also found to have committed acts of violence against humans.

“One theory to explain this link is that cruelty to animals is a ‘red flag’ or a warning sign of potential future violent behavior. This is because committing acts of cruelty to animals can be seen as an expression of a more general pattern of antisocial or aggressive behavior. Additionally, engaging in acts of cruelty to animals can desensitize a person to violence and make it more acceptable or ‘normal’ in their mind. Furthermore, abuse of animals may also be used as a tool to control people, or express power and control over others, which can be indicative of a more general pattern of aggressive behavior.

“It is important to note that not all people who abuse animals will go on to commit acts of violence against people. However, the link between animal abuse and violence is strong enough that it is often considered a risk factor for future violent behavior. Many law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and mental health professionals take reports of animal cruelty very seriously, and investigate them thoroughly, as they are seen as a potential indication of a more dangerous offender.

“It is also worth mentioning that there is also a connection between animal abuse and domestic violence. Domestic violence victims may delay leaving their abuser for fear of what might happen to their beloved pets, as many abusers use that as a tool to further control the victim. Also, animal cruelty may be used as a tool of domestic violence to control and intimidate the victim.

“Overall, cruelty to animals should be taken seriously as a warning sign of potential violence against people and it is important that professionals work together to address this issue.”



(If you’d care to [respond](#) to the implications of this, please include this Captcha code so we know that you’re not a robot.)



NEWS from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

HAVEN Shows How a Dedicated Link Coalition Can Build Bridges



One of the oldest local Link coalitions in the U.S. is continuing its work in western Massachusetts of making Berkshire County safer for people and animals. [HAVEN](#) – the Human-Animal Violence Education Network – has been functioning for a decade as a coalition of Berkshire County citizens and professionals who come together to identify the connections between animal cruelty and human violence. As professionals in the fields of education, animal protection, human services, law enforcement, and veterinary medicine they work to find ways to make Berkshire County a safer, healthier, and more humane place for people and animals.

This work was fully evident during one of HAVEN’s regular monthly meetings which, as with so many organizations, transitioned from in-person gatherings to virtual Zoom calls. On a Wednesday afternoon in January, 11 participants gathered and demonstrated what a small, dedicated core group of committed individuals and agencies can accomplish.

Erin Starsja, Assistant Shelter Manager of the [Berkshire Humane Society](#), unveiled plans for a collaboration with local veterinarians to alleviate the shortage of practitioners in the wake of COVID and the cost-of-care and accessibility gaps that keep many pet owners from obtaining regular veterinary care.



Berkshire Humane Society
HELPING ANIMALS AND PEOPLE SINCE 1992

The shelter will open a wellness clinic for dogs and cats offering such basic services as routine vaccinations, flea and tick control and treating ear mites, thereby freeing up local veterinarians’ time to concentrate on more complicated cases. The clinic, she emphasized, is not designed to take business away from veterinarians, but rather to bridge the gap that often separates humane groups from veterinarians and to educate pet owners about the need for comprehensive veterinary care. It will be staffed by local veterinarians and technicians and clients will pay for services on a sliding scale. Flyers will be distributed to staff at the Department of Children & Families to let their clients know about the new service. “This is another connection that’s really important,” said HAVEN co-founder Lorna Grande, DVM.



Kindness and Care for Animals®

Sgt. Bill Loiselle, the [Massachusetts SPCA](#)’s animal cruelty law enforcement officer for western Massachusetts, described two cases in which his team removed 18 unsheltered horses and 15 cats were abandoned in sub-zero temperatures. “The relationships we’ve kept up with prosecutors, law enforcement and the general public has been very good,” he said, advising participants from multiple disciplines to always “keep the lines of communication open.” The MSPCA works with Berkshire County social services agencies, who are allowed to report suspected animal abuse to the MSPCA under state law.

Norfolk County prosecutor Tracey Cusick described several cases pending in her court and others that are on appeal. She recently attended the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys/Animal Legal Defense Fund national conference in Nashville, where she found the training and networking extremely helpful. “I hope I was able to be helpful to some people because they’ve been so helpful to me,” she said.

Grande reported that HAVEN is developing training programs for the sheriff's office and is training vet tech students at Holyoke Community College. Retired judge Martha Grace said she is reaching out to shelter workers about The Link.



Nancy Thomas described how the challenges she faced in adopting several children from foreign countries who experienced a wide range of behavioral problems, including inappropriate sexual behaviors, abuse of the family pets and assault, led her to co-found a local support group which grew into a national nonprofit. The [Attachment Trauma Network](#) serves as the nation's leading resource to help parents and educators heal children who have been impacted by trauma. "I was well aware of the different types of sociopathy with animal abuse being one of them," she told the participants. "It's amazing what you guys are doing from your different angles."

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

The Link movement continued to make amazing legislative progress in 2022; 19 laws were passed among 148 bills and ballot initiatives that were introduced in 36 states and the District of Columbia. addressing animal abuse's Links with human violence. Even more significant, eight key federal bills were introduced in Congress; we hope they will be re-introduced in the 118th Congress for 2023-2024.

Bills We're Watching in 2023:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Nebraska LB 11 would allow domestic violence victims to file for protection orders that would allow courts to direct the care, custody and control of household pets and enjoin the respondent from coming into contact with, harming or killing household pets. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



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 Mexico SB 18 would rename the Family Violence Protection Act to become the "Protection Against Abuse and Violence Act," would allow courts to include animals in orders of protection, and would include "harm or threatened harm to an animal to intimidate, threaten or harass a person" within the definition of abuse. The bill passed the Senate Health & Public Affairs Committee and is heading to the Judiciary Committee.



New Mexico SB 291 would appropriate \$350,000 to the Children, Youth & Families Department to support program work for domestic violence victims and their animals. The bill is in the Senate Health & Public Affairs Committee.



New York A 39 would provide further protection for pets in domestic violence protection orders by authorizing the court to order a party to either relinquish a companion animal or to refrain from any contact with it. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



New York A483 would amend the penal law to create new crimes of animal cruelty when a companion animal is intentionally injured or killed in order to intimidate, threaten or harass a family member; it would be a Class D felony, or a Class C felony if committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



Texas HB 1179 would require the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to develop information to be provided to the public about the provisions that pets and assistance animals may be included in protective orders. Such information would have to be readily available at prosecutors' offices to persons applying for protective orders.



Virginia HB 713 would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor for a person to engage in coercive control of a family or household member. Acts of coercive control would include committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates the other party. The bill also includes coercive control in the definition of "family abuse" used for the basis of the issuance of family abuse protective orders. The bill is in the Committee for Courts of Justice.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



New Jersey A 4229/S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of child and elder abuse, domestic violence and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons' animals. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



New York A483 would amend the penal law to create new crimes of animal cruelty when a companion animal is intentionally injured or killed in order to intimidate, threaten or harass a family member; it would be a Class D felony, or a Class C felony if committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 394 would increase the potential term of imprisonment from two to four years for acts of aggravated animal cruelty when committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York A 444 would establish a misdemeanor crime of knowingly causing a minor to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



Texas HB 720 would allow therapy or facility dogs to accompany a child or a person with a disability during testimony in certain criminal cases.

Animal Hoarding



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.

Animal Sexual Abuse



Maryland SB 54 and HB 131 would replace the archaic terminology of “unnatural or perverted sexual practice” with “any other sexual conduct that is a crime.” Current statutes put animal sexual abuse in the same category as homosexual behavior; it is not clear whether the change in language would have the effect of making bestiality legal. The bills are in the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committees.



New Mexico SB 215, the Animal Sexual Abuse Act, would establish crimes of bestiality and aggravated bestiality, with felony-level penalties upon conviction. Those convicted of these crimes would be registered as sex offenders, would be banned from keeping or caring for animals, and may be ordered to submit to psychological assessment and counseling. The bill is in the Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



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 and A 4540 (“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 A 433 and S 294 (“Buster’s Law”) would require courts to order psychiatric or psychological testing to determine whether an animal cruelty offender is capable of providing humane care before issuing an order prohibiting the possession or ownership of a companion animal. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committees.



New York S 299 and A 390 would require offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals to undergo psychiatric evaluation and appropriate treatment for mental illness. The bills are in the Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees.

Cross-Reporting



Missouri SB 91 and HB 300 would require animal control officers and animal humane investigators to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect of children, the elderly and other vulnerable persons. They would be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize such signs of abuse or neglect. Certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel would similarly be mandated to report cases of companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association and receive similar training. Mandated reporters who fail to make a report would be subject to discipline by his or her professional licensing board, as well as a fine. **SB 91** is in the Senate Health & Welfare Committee.



New Jersey A 4229/S 1789 would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, domestic violence investigators, employees of the Department of Children & Families, employees of the Department of Human Services, Division of Aging, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities to report suspected animal cruelty to an appropriate law enforcement officer with civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Food Security and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



New Jersey A 4936 would require employees of the Division of Children Protection and Permanency who investigate child abuse and neglect and have reason to believe that an animal has been subjected to, or who witness an act of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect, to report the suspected or witnessed act of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect. Nothing in the bill requires an employee to report such an act. Employees who make a report, provide records or information relating to the report, or who testify in any judicial proceeding arising from the report, would be immune from liability for any actions taken in good faith. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee.

Court-Appointed Advocates for Animals



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 111 would create court-appointed attorney and law student advocates for animals in civil and criminal animal welfare cases, to represent the interests of the animal. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Arizona HB 2184 would allow petitioners to file for a Severe Threat Order of Protection, which would prohibit a respondent from gaining access to firearms, if the respondent poses a credible threat of death or serious injury to self or others or cruel mistreatment of an animal.



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 A 340 would include felony animal cruelty offenses among the crimes which would prohibit possession of a firearm. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York S 96 would enact “Kirby & Quigley’s Law” expanding the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Federal Legislation Introduced in 2022

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



U.S. H.R. 2377, the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2022, would have allowed 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. The bill passed the House and was in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



U.S. H.R. 8074, the PUPP Act (“Providing for Unhoused People with Pets”), would have authorized HUD to award grants to modify and upgrade interim and permanent housing for unhoused individuals with pets, including domestic violence survivors. Grants could be used to acquire, renovate, rehabilitate, re-purpose, retrofit, or construct 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 residents. Animal shelters could partner with eligible entities to provide interim or permanent housing. The bill was in the House Committee on Financial Services.

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 were 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 was in the House Judiciary Committee’s subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law.



Oregon SB 696, filed at the request of the Oregon Humane Society, would appropriate funds for two years to the Department of Justice to fund an animal cruelty-focused attorney within the Criminal Justice Division. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



U.S. H.R. 763, the Child and Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to require that data collected by the federal government from state child protection agencies include information about animal abuse as a risk factor for child abuse. The bill is in the House 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. H.R. 4159 was in the House Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property and the Internet; S.2121 was in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Judges Cite Escalation of Violence from Animals to Humans in Sentencings



William Landry

An Ontario, Canada man who had previously been convicted of animal cruelty, causing bodily harm to a baby, and domestic violence was sentenced in 2022 to 12 months in prison and three years of probation for abusing a friend's dog and violating a probation order from his previous conviction that prohibited him from coming into contact with animals. The [Brantford Expositor](#) reported that William Landry, of Sarnia, had served eight months in jail in 2016 after pleading guilty to strangling three cats. At that time, he was under an order to not be in control of any animals as a result of an earlier animal cruelty conviction. A lifetime animal prohibition order was issued at that time as well as three months' probation and an order to undergo counseling, according to the [Niagara Falls Review](#).

In 2020, Landry was found guilty of assault causing bodily harm to a baby and given a nine-month conditional sentence of house arrest. While he was under that sentence he was convicted in 2021 of domestic violence after pleading guilty to assaulting his girlfriend. The judge in the 2021 conviction was the same one who had ordered the earlier conditional sentence and said that Landry's escalating pattern of violence from animal cruelty to assault on an infant and his partner was "concerning" and ordered he be incarcerated for the remainder of the conditional sentence, the [Sarnia Observer](#) reported.

The judge in the 2022 animal cruelty case, which resulted from a 6-year-old boxer named "Gracie" having to be euthanized as a result of her injuries, said, "Mr. Landry has a proven track record of causing harm and pain by assaulting, injuring and causing unnecessary suffering both to animals and to human beings. Mr. Landry presents as an offender who causes grave concern for this court." The judge also imposed another lifetime prohibition against having any animals.

Michigan Attorney General Uses New Link Law to Charge Man with 4 Counts

A new Michigan law that recognizes the connection between domestic violence and animal abuse was used to charge Julius Holley, 55, of Detroit on four counts of home invasion, larceny, stalking, and first-degree killing or torturing of animals. [WILX-TV](#) reported that Holley is accused of torturing a small dog as part of a pattern of ongoing abuse of his former girlfriend. Court documents allege that Holley went into his ex-girlfriend's home without permission, took her Yorkshire terrier mix and other items, and then sent her videos of him beating and torturing the dog. The dog was eventually left in a bucket next to a house but was turned over to the Michigan Humane Society.



Julius Holley

"Law enforcement is all-too familiar with the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse," said Attorney General Dana Nessel. "State law that rightfully acknowledges the relationship between these two crimes provides prosecutors with the tools necessary to hold accountable these violent offenders."

Michigan in 2019 amended Sec. 750.50b of the Penal Code to state that a person who tortures or kills a pet with the intent to cause mental distress or suffering to another person, or to extort control over another person, is guilty of a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison, a \$5,000 fine, and up to 500 hours of community service ([See the January 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).

Canadian Couple Sentenced for Child Pornography and Bestiality

A woman in Ontario, Canada, who [pled guilty](#) to two counts of child pornography and bestiality was sentenced to three months in jail. The charges were filed after her 14-year-old daughter became suspicious of disturbing Facebook exchanges between the woman and her then-husband detailing explicit sexual abuse fantasies of the girl, her younger sister and a friend. The girl took screenshots of the exchanges to police, whose Internet child exploitation unit also recovered a 59-second video on the woman's cellphone showing her calling a dog to perform a sex act on her. Her then-husband, who took the lead in describing the graphic detail of sexual abuse he wished to inflict on the girls, pled guilty to making child pornography and was placed on three years of probation. Canadian law forbids identifying defendants if doing so could reveal the identity of a child pornography victim.

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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.

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.

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

Feb. 16 – (online): The [Animals & Society Institute Colloquium](#) will feature Sarah May Lindsay discussing "Service, Support or Companion? Species, Ability and Care in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Shelters."

Feb. 17 – (online): RedRover and Greater Good Charities' Rescue Rebuild will hold a [guest presentation](#) exploring funding opportunities through RedRover's Safe Housing grant program for housing people and pets in crisis.

Feb. 21 – Kansas City, Mo. (online): [BestyBnB](#) will host a webinar, "Navigating Barriers to Safety & Security: Survivors and Pet Placement Advocacy."

Feb. 22 -- (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.

Feb. 25 – Orlando, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present "We're All In This Together: Pooling Limited Shelter Resources to Help People and Animals" at the [Florida Animal Control Association's](#) Annual Training Conference.

Mar. 1 -- (online): [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a special presentation ""Empathy is Everything": Veterinary Medicine and Supporting Domestic Violence Survivors."

Mar. 2 -- (online): [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a training workshop on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

Mar. 14 -- Atlanta, Ga.: [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a training workshop on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

March 15 -- (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

March 21 -- Dallas, Texas: Sherry Ramsey will present "Potential Indicators in Predicting Future Extreme Violence and School Shootings: From Family Violence to Animal Cruelty" at the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges' [2023 National Conference on Juvenile Justice](#).

March 21-23 -- (online): My Dog Is My Home's [3rd Annual Co-Sheltering Conference](#) will focus on "Changing Systems, Changing Lives: Creating a World with Equitable Access to Homes for People and Their Animals."

March 29 (Online): Teena Stoddart will conduct a [Violence Link training](#) for Ontario law enforcement officers.

April 4 -- (online): Phil Arkow will present "Connecting the Dots in Civil and Criminal Justice: Protecting People by Focusing on Animal Abuse" in a [Justice Clearinghouse webinar](#).

April 17 -- Santa Rosa, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present a Link training and facilitate the formation of a [Sonoma County Link Coalition](#).

April 17-18 -- Washington, D.C.: The National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges and the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present the [Judicial Institute](#) on the Human-Animal Bond and the LINK Between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence: Issues in Family Law Cases.

April 19 -- (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

April 20-21 -- Minneapolis, Minn.: Lesley Winton will present "Sharing the Stories of Rescued Animals with Care-Experienced Children to Foster compassion and Help Reverse the Cycle of Abuse," and Caroline Griffin will present "It's Cool to be Kind" at the Association of Professional Humane Educators' [annual conference](#).

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

May 10 -- 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 -- (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 1-2 – Lisbon, Portugal: The República Portuguesa [Provedor do Animal](#) will conduct a two-day conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence.

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

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

Aug. 2 – New Orleans, La.: Phil Arkow will present “Species-Spanning Polyvictimization Affecting Military and Civilian Survivors: Animal Abuse as a Red Flag for Family Violence” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [49th Annual Training Event](#).

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

Aug. 24 (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. 18-19 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.: [Positive Links NM](#) will hold its Conference on The Link.

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

Oct. 3 – (online): Kathleen Wood and Katherine Youssouf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present “The Importance of Pre-Sentence Evaluation in Animal Cruelty Cases” in a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar.

Oct. 4 – Ft. Worth, Texas: Phil Arkow will present “Child Abuse Prevention and the Animal Abuse/Human Violence Link” for the [Alliance for Children](#).

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

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



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



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multidisciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
Etowah, N. Car.

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The Hon. John J. Romero, Jr.

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

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Boston, Mass.

John Thompson

Executive Vice President
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