



A monthly report of news from
THE GLOBAL RESOURCE CENTER ON THE LINK BETWEEN
ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



Top Stories in This Issue:



Tennessee allows veterinarians to report animal abuse
(Page 8)



Animal cruelty investigations lead to more criminal cases
(Page 10)



Federal AVERT Act re-introduced
(Page 15)

Link Training Reaches “First Eyes” Responders in Bermuda

National Link Coalition Board member Mark Kumpf brought his weeklong Animal Control & Care Academy training to Bermuda’s animal wardens and chief veterinary officer. The training offered the message that animal welfare investigators are first responders — “first eyes” who are often the first on the scene of other family



issues who may uncover child, domestic or elder abuse that other community agents may miss. Sarah D’Alessio, Adult Protective Services Manager with the Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors, participated in the training which highlighted the interdepartmental cooperative approach required to address incidence of domestic violence. The Bermudans are interested in expanding the training next year to include an even more international and multidisciplinary mix of participants.

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News from LINK Coalitions

About the National Link Coalition

The National Link Coalition is the only international educational and advocacy organization working to prevent animal cruelty, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse by showing how they intersect.

As the global resource center on The Link between animal cruelty and human violence — with readers in 55 countries — we train multidisciplinary professionals, showcase programs, and publicize legislation and research to foster collaborations that create safer communities by recognizing that when animals are abused, people are at risk, and when people are abused, animals are at risk.

Keystone Link Hosts 3 “Safer Together” Webinars

Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) is hosting a three-part “Safer Together” webinar series on The Link, in conjunction with Pittsburgh’s [Crisis Center North](#), on different aspects of how animal abuse impacts human violence.

On April 24, Claire Coughlin, Coordinator of the [Animal Welfare Institute](#)’s Animals and Interpersonal Violence program and Safe Havens for Pets project, will kick off the second program in the series with a “deep dive” into the child abuse/animal abuse Link. She will address how animal abuse constitutes emotional abuse of children, and help participants to identify these situations and report to human and humane services.



Claire Coughlin

Nikki Thompson, Chief Humane Society Police Officer for the [Bucks County SPCA](#), will showcase the strong collaborative effort that Bucks County humane and human services have developed, along with the challenges that the collaborative has addressed. She will describe in detail the Bucks County model which could be replicated in other communities in Pennsylvania and in other states.



Nikki Thompson

The program, “Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services: Deep Dive into Child/Animal Abuse,” will be broadcast from 12—1:30 p.m. A recording of the webinar will also be available for one month for those who cannot participate on April 24.

[Registration](#) is free. Click on the hyperlink to sign up.

Safer Together: Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services, Deep Dive into Child/Animal Abuse

WEBINAR REGISTER ONLINE [http://LINK BELOW](#)

Wednesday April 24, 2024
12:00-1:30 PM

PRESENTERS

Claire Coughlin, Coordinator of the Animals and Interpersonal Violence program, and Safe Havens for Pets project, Animal Welfare Institute

Nikki Thompson, Chief Humane Society Police Officer, Bucks County SPCA

KEystoneLINK & Crisis Center North

General certificates will be available for caseworkers and other professions. 1.5 CEUs will also be available for social workers through West Chester University’s Graduate Social Work department.

On Feb. 28, the National Link Coalition’s Phil Arkow presented the first webinar in the series, “Safer Together: Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services.” Over 300 people attended and the Keystone Link Coalition received numerous requests for additional people to join.

A third webinar on The Link between animal abuse and elder abuse is scheduled for September 23, featuring Mary Rautkis and Jessica Bibbo.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

Scoping Review Explores Link with Domestic Violence and Sex Offenses

Researchers at Australia's University of Melbourne are continuing their exploration of the many aspects of The Link, including urging veterinarians to respond to online child and animal sexual abuse (*See the [January 2024 LINK-Letter](#)*) and training veterinarians to recognize, respond and refer in cases of suspected domestic violence (*See the [February 2024 LINK-Letter](#)*).

Sociologist Kristin Diemer and colleagues conducted a scoping review of two discrete bodies of international literature examines threats and actual harm to animals in the context of domestic abuse and sex offending in the context of animal abuse. The review focuses on the implications for risk assessment and risk management.



Kristin Diemer

The analysis of 27 studies on domestic abuse and 15 papers on sex offenders identified four dominant themes:

- (1) animal abuse as an indicator of domestic abuse;
- (2) childhood animal abuse as a signal of other problems within a household;
- (3) animal abuse as an indicator of more severe domestic abuse; and
- (4) the inclusion of pet abuse as a unique form of domestic abuse.

Both literature compilations highlighted gaps in risk assessment, risk management, and the lack of identification and training in this neglected area of the service system prevention and response.

— Diemer, K., Gallant, D., Tupper, N.M., & Humphreys, C., et al. (2024). Exploring the linkages between animal abuse, domestic abuse, and sexual offending: A scoping review. *Health & Social Care in the Community*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/1170505>

Webinar Details Father Joe's Villages' Pet-Friendly Co-Sheltering



RedRover's [Don't Forget the Pets](#) project, in conjunction with [Father Joe's Villages](#) program to prevent and end homelessness, will present a one-hour training webinar on

Jesse Casement Thursday, April 18, describing how the San Diego-based organization became pet-friendly. Register for the "Making Room for Pets" webinar at <https://lnkd.in/eJBYGY5d>

Jesse Casement, Division Director of Client Services for Father Joe's Villages, will review sample pet policies and procedures, discuss staff training and support, and learn how this expansive organization made room for pets by adopting a co-sheltering model.

Established in 1950 to serve San Diegans experiencing homelessness and poverty, Father Joe's Villages now includes a comprehensive campus and scattered-site programs that house over 2,000 people nightly.

Join Us In Our Mission!

If you would like to join us in our education and advocacy to promote greater legislative, public and professional understanding of, and response to, The Link between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse, please consider partnering with us! It is through the generosity of our donors that we are able to continue our trainings, publications, compilation of resources and research, and reporting on Link legislation. Your gift helps us prevent animal cruelty, domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse and create a safer world. [Please click here](#) to make a secure and tax-deductible contribu-

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

Urban Resource Institute Recommends Greater Support for Pets of Domestic Violence Survivors and the Homeless

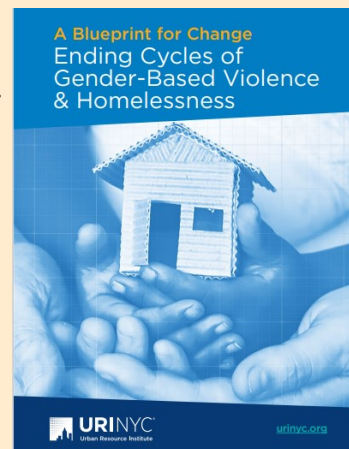
Since 2013, The *LINK-Letter* has written extensively about New York City's Urban Resource Institute — the largest provider of domestic violence shelter services in the U.S. — and its pioneering [URI PALS](#) (People & Animals Living Safely) program, which now offers 304 units in nine pet-friendly shelters. To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of URI PALS — and in response to a 29% increase in domestic violence fatalities in the city — URI has [published](#) “*A Blueprint for Change: Ending Cycles of Gender-Based Violence & Homelessness.*”

The Blueprint is based upon four core areas:

- **Flexible Funding as a Vital Anti-Violence Tool: Coercive Control Embedded in Our Systems**
- **Decriminalizing Domestic Violence: Investing in People Who Cause Harm is Investing in Survivors**
- **Interrupting Intergenerational Violence: Youth-Led Relationship Abuse Prevention Programming**
- **Removing Roadblocks to Safety: Human-Animal Co-living Enhances Shelter Access and Healing**

The latter finding cites the URI/National Domestic Violence Hotline findings that 50% of survivors won't leave their abuser if they have to leave a pet behind ([See the June 2021 LINK-Letter](#)). It offers three recommendations:

- **Provide resources, technical assistance and other forms of support to temporary housing providers empowering them to easily create more opportunities for people and pet co-living.**
- **Implement the policy solutions contained within URI's Pawprint for Action (*see below*), that will help pave the way for additional opportunities for people and pet co-living in transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence and families experiencing homelessness.**
- **Expand opportunities for people and pet co-living in temporary housing for survivors of domestic violence and families experiencing homelessness .**



The [10th Anniversary Celebration](#) of “A Decade Honoring the Human-Animal Bond” will be held in New York City on May 9.

URI PALS “Pawprint” for Action Makes Legislative Recommendations



The Urban Resource Institute's “Pawprint” for Action offers a series of federal, New York State and New York City legislative recommendations to reduce the barriers preventing abuse victims with pets from escaping:

CONGRESS

- Re-Authorize the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act
- Enact the Providing for Unhoused People with Pets (PUPP) Act

NEW YORK STATE

- Offer CE credits for veterinarians who provide free care to companion animals in domestic violence and homeless shelters
- Create a dedicated state funding stream for PALS operational expenses and capital construction
- Enact A39 and S5309 which would expand provisions under the state's Pet Protection orders.

NEW YORK CITY

- Enact local laws allowing shelters for the homeless to accommodate companion animals.
- Enact laws making PALS' operational, safety and sanitation standards the best practices for adoption at other city shelters.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

Researchers Identify Issues of Pets and People During Forced Separations (I)

In our [March 2024 LINK-Letter](#), we reported on a preliminary scoping review of 42 journal articles that established a research protocol and conceptual framework for the issues affecting people and their pets forced into homelessness by domestic violence, natural disasters, health, and housing issues. The results of that review are being published and they find an increased risks of safety and psychological well-being for both humans and animals during forced separations. Underlying concepts of human superiority to that of animals and who is responsible for the animal emerged as major themes.

Regardless of the reason for the forced separation, the researchers find that pets are taken into consideration only after a problem is recognized for the person among services and policy programs; the animals are even seen as a risk to people that requires mitigation strategies. Meanwhile, how people perceive the value of companion animals is complex and varies between different types of animals/pets within a household and in different situations.

The review finds “catastrophic” outcomes for pets in situations of forced separation, including death. These pets are extremely vulnerable and the animal’s survival and safety are completely dependent on humans. Consequently, humans who feel a sense of responsibility for their pets and are forced to separate are placed at an increased risk to their safety and psychological well-being.

Lending additional support to the need for co-sheltering pets and people escaping domestic violence, they write, “The significant negative psychological impacts on people underline the deep connection between humans and animals and highlight that, when pets are not given equal consideration in policy/programs and people are not provided with sufficient support to stay with their pets, the wider community, including health and animal welfare sectors, may be impacted as the recovery process is hindered.

“The level of value of and responsibility for the companion animal has implications for the animals’ welfare during times of crisis and the risks and decisions people are willing to make to protect them. In order to protect their pet, the risk to safety for the person



Jasmine Montgomery (left), Zhanming Liang and Janice Lloyd increases in such circumstances where a person may refuse to evacuate without their pet or return for a pet during a disaster, prolong homelessness to stay with their pet, and delay leaving a violent relationship to protect the pet.”

“When pets are not given equal consideration in policy/programs and people are not provided with sufficient support to stay with their pets, the wider community, including health and animal welfare sectors, may be impacted as the recovery process is hindered.”

The review finds that systematic attempts to mitigate risks for pet owners and their animals during natural disasters have been implemented in the U.S. and New Zealand, and pet co-sheltering programs – such as Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)[®] are emerging in the U.S. and, to a much lesser extent, in Australia. They note that many people leaving domestic violence situations are not aware of these programs and that the many off-site foster care programs for pets, while well-intentioned, inadvertently perpetuate forced separations.

In calling forced separation a barrier to leaving an abusive relationship, they itemize factors which need to be considered when developing pet housing policy and programs, including: the overall health of the person and animal; financial situations; children and their concerns for their pets; logistics; awareness of available programs; and finding permanent, affordable pet-friendly accommodations after the event.

-- **Montgomery, J., Liang, Z., & Lloyd, J. (2024). A scoping review of forced separation between people and their companion animals. *Anthrozoös*, ahead-of print: ahead-of-print, 1-23, DOI: 10.1080/08927936.2023.2287315**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

Researchers Identify Issues of Pets and People During Forced Separations (II)

An evaluation of Australia's RSPCA New South Wales' community programs of temporary housing and care for pets whose owners are escaping crisis situations, including domestic violence, captured the animals' positive benefits to health and the negative effects on humans' help-seeking behaviors during forced separations. The study explored the perspectives of people in crisis to create a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of how human-animal bonds for people experiencing crisis situations allow pet owners to focus on their own wellbeing, recovery, and safety.



The authors write that the human-animal bond can have both positive and negative influences on the health of people experiencing short-term, overwhelming crisis situations including homelessness, domestic violence, incarceration, and hospitalization. People

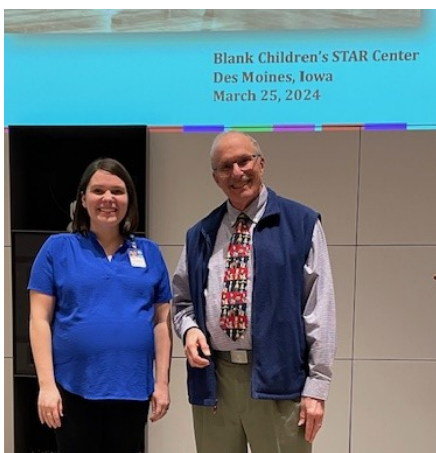
experiencing any of these key crisis situations tend to be socially isolated and highly stressed, and the social support provided by human-animal bonds can be pivotal for their health and coping. However, for people in crisis situations, caring for an animal can become a barrier to seeking help, as this may entail leaving their pet in a dangerous environment or surrendering them. If a pet is left behind when escaping a crisis situation, negative cognitions associated with their pet's safety can hinder a persons' recovery.

They note that domestic violence survivors' pets are crucial supporters, confidants, and allies. However, domestic violence perpetrators can use violence against pets as a coercive control measure, making the pet a barrier to escaping a domestic violence situation.

— Oosthuizen, K., Haase, B., Ravulo, J., Lomax, S., & Ma, G. (2023). The role of human-animal bonds for people experiencing crisis situations. *Animals*, 13(5), 941. doi: [10.3390/ani13050941](https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13050941)

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and The LINK

Link Training Comes to Des Moines CAC



Wendy Berkey, Family Advocate for the Blank Children's STAR Center Children's Advocacy Center in Des Moines, Iowa, invited the National Link Coalition's Phil Arkow to conduct two trainings on "Connecting the Dots to Protect Kids & Critters." Over 100 child welfare advocates attended the sessions.

Michigan Considers Mandated Reporting of Suspected Animal Abuse

A bill introduced in the Michigan Legislature would require child protective services employees to report suspected animal abuse.



Sen. Sue Shink

SB 783, introduced on March 13 by Sen. Sue Shink (D-Ann Arbor) would require CPS employees who have reasonable cause to suspect animal abuse or neglect encountered in the course of their work to immediately make an oral

report to an animal control officer or law enforcement officer. CPS employees would also be permitted to make such a report to an animal cruelty investigator. A written report would be made within 72 hours.

The employee would be presumed to have acted in good faith, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report or knowingly making a false report would be punishable by jail terms and fines. The employee's identity would remain confidential.

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and The LINK

Study Reviews Model Veterinary Support Partnership for Pet Victims of Domestic Violence

A new article in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* is assisting practitioners to better understand and assist the animal victims of domestic violence that they may encounter.

“Pets are involved in intimate partner violence, as victims and barriers to achieving safety, to the extent that they cannot be ignored in programs, resources, and safety plans for human victims,” they conclude. “The understanding of the role that veterinarians may play in intimate partner or family violence is growing.”

The study documents and evaluates a novel partnership model of a pets safekeeping program for domestic violence victims in Wichita, Kansas over a one-month period. 13 dogs and 6 cats belonging to 13 owners were referred to the program; 8 pets were placed into foster housing, 5 were returned to their owners after 5 weeks, and 2 were adopted into new homes.

The authors note the complexity of domestic and animal abuse dynamics and particularly strong pet-owner bonds that create a significant One Welfare concern in these situations. They write that, “The involvement of pets in domestic violence is often discussed in terms of reducing harm to victimized people, but the animals themselves face serious welfare con-

cerns.” In addition, “children were also witnesses and/or victims, which is in turn linked to a higher risk of perpetrating animal cruelty themselves.”

violence among their clients, and having domestic violence shelters inquire about any pets needing assistance.

“Veterinarians should become increasingly proactive in asking about human-directed violence anytime they suspect animal abuse and interested in actively supporting domestic violence programs in their community.”

They describe cost, safety, volunteer, and veterinary challenges facing off-site foster care for pets. The authors, representing an animal health industry, a local practitioner and a domestic violence shelter, created a core committee to design a novel corporate-community partnership model with sustainable standard operating procedures.

They conclude by encouraging veterinarians to be more proactive in asking about possible domestic

“As the concept of One Welfare grows alongside the already well-known One Health, veterinarians should become increasingly proactive in asking about human-directed violence anytime they suspect animal abuse and interested in actively supporting domestic violence programs in their community. Likewise, domestic violence advocates should be in the habit of asking about involved pets and being familiar with area resources.”

— Pearce, H.L., Spielman, B., Weatherwax, C., & Pairis-Garcia, M. (2024). A novel corporate-community partnership model provides safe housing for pets of domestic violence victims. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.23.12.0716>



Hillary Pearce

Hillary Pearce, DVM, MRCVE, the primary author of this study, was also interviewed by AVMA for their [Veterinary Vertex podcast](#). Her interview, “Fostering Change for Pets and People Entangled in Domestic Violence Situations,” described how practitioners can weave resources into the fabric of veterinary clinics to discreetly assist domestic violence victims, emphasizing the significance of subtle gestures of support.

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and The LINK

Tennessee Enacts Permissive Reporting of Suspected Animal Abuse

Veterinarians in Tennessee are now specifically able to report suspected cases of animal cruelty, abuse or neglect to law enforcement authorities, thanks to **HB 2079** which was signed into law on March 15 by Gov Bill Lee.

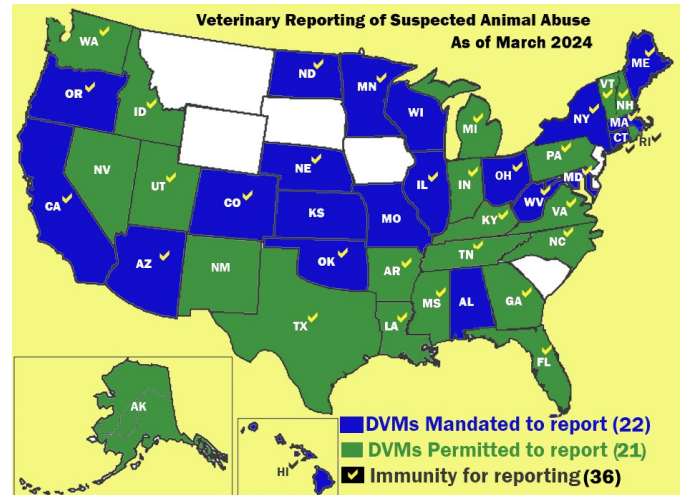


Rep. Bryan Terry

The law makes Tennessee the 43rd state to allow or require practitioners to report suspected animal maltreatment; in 36 of those states, including Tennessee, they have immunity from civil or criminal liability for filing such a report.

The new law updates Tennessee’s [Veterinarian Medical Practice Act](#). It also allows veterinarians to testify in court without violating veterinarian-client-patient confidentiality. The legislation also provides immunity “from any breach of confidentiality if veterinarians are acting in good faith in reporting the suspected abuse.”

“Animal cruelty is a serious crime in Tennessee and it was important that we clarify the Veterinarian Medical Practice Act to ensure our experts could, in fact, advocate for animals,” said the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Bryan Terry (R-Murfreesboro), a physician. “This kind of law is in place in surrounding states and I am honored to



be able to work with our veterinarian association and the Farm Bureau to put these common-sense protections in place for our veterinarians and our animals.”

“We are very pleased to see Tennessee joining the 42 other states that have enacted similar legislation,” said Phil Arkow, President & Secretary of the National Link Coalition. “A founding principle of The Link is that the veterinarian should be at least as proactive in responding to suspected animal abuse as pediatricians and other physicians are in responding to possible child maltreatment.”

Utah Expands Veterinarians’ Ability to Report Suspected Animal Abuse



Veterinarians in Utah also received additional legislative support to report suspected animal abuse with the passage of **HB 478** on March 12.

Rep. Norman Thurston

Practitioners in Utah already enjoy immunity from civil or criminal liability for reporting to law enforcement authorities, in good faith and in the normal course of their work, individuals whom they suspected of animal cruelty. The new law extends those protections to veterinarians who report suspected animal abuses they encounter in animal care facilities, including animal

rescues, animal sanctuaries, animal shelters, and boarding facilities.

Such institutional reports may be made to law enforcement or the Department of Agriculture and Food under Utah Code Annotated Sec. 4-2-903.

The new provisions take effect on May 1.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Norman Thurston (R—Provo).

THE LINK... and The MILITARY

DoD Increases Allowance for Transporting Service Members' Pets

In our [January 2024 LINK-Letter](#), we introduced the issue of how military servicemembers and their families face unique issues regarding maintaining their pets and the risks of animal abuse and interpersonal violence in those households. In a community experiencing higher rates of exposure to trauma, physical and sexual abuse and PTSD, pets can provide additional emotional support to dependents when the service-member is deployed. 96% of families experience temporary or chronic sadness when they are forced to leave a pet behind due to relocation.

The Department of Defense has now recognized the significance of the human-animal bond for these families with a new regulation that increases reimbursement for allowable expenses. As of Jan. 1, 2024, active-duty service members are now authorized to receive up to \$550 reimbursement for costs related to relocation of one household dog or cat due to a permanent change of station (PCS) move within the U.S., or \$2,000 for an overseas PCS.

The relocation expense for either one dog or one cat includes travel costs within the U.S. or overseas and any other travel requirements. A servicemember may be authorized the reasonable and substantiated cost of mandatory microchipping, boarding fees, hotel service charges, licensing fees at the new base, and pet shipping fees if the member flies rather than drives, or if the pet is shipped separately from the member.



Allowances for overseas shipping include reimbursements for quarantine fees and testing titer levels for entry. Details are included in a [546-page publication](#), *The Joint Travel Regulations for Uniformed Service Members and DoD Civilian Employees*.

The new policy is part of a DoD initiative called "Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families" that also includes strengthening support for families with improved access to quality and affordable child care. "DOD recognizes that pets can be a source of stability and security to service members and families who often move. Defraying the cost of PCS moves involving a pet acknowledges the role played by these emotional constants and will improve quality of life for the force," said Jennifer McPherson-Todd, director of the [Defense Travel Management Office](#).



We Hate to Have to Ask...

... but we need your help to keep the LINK's news, trainings, information, and systems-changing strategies flowing freely. Together, we can drive sustainable change that protects animals, and their people and communities, from violence, abuse and neglect. Please [click here](#) to donate safely and securely.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and The LINK

Virginia Animal Cruelty Enforcement Opens Doors for Other Criminal Investigations



The pioneering statewide Animal Law Unit operating under Virginia's Office of the Attorney General received impressive publicity in February, when the [Cardinal News](#) featured the Unit and its director, Michelle Welch.

Michelle Welch

The Unit is a team of attorneys and investigators who focus on animal abuse and neglect, trafficking and training in animal law issues for law enforcement and other state attorneys. "I like to say that my role as Attorney General is that I often say we're the people's protector," Attorney General Jason Miyares told the newspaper, adding that in many cases, animals in Virginia are very much considered part of "the people."



Jason Miyares

Miyares recognizes the Link aspect of animal cruelty prosecutions. "The people that are perpetrating these acts, so many of them ... also are engaged in other criminal enterprises," he said. "Sometimes you have ... a high degree of suspicion this person is engaged in narcotics dealing," he continued, but a lack of evidence hampers getting a search warrant. But a way in the door can be that person's treatment of animals which turns up results and allows investigators to broaden their scope. "It is a useful tool in the toolbox for law enforcement," Miyares said.

The Animal Law Unit was created in 2015 during then-Attorney General Mark Herring's first term, when he saw the office's animal law prosecution as one of its strengths. He decided to set some of those attorneys on the beat full time and designated Welch, now a Senior Assistant Attorney General and still the director of the Unit, as its head. Welch had already made a name for herself in the world of animal law and Link prosecutions.

"I thought the abilities and talent of those lawyers were an underused asset, and without having to ask the legislature for any more resources or funding, we could give the lawyers who did that kind of work [a platform]," Herring said.

For her part, Welch sees the prosecution of animal cruelty cases a calling. "It became clear to me that [animals] need-

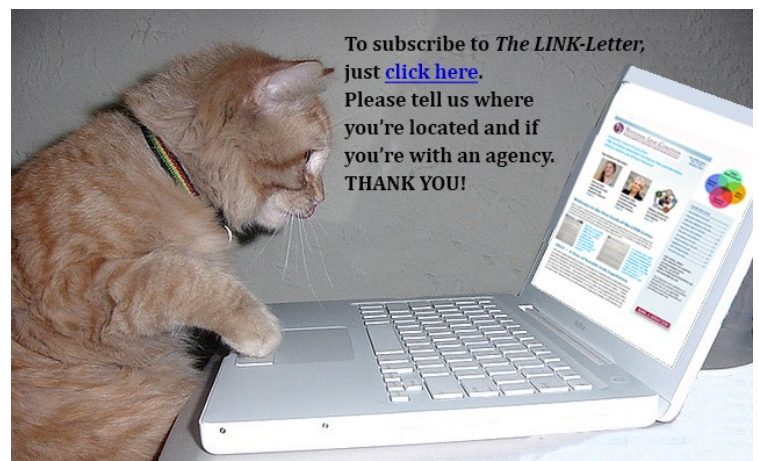
ed a real advocate, a prosecutor who was going to do that case really effectively," she told a TV interviewer in 2022. "It really is an honor to

protect animal victims and seek justice on behalf of them. That is where I get my energy. Animal abusers need to be brought to justice."

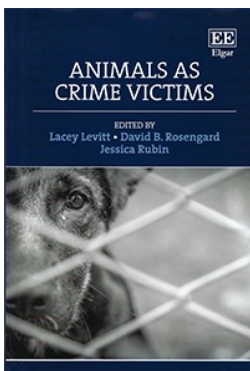
In subsequent years, the Unit has closed more than 3,000 cases, including some of the state's highest-profile cases involving zoos, dogfighters and cockfighters, wildlife trafficking, and food production facilities. "How a society treats its animals says something about who we are as people," Herring said. "And so the Animal Law Unit says something about who we are as Virginians."

"How a society treats its animals says something about who we are as people. The Animal Law Unit says something about who we are as Virginians."

—Former Attorney General Mark Herring



Textbook for Criminal Justice Officials Addresses The Link



Law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and the entire criminal justice system now have an improved way to look at animal cruelty crimes and their Link to human violence through the publication of a new book. The emphasis of *Animals As Crime Victims*, throughout 309 well-researched and compelling pages written by 21 renowned authorities, is that in any civilized society, victimized animals should be considered crime victims.

The book provides law enforcement personnel, attorneys, veterinarians, mental health professionals, and other stakeholders with details to advance legislation, court decisions and improvements in how various fields respond to animal maltreatment. The 16 chapters represent a collaborative effort and a multiplier effect that brings together theorists and practitioners.

Co-editors **Lacey Levitt**, **David Rosengard** and **Jessica Rubin** begin the book by describing how both the increase in public understanding of animals' cognitive and emotional experiences, plus research revealing The Link between animal maltreatment and interpersonal violence, warrant re-examination of how the criminal justice system and legislators respond to animal welfare issues. "For the legal system to embrace the notion that animals are not only injured by cruelty, but are actually crime victims, offers a sea change in how animals are positioned within the law," they write.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

Many of the book's contributors make reference to The Link. In his entire chapter on "The Relationship Between Animal Maltreatment and Interpersonal Violence," **Brian Holoyda** writes that, "The Link serves as a major scientific rationale for the adoption, expansion, or modification of legislation that protects animals from potentially harmful human behavior." His extensive review of Link research and how the Link concept has propelled animal welfare legislation forward since the 1990s concludes with a warning that such a focus raises "the risk of minimizing the significance of violence against animals, which could preclude the development of a body of law reconceptualizing animals as victims."



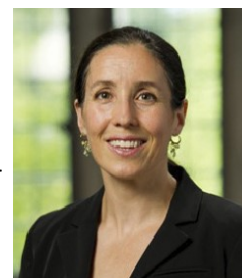
Brian Holoyda

In "Proposing a Nonhuman Animal Victimology," **Melanie Flynn** argues that the inclusion of four types of animal maltreatment in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System – seen as an imperfect process but nevertheless a major advancement to finally compile national data on animal abuse incidence and its Links with other crimes – continues to denigrate animals because these offenses are listed as "crimes against society, reinforcing the idea that animals are not victims." (Regrettably, Flynn fails to note that under prior FBI terminology, animal cruelty was listed among "crimes against property.")



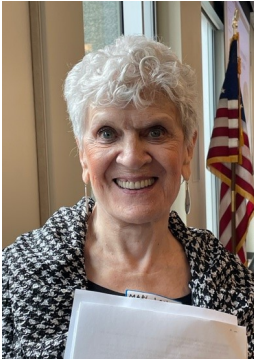
Melanie Flynn

Rubin describes how Connecticut enacted "Desmond's Law," the nation's first Court Animal Advocate law, in response to a confluence of factors: the state's historical underenforcement of anti-cruelty laws; recognition of animals' sentience; a need to offer law students experiential learning opportunities and courtroom training; and acknowledgement of the connection between violence to humans and animals. (continued on Page 12...)



Jessica Rubin

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and The LINK



Mary Lou Randour notes “a large body of empirical research gathered over the last 40 years that demonstrates a clear connection between animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence” in introducing mental health professionals to the concept of animals as victims. She outlines strategies for overcoming the challenges in identifying

and addressing suspected animal abuse: vague confidentiality laws; lack of mandated reporting laws; an absence of training; and ignorance of the available resources for animal victims and their families.



Martha Smith-Blackmore and **Sheila Segurson** address veterinary confidentiality by

noting that AVMA’s Principles of Veterinary Ethics allow practitioners to report suspicions of abuse if the health and welfare of an individual, animals, or others are endangered. Citing Link findings, they describe how reporting suspected animal maltreatment helps to protect both public health and public safety.



Gary Patronek

Gary Patronek describes some of the Link-based responses to large-scale animal neglect and hoarding cases that could help prevent “victimhood.” These include: impounding the animals; forfeiture and possession bans; psychological treatment and evaluations; and including pets in protective orders.

“As public and law enforcement awareness of The Link between animal maltreatment, interpersonal violence, and



Virginia Maxwell, left, & Cassandra Reyes

other criminal behavior increases, reporting of animal cruelty and expectation of responses is rising,” warn **Virginia Maxwell** and **Cassandra Reyes**. Their chapter on “Preparing Law enforcement to Respond to Animal Victims” calls for additional animal-specific training, additional personnel, budgetary resources and multi-disciplinary responses – factors that may have no equivalent in crimes affecting only humans.

—Levitt, L., Rosengard, D.B., & Rubin, J. (Eds.). (2024). *Animals as Crime Victims*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Maryland Lawmakers “Missing the Mark” in Juvenile Justice Reform

“Childhood animal cruelty may indicate a conduct disorder and is linked to other antisocial behaviors, especially bullying. It may also be a sign that



Caroline A. Griffin

a child is a victim of violence, as children who engage in these crimes are more than twice as likely to have suffered abuse or neglect themselves. Alarming, studies have examined the link between children who have been sexually abused and then

proceeded to harm animals. These children need intervention, and judges have great discretion to protect the juveniles who appear before them.”

Those are the watchwords from Caroline A Griffin, co-founder of Baltimore’s famed [Show Your Soft Side](#) campaign, in an Op-Ed in the March 22 [Baltimore Sun](#), lamenting the debate over **HB 814** in the Maryland General Assembly. The House version of the sweeping juvenile law reform proposal, included authorizing the Department of Juvenile Services to

charge minors who engage in aggravated animal cruelty. Unfortunately, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee stripped animal cruelty crimes from its version of the bill, **SB 744**.

“The Senate version of the Juvenile Law Reform bill misses the mark by turning a blind eye to the seriousness of these offenses,” Griffin wrote, citing a Link case in Maryland and national organizations’ recognition of The Link as a warning sign for adolescent and adult criminal activities.

Raising LINK Awareness

Pennsylvania Advocates Address Link on PBS Radio Station



Three representatives of Pennsylvania's Keystone Link Coalition were featured in an extensive 21-minute interview on Harrisburg's PBS radio station WITF on March 7. [Click here](#) to listen to Scott Lamar's program, "The Spark," about "Animal cruelty and violence toward humans run hand-in-hand."

Teresa Olsen, Program Director for the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect (SCAN), cited statistics linking physical child abuse with an 88% co-occurrence of animal abuse. She also described how a child's fear of retaliation against a pet is a weapon to ensure children's silence about sexual abuse.

Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania State Director for the Humane Society of the U.S., described how Link activities "connect the dots between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, and our coalitions really come together dedicated to the prevention of protecting both humans and animals as victims of abuse."

Dana Herrmann-Hart, Director of Legal Services and the PAWS for Empowerment Program at Pittsburgh's Crisis Center North, described working with domestic violence survivors with pets. "Pet ownership can sometimes be a barrier to leaving. The abuser will say, if you leave, I'm getting the pet, or they don't want to leave their pet in an abusive situation, and they have that intensified emotional bond with that pet during the crisis," she said.

The LINK... in the LITERATURE

Study Links Adult & Child Pornography with Animal Sexual Abuse

In a study comparing 254 members of the public with 78 adults who had previously been convicted of child sexual and exploitation offenses, 44% of the offenders reported having viewed adult pornography involving animal sexual abuse; 18% reported having viewed child pornography that involved animal sexual abuse. Only 3% of the general public respondents reported viewing any pornography that involved bestiality. Offenders viewed more diverse categories of adult sexual exploitation materials than non-offenders, including more bestiality, hentai, teen, and nudist/naturist material.

-Steel, C.M.S., Newman, E., O'Rourke, S., & Quayle, E. (2021). *Collecting and viewing behaviors of child sexual exploitation material offenders. Child Abuse and Neglect, 118, 105133.* DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105133.

Canary Island Teens' Attitudes toward Animal Abuse Explored

In the Canary Islands, a region of Spain described as having very high rates of intentional poisoning of wildlife and abandonment of pets in a country with the European Union's highest rates of animal abuse, researchers examined the perception of animal abuse among 302 adolescents and the social and demographic factors impacting their perception of animal abuse. The researchers report that perception of animal abuse was influenced by socio-demographic variables, with gender being the most important. The demographic profile of adolescents least responsive to animal abuse concerns was a male engaged in sports, not owning a dog, and hailing from a family involved in hunting. The authors recommend raising awareness of animal welfare at an early age, promoting artistic activities, encouraging contact with animals, and sporting practices that do not generate a lack of empathy for animals.

— Estévez-Pérez, L., Zumbado, M., Luzardo, O.P., & Henríquez-Hernández, L.A. (2024). *Perception of animal abuse among adolescents: Influence of social and demographic factors. Animals, 14, 972.* <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani14060972>

Therapeutic Interventions and The LINK

Dog-Training Program Gives Offenders and Dogs a New Leash on Life

A prison inmate dog-training program in North Carolina is giving inmates and dogs a second chance. Four dogs undergo a 10-week training session at the Forsyth County Correctional Center in Winston-Salem where the New Leash on Life program is changing inmates' lives.

"The men save the dogs, the dogs save the men, it's a beautiful thing," said Candide Jones, the President of [Piedmont Animal Welfare Alliance](#). "This program takes dogs really in need of training in order to be adopted and we pair it with the prison, who chooses qualifying inmate trainers. In 10



weeks the dogs are crate trained, obedience trained, housetrained, advanced obedience, and agility trained."

The dogs are with the men 14 hours a day and sleep in indoor kennels on the prison grounds. After 10 weeks, there's a graduation where the dogs are adopted into permanent homes.

Shuki Martin, program coordinator, told [WFMY-TV](#) how the program is changing offenders' lives. "It teaches them to be a community service while incarcerated and this is something that they could use once they get out," said Martin. "They always come back to me and say, 'Hey, thank you, that taught me patience, that

"The men save the dogs, the dogs save the men, it's a beautiful thing."

taught me responsibility,' so it's a lot of different things that the guys are getting from this program."

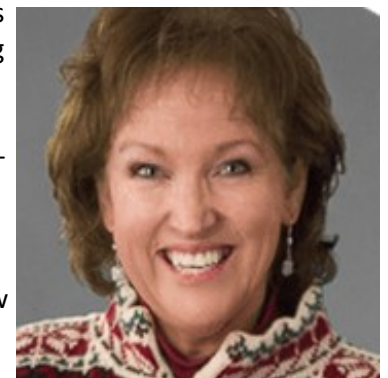
Animal-Assisted Play Therapy® Seen as Help for Childhood Animal Abusers



Katharine Wenocur

of implementing Animal Assisted Play Therapy® to treat symptoms of trauma and attachment challenges when harm to animals has occurred.

Intentional harm to animals in childhood often correlates with histories of witnessing, experiencing or perpetrating violence. Without appropriate intervention, children and adolescents who abuse animals following exposure to family violence risk long-term behavioral health challenges. While some treatment models have been specifically designed to reduce the risk of future violence among children displaying this behavior, interventions involving nonhuman animals represent a novel approach and show promise in addressing behavioral challenges associated with this behavior. Framed through the lens of a clinical case study, this article presents the potential benefits



Rise VanFleet

-- Wenocur, K., & VanFleet, R. (2024). *Animal Assisted Play Therapy® for childhood animal abuse following exposure to family violence: A case study. People and Animals: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 7(1). <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/paij/vol7/iss1/4>

AVERT Future Violence Act Re-Introduced



Sen. Thom Tillis A game-changing measure with the potential to be the most widespread federal recognition of how animal abuse is linked with human violence and which would create the AVERT Future Violence Act — Animal Violence Exposes Real Threat of Future Violence — has been re-introduced into Congress. The bipartisan **S 3737** has **Sen. Gary Peters** been introduced in the Senate again by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Gary Peters (D-MI).



Rep. Dina Titus A companion bill, **H.R. 7396**, sponsored by Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV-11) with five bipartisan co-sponsors, was introduced in the House.

The AVERT Future Violence Act would direct 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. The study would examine: evidence-informed risk factors associated with individuals who commit various types of animal cruelty; whether certain such

acts demonstrate a tendency or likelihood to commit future acts of violence against humans; and the types of interpersonal violence, such as domestic violence, most commonly associated with certain acts of animal cruelty. It would recommend needed areas for future research on animal cruelty and develop best practices for early interventions to prevent animal cruelty and interventions with offenders to prevent future animal cruelty.

The study would generate a report recommending specific policy recommendations for legislative and regulatory action at the federal, state and local levels to address the evidence-informed risk factors that may contribute to individuals' acts of animal cruelty and to develop effective interventions and diversion strategies for juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders to reduce the likelihood of future crimes of violence against animals or people.

The measure would also authorize \$2,000,000 for the Stop Future Violence Grant Program to fund state and local governments and tribes, courts, and organizations in developing and strengthening effective detection strategies and early intervention or diversion resources to stop acts of animal cruelty and rehabilitate offenders.

Such organizations could include: animal shelters; animal welfare



Rep. Kathy Clark organizations; mental health services for perpetrators and survivors of crimes; training programs for law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, veterinarians or mental health professionals; domestic violence and sexual assault service providers and coalitions; child abuse or elder abuse service providers; family services departments; community-based and culturally-specific organizations; and other nonprofit organizations.

The AVERT Act was originally proposed in 2021 by Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA-5) ([see the December 2021 LINK-Letter](#)) who had spent six years shepherding the PAWS (Pet and Women Safety) Act through three sessions of Congress. Clark, who is now the House Minority Whip, is not in a position to sponsor the AVERT Act again. Clark, Sens. Tillis and Peters, and multiple bipartisan co-sponsors reintroduced the AVERT Act again unsuccessfully in 2022 ([See the September 2022 LINK-Letter](#)).

LEGISLATION... and The LINK

Think Tank Compiles Annual Lists of Animal Legislation in U.S. and Canada

The [Brooks Institute for Animal Rights Law and Policy](#), an animal law think-and-do tank founded in 2017, publishes free annual compendiums of significant municipal, state and federal laws in the U.S. and Canada. These compendiums add to the Institute's analysis of legislative needs and initiatives that address interdisciplinary and intersectional collaboration.

The compendiums are curated compilations of legislative, regulatory and judicial news gathered from the Institute's weekly Animal Law Digest. The 2023 [U.S. edition](#) includes: 12 pages of highlights; details of laws enacted in 18 states and five cities and counties; case law updates from courts in 16 states and at the federal level; and news updates from 15 federal agencies and 11 state agencies.

The 2023 [Canadian edition](#) includes federal and provincial legislation, litigation, enforcement, agencies, and academia.


The National Link Coalition monitored 137 state and federal bills that were introduced in the U.S. and Canada in 2023 related to specific Link issues such as pet protection orders, animal sexual abuse, therapeutic interventions for animal cruelty offenders, cross-reporting, and animal cruelty's Links to other crimes. We celebrated 16 of these bills that were enacted into law ([See the January 2024 LINK-Letter](#)).

However, few of these Link advances are recognized in the Institute's Compendiums, which focus more on such animal rights issues as "ag-gag" laws, breed discrimination by insurance companies, animals used in research facilities, banning retail pet sales, and agricultural operations.

The National Link Coalition hopes to produce more extensive reports on specific advancements in Link-themed laws in the future.

The Brooks Institute advances a broadly collaborative approach in animal law academics, scholarship, and policy-making. It creates neutral space and opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas and breaking down disciplinary silos. The Institute shines light on pathways for new and practicing lawyers to infuse animal interests into legal practice via education and career development, pursuing a paradigm shift that advances animal law and policy.





HELP US KEEP THE LINK FREE!

We at the National Link Coalition believe that information is power, and that power shouldn't be available only to those who can afford to pay. That's why we keep The LINK-Letter and the fabulous resources at NationalLinkCoalition.org free of charge.

Thousands of people around the U.S. and world rely on our high-quality information to keep up-to-date on new developments in this rapidly-evolving, dynamic field.

Please support our mission and help keep The Link free for all by making a [tax-deductible contribution](#) to the National Link Coalition today.

LEGISLATION... and The LINK

Minnesota Considers State Animal Protection Office Based on The Link



The bills in Minnesota that would create a state-funded, centralized Office of Animal Protection based upon The Link between animal abuse and human violence ([see the March 2024 LINK-Letter](#)) received additional exposure through a [news release](#) published by the

Rep. Matt Norris House of Representatives promoting the legislation. “Criminologists have long demonstrated a link between cruelty toward animals and cruelty toward humans,” begins the news release.

“We’ve all heard of serial killers torturing animals before going after people, but animal cruelty is also linked to more common crimes such as child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse,” Rep. Matt Norris, DFL-Blaine, told the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee on presenting **HF 3799**. The committee laid over the bill for consideration in a larger committee bill. A companion measure, **SF 3542** is in the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

Oregon Increases Penalties for Animal Abuse Linked with Domestic Violence and Children

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek signed **HB 4043** into law on March 27, upgrading animal cruelty crimes into an aggravated animal cruelty category if the offense involved domestic violence or assault, or occurred in the presence of a child.

The new law also makes it illegal to commit a crime of interfering with an investigation into an offense against an animal. Among its provisions, the new law, which takes effect on June 6, prohibits intentionally or knowingly concealing an animal, transporting an animal or taking other action to prevent a peace officer or a licensed veterinarian from examining an animal that is a suspected victim of a cruelty offense.

The proposed office would not have any authority to enforce animal cruelty laws but would “address animal cruelty in a more comprehensive and centralized manner” through the creation of an advisory committee that would make recommendations to local law enforcement agencies on animal cruelty investigations and reporting, victim services, crime data collection, cross-reporting, courtroom advocates, and crime prevention.

Retired Dakota County Attorney Jim Backstrom testified in support of the measure, stating that he prosecuted many types of animal cruelty cases during his career which often involved other crimes. Backstrom also stressed the connection between cruelty to animals and violent crimes against humans. “If this is ignored, such violence can continue and become more severe.”

The bill would appropriate \$350,000 in fiscal year 2025 to fund the office, which could give grants to state and local units of government and nonprofit organizations to promote animal protection efforts. Some agencies are opposing the bill because the new Office would lack enforcement powers.

Canada Considers Coercive Control

A bill in the Canadian Parliament would add a new crime of “Controlling or Coercive Conduct” to the Criminal Code. Such conduct would include actions that cause a spouse, partner, relative, or date to fear physical violence or cause alarm or distress.

Because the vulnerability of animals used as tools in coercive control is not specifically addressed, Advocates Barbara Cartwright of Humane Canada and Carmen Gill from the University of New Brunswick testified that because family pets are often killed as a warning in domestic violence, such acts should be specified within the bill’s language to add clarity for law enforcement, criminal justice, prosecutors, and victims and survivors.

LEGISLATION... and The LINK

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES — 2024

Most 2024 state legislative sessions are in full swing, with 69 new Link-themed bills joining 63 bills carried over from 2023 in 22 states and Congress. The following list includes proposals which are currently being considered. The bills are color-coded as follows:

- Purple bills affect domestic violence and pet protection orders
- Dark blue bills affect child abuse and maltreatment
- Grey bills affect abuse of the elderly and disabled
- Pink bills affect animal sexual abuse
- Green bills affect cross-reporting among animal care & control, veterinary and human services professionals
- Orange bills affect court-appointed advocates for animals
- Red bills affect animal hoarding
- Brown bills affect psychological assessments, interventions and treatments for animal cruelty offenders
- Light blue bills affect animal abuse Linked with other crimes

Please join us in following their progress and alert us to any additional bills we may have missed!

Note: Inclusion of a bill does not necessarily imply our endorsement of the measure or its specific language, but is included to demonstrate the breadth of proposals and the increased interest by legislators for laws addressing The Link between animal abuse and other crimes and acts of interpersonal violence.

USA—FEDERAL BILLS

NEW THIS MONTH: S 3737 and H.R. 7396 — the **AVERT Future Violence Act (Animal Violence Exposes Real Threat of Future Violence)** — would 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 fund a \$2,000,000 Stop Future Violence Grant Program to develop and strengthen effective detection strategies and early intervention or diversion resources to stop acts of animal cruelty and rehabilitate offenders.

H.R. 3957, the PUPP Act of 2023 (Providing for Unhoused People with Pets) would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to modify and upgrade structures that serve as interim and permanent housing for unhoused individuals with pets, and to provide supportive and veterinary services. It was referred to the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committees' Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry.

S. 2734, the PAWS (Pet And Women Safety) Reauthorization Act of 2023 would re-authorize the 2019 federal PAWS Act – making \$3,000,000 available annually to help domestic violence shelters build facilities to accommodate pets and enabling pet protection orders to be enforced across state lines – to be continued from 2024 to 2028. The bill is in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

U.S. H.R. 56, the RAISE Act (Reforming Alternatives to Incarceration and Sentencing to Establish a Better Path for Youth Act of 2023) would have the Bureau of Prisons establish a two-year pilot program, in at least 10 judicial districts, to equip incarcerated youths with the skills to provide therapy and training to animals seized by federal law enforcement and to organizations that provide shelter and other services to abandoned, rescued or otherwise vulnerable animals. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

ARIZONA

HB 2076 would expand existing definitions of acts of animal cruelty that also constitute acts of domestic violence to include intentionally or knowingly subjecting a domestic animal to cruel mistreatment or killing it.

HB 2234, HB 2756 and SB 1643

would require courts to prohibit individuals who have been convicted of domestic violence — which in Arizona includes coercive acts of animal cruelty — from possessing firearms.

HB 2238 would allow individuals to petition courts to issue a Severe Threat Order of Protection against an individual who has committed or attempted a credible threat of death or serious physical injury to self or others or cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would prohibit the respondent from possessing firearms. Violation of the protective order would be a Class 4 felony.

HB 2241 would expand the definition of bestiality to include possessing, distributing, transporting, exhibiting, selling, purchasing, electronically transmitting, or exchanging any visual depiction of a person engaged in sexual conduct with an animal. The crime would be a Class 1 misdemeanor unless the depicted person is a minor under 15 years old, in which case it becomes a Class 6 felony.

CALIFORNIA

SB 89 would expand the definition of stalking to include willfully, maliciously and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for the safety of that person's pet, service animal, emotional support animal, or horse. The bill passed the Senate and was sent to the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

SB 902 would prohibit persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing a firearm for 10 years.

AB 1215 would have appropriated up to 7% of the Department of Housing and Community Development's budget to administer a Pets Assistance With Support (PAWS) grant to domestic violence and homeless shelters to provide shelter, food and veterinary services for pets. The bill passed the Assembly and Senate unanimously, but **was vetoed by the Governor**.

SB 933 and AB 1873 would expand the definition of sexual exploitation of a child to include depictions of sexual conduct between a minor and an animal generated by the use of artificial intelligence.

SB 921 would make it a crime to abuse or subject an animal to needless suffering, even if it does not cause physical injury, and require offenders to undergo counseling.

AB 2917 would expand provisions allowing courts to issue gun violence restraining orders, prohibiting a person from purchasing or possessing a firearm for 1 to 5 years, to individuals with a history of cruelty to animals.

FLORIDA

HB 45 and **SB 86** would require the Office of the State Courts Administrator to issue free wallet-sized laminated "Hope Cards" to petitioners who have been granted a final order of protection. Hope Cards will contain information about the respondent and any other individuals or companion animals covered under the protection order. **SB 86** passed both chambers unanimously and was sent to the Governor on March 5.

HB 297 and SB 272 would have authorize courts to order attorneys or law school students to be appointed in the interests of justice for criminal proceedings regarding dogs' or cats' welfare. **The bills died in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**

GEORGIA

HB 217 and SB 255 would expand dogfighting statutes to include cockfighting and make it a high aggravated misdemeanor to permit a minor child to be present at a dog or cock fight. Subsequent convictions would be felonies. The bills are in the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and the Senate Public Safety Committee.

SB 418 would require the basic and in-service training courses for all peace officers to include animal fighting and recognition of animal abuse.

HAWAII

SB 30 would expand domestic violence protection orders, which already enjoin any party from harming or threatening household animals, to allow minor children in the home to file for a protection order or a temporary restraining order even if the child was not a victim of domestic violence.

HB 1580, declaring that "animal cruelty offenders are a threat to the health and safety of all members of our communities, especially vulnerable populations," and that "animal cruelty is a predictive and co-occurring crime with violence against humans," would increase the category of offense and penalties for animal cruelty, animal fighting, and sexual assault of an animal.

HB 1980 and SB 2684, declaring that "illegal animal fighting is directly associated with other criminal activities such as illegal gambling, firearms possession, drug distribution, engagement of minors, and human violence," would increase the penalty for cockfighting to a felony and impose fines on persons who attend or gamble on a cockfight.

IDAHO

HB 512 would set minimum incarceration limits and increase penalties for offenders who induce children to commit bestiality or participate in ritual animal sacrifices. Offenders with history of multiple crimes would be ineligible for probation, parole or suspended sentences.

HB 537 would limit the crime of bestiality with a minor child to offenders who are at least four years older than the child.

ILLINOIS

SB 2633 and HB 4469 would enable persons petitioning for a protective order to also seek to prevent the respondent from possessing firearms, ammunition, or parts that could be assembled to make an operable firearm. Illinois has included pet protection provisions in these orders since 2007.

HB 3294 would expand the definition of domestic violence abuse to include the infliction of fear of imminent conduct related to animal cruelty, aggravated cruelty, animal torture, or sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal, taken against a domestic animal when used as a method of coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge directed against a family member or member of an unmarried couple who has a close bond of affection to the domestic animal.

HB 3454 would make the theft of any animal a Class 4 felony.

Purple = Domestic Violence

Dark Blue = Child Abuse

Grey = Elder/Disabled Abuse

Pink = Animal Sexual Abuse

Green = Cross-Reporting

Orange = Court Animal Advocates

Red = Animal Hoarding

Brown = Assessments/Interventions

Light Blue = Link & Other Crimes

IOWA

SF 2180 and HF 2318 would expand the statutory definition of bestiality to include organizing, promoting, conducting, promoting, permitting, filming, distributing, possessing, or participating as an observer of an act involving a sex act with an animal. It would add enhanced penalties for subsequent convictions.

HF 472 and SF 316 would grant veterinarians who act in good faith immunity from civil, criminal and administrative liability for cooperating with law enforcement officers, reporting suspected animal cruelty or neglect, rescuing a threatened animal, and serving as an expert witness in a cruelty case.

KENTUCKY

SB 106 and HB 253 (“Kyan’s Law”) would require animal control officers to receive training on recognizing child abuse and add animal control officers to the list of people with a duty to report dependency, neglect, or abuse of a child.

SB 243 would make cockfighting and allowing a child to attend any animal fight, currently a misdemeanor, a felony.

MARYLAND

SB 17 and HB 667 would establish each animal harmed in an act of animal cruelty as a separate offense and that convictions and sentences for animal cruelty could not be merged with convictions and sentences for any other co-occurring crime.

NEW THIS MONTH: **HB 814** would allow minors to be charged with aggravated animal cruelty, but **SB 744** deleted this provision.

MASSACHUSETTS

H.4241 would add “coercive control,” including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals connected to a family or household member, to the definition of abuse.

H.1702 and S.1019 would expand existing laws that allow courts to include animals in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders to also include the statutes covering stalking harassment.

S.90 and H.198 would give the Department of Children & Families the right to request that pre-adoptive parents or foster parents provide a behavior/temperament assessment, histories of dangerous incidents, spay/neuter status, the number of animals in the home and their housing conditions, and/or veterinary records of any animal maintained on the premises; DCF could not restrict placement of a child solely based on the presence of any particular breed of dog in the home. The bills are in the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

S.82 would require animal control officers, who are already mandated to report suspected child abuse, to complete an evidence-based training, approved by the Office of the Child Advocate, on child abuse and sexual abuse. Current law only states that mandated reporters must complete training. The bill is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

S.1142 would allow courts to order psychiatric, psychological or mental health evaluations and treatment for animal abuse offenders. Completion of counseling, anger management, humane education or other treatment programs designed to address the underlying causative factors for the violation could result in any imposed fines being suspended. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

NEW THIS MONTH: **H. 4241** would add “coercive control”, which would include “committing or threatening to commit cruelty or abuse to an animal connected to the family or household member,” to Sec. 1 of Chapter 209A of the General laws.

MICHIGAN

SB 248 would define the age of persons eligible to have a courtroom support dog as those under 16 years of age or over 16 years if they have a developmental disability.

HB 5410 would replace the archaic “abominable and detestable crime against nature either with mankind or with any animal” with the term “bestiality.”

NEW THIS MONTH: **SB 783** would require child protective services employees to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to law enforcement officers.

MINNESOTA

SF 3324 and HF 3300 would allow courts to appoint an advocate to represent the interests of the animal from a list of attorneys who have been trained in this procedure and who would serve pro bono. The bills are in the Senate Judiciary & Public Safety and House Public Safety & Finance Committees.

SF 3324 and HF 3300 would require Office of Animal Protection personnel to report suspected child and elder abuse to the Department of Human Services; child and adult protective services employees would be required to report suspected animal cruelty to the Office of Animal Protection. All reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability if the report is made in good faith. The bills are in the Senate Judiciary & Public Safety and House Public Safety & Finance Committees.

SF 3542 and HF 3799 would create a comprehensive and centralized state Office of Animal Protection, under the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, based on the premise that “animal cruelty is linked to human violence and criminal activity.”

MISSOURI

HB 1695, SB 1259 and SB 995 would require animal control officers and humane investigators to report suspected abuse, neglect or bullying of elderly adults, disabled persons and children. Professionals working in elder and child abuse would be required to report suspected companion animal abuse to a Missouri Animal Control Association hotline. All persons in the state’s child and eligible adult protection and welfare system would be mandated to complete one hour of training, within the first 60 days of employment, on how to identify and report companion animal abuse and the relationship between companion animal abuse and elder abuse and child abuse, respectively. Animal control and humane investi-

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Light Blue = Link & Other Crimes

gators would be required to complete training on how to identify and report suspected abuse of a child or eligible adult and the relationship between child, eligible adult and companion animal abuse or neglect.

NEW JERSEY

A 2456 and S282 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.

A291 would expand the statutory definitions of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons' animals. They also 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 law enforcement with civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith.

A 296 ("Shyanne's Law") would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders.

A 310 would allow 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.

A369 would prohibit convicted animal cruelty offenders from having or being issued a permit a firearm for a handgun.

NEW MEXICO

SB 12 would have replaced the definition of "domestic abuse" with a more encompassing term of "abuse" that would include incidents or patterns of behavior by a household member against another household member consisting of, or resulting in, harm or threatened harm to an animal. It also would have allowed courts to include pets in protection-from abuse orders. **The bill died when the Legislature adjourned.**

SUCCESS!!! **HB 2, the state's budget bill, included \$360,000 for the next two years to fund Children, Youth & Families' programs to provide and support temporary safe havens for the animals of domestic violence victims while they transition to safety.**

NEW YORK

A 444 would establish a misdemeanor crime of knowingly causing a minor to attend an animal fight.

A 39 and S 5309 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.

A 483 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.

A 1865 would make sexual conduct with an animal that results in the animal's injury or death a felony. Convicted offenders would be required to: relinquish and permanently forfeit custody of all animals; be barred from working or volunteering in a place with unsupervised access to animals; and reimburse animal shelters and veterinarians for costs of care and treatment.

A 1844 would move the state's anti-cruelty statutes from the Agriculture and Markets Law to the Penal Law.

A 1276 and S 7812 "Bella's Law,"

based on the premise that "animal cruelty is a serious problem and that individuals who harm and abuse animals are statistically more likely to engage in domestic violence and child abuse," would require animal cruelty investigators to inform the Office of Children and Family Services who must further investigate the accused individual and coordinate its findings with the referring or prosecuting agency. The investigation would determine whether the accused or investigated party has any associated family or domestic violence. CFS would not be notified if it would jeopardize an ongoing investigation or the safety of an individual, or if it is clear the accused has no family members.

A 5504 would require every county in the state to have sufficient residential and non-residential domestic violence services and care for victims and their children. Residential shelters' programs could include therapy dogs and companion animals as well as service animals.

A 7903 and S 7608 would enable veterinarians to receive up to three hours of continuing education credit for providing pro bono veterinary care services to individuals in domestic violence and homeless shelters.

A 111 and S 1659 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.

A 394 and A 1430 would increase the penalties for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child.

A 3346-A and S 3170-A, "Kyra's Law," would allow courts to consider a person's threats to harm or kill emotional support or comfort animals among the risk assessment criteria in determining that person's visitation and custody rights in a child abuse proceeding.

A 5405 would cause the Attorney General to establish a 24-hour toll-free animal abuse hotline and inform the public of its existence. Hotline personnel would transmit reports received to appropriate law enforcement or animal protection organizations.

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A 3908 and S 5947 would require persons charged with enforcing laws prohibiting cruelty to animals to report when, in the performance of duties, there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse or maltreatment of a child has also occurred; persons mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment would be required to report suspected animal cruelty.

A 433, A 1507 and S 294 (“Buster’s Law”) would prohibit animal cruelty offenders from owning pets unless the offender demonstrates through psychological or psychiatric testing that he or she clearly and convincingly demonstrates the ability to care for the animal in a humane manner and then is specifically authorized to possess animals by a court order.

S 299 and A 390 would require offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals to undergo psychiatric evaluation and appropriate treatment for mental illness.

A 340 would include felony animal cruelty offenses among the crimes which would prohibit possession of a firearm.

A 1639 would require the district attorney in each county to appoint at least one assistant district attorney to be responsible for overseeing the prosecution of animal cruelty crimes.

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.

S 5337, S 8471 and A 7303 would add animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption.

A 8901 would add the harming, interference, harassment or intimidation of a service animal belonging to a current or former family member to the definition of a “domestic violence crime.”

A 8604 and S 8063, the “Hope Card Act,” would provide that any protected party of a final order of protection shall be provided either a digital image of the final order of protection or a durable, wallet-sized physical card that contains a summary of information about a final order of protection, including that pets can be included.

OHIO

SB 187 would prohibit individuals convicted of domestic violence from acquiring, having or using a firearm.

OREGON

SUCCESS!!! **HB 4043** increases the penalties for committing felony-level aggravated animal cruelty if the offense involved domestic violence or occurred in the presence of a child.

HB 4145 would create several levels of a state crime of creating, encouraging or failing to report a display of “animal crushing” videos.

SB 1574 would add sexual abuse of a corpse to the list of sex crimes for the purpose of sex offender reporting and would allow the Department of Transportation to share motor vehicle records with humane special agents.

PENNSYLVANIA

HB 1108, recognizing that “companion animals are living beings that are generally regarded as cherished family members that offer their owners companionship, security and assistance” and “occupy a special category of personal property which does not include inanimate property,” would allow parties in a divorce settlement to enter into an enforceable contract dictating the possession and care of pets based on which party could provide the best care and social interaction. The bill was approved by the House and sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 1210 would amend the Domestic Relations title to allow courts to grant temporary ownership rights over companion animals in protection orders and direct defendants from harming, possessing, transferring, or relocating the animal. The bill was approved by the House and sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 530 would require persons convicted of animal cruelty to attend and complete violence prevention counseling.

HB 642 would allocate \$2,000,000 per year to local law enforcement agencies to investigate and enforce violations of gambling and animal fighting laws. The bill is in the House Committee on Gaming Oversight.

SB 55 would order courts determining child custody to consider a party’s conviction for sexual intercourse with an animal, cruelty or aggravated cruelty to an animal, animal fighting, or possession of animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill would also permit the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts to develop and implement an ongoing education and training program for court officials on “all aspects of the maltreatment of children,” including the impact of child abuse and domestic violence – but not exposure to animal cruelty. The bill cites a duty to protect all children and defines domestic abuse as a pattern of abuse that can include abuse of a partner, spouse, child or pet. The bill passed the Senate and the House.

SB 852 would permit limited access to criminal records of certain individuals convicted of felonies. Individuals convicted of sexual intercourse with an animal within the previous 15 years would not be eligible for such limited access. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

HB 1928 would require courts to consider a party’s conviction for animal cruelty or animal fighting offenses in determining child custody that is in the safest interests of the child.

SB 1018 would allow child witnesses and victims to have access to an animal to provide emotional support or mitigate emotional trauma during the proceeding. The bill is in the Committee on Aging and Youth.

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RHODE ISLAND

H 7163 would expand existing law, which allows courts to include household animals and pets in protection orders, to allow courts to award custody of the pets to the plaintiff.

NEW THIS MONTH: H 7970 would require courts, in awarding sole or joint possession of a domestic companion animal in a divorce or separation agreement, to consider the best interest of the animal based upon a list of criteria.

NEW THIS MONTH: H 7236 and S 2655 would add animal cruelty, malicious killing or injury of an animal, and abandonment of an animal to the statutory definition of domestic violence.

TENNESSEE

HB 2302 and SB 2116 increase from 15 days to 15 business days the time period a court may send notification of a defendant's conviction of aggravated cruelty to animals to the appropriate protective agencies if the defendant resides in a household with minor children or elderly individuals.

HB 2068 and SB 1782 would increase the penalties for cockfighting from a misdemeanor to a felony and add a fine of \$1,000—\$2,500 for attending a cockfight.

NEW THIS MONTH: HB 1875 and SB 1767 would expand the definition of "racketeering activity" to include committing, conspiring to commit, aiding, attempting to aid, soliciting, coercing, facilitating, or intimidating another person to commit the criminal offense of animal fighting.

SUCCESS!!! SB 1957 and HB 2079 permit veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty and testify in court in good faith with immunity from civil and criminal liability.

UTAH

HB 130 would have made it a misdemeanor to allow a minor child under age 18 to attend a dog- or cock-fight. **The bill died when the Legislature adjourned.**

SUCCESS!!! HB 478 extends the veterinarians' freedom from civil liability for reporting a violation in good faith to include reports of alleged abuses in animal care facilities, animal rescues, animal sanctuaries, and animal shelters.

VERMONT

H.27 would add "coercive controlling behavior," including threatening to harm or abduct the plaintiff's animals, to the definition of abuse for the purposes of obtaining a protective order.

WEST VIRGINIA

HB 4935 would have created a new misdemeanor crime of hoarding of animals. **The bill died in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**

HB 5146 would have prohibited animal hoarding, punishable by a fine of \$500 and seizure of the animals by an animal shelter. **The bill died in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**

WYOMING

NEW THIS MONTH: HB 77 would have added "threatening or menacing conduct that causes another person to reasonably believe that the person is in danger of an imminent battery" to the definition of domestic assault. **The provision was deleted and the Legislature adjourned.**

CANADA

NEW THIS MONTH: Bill C-332 would add a new crime of "controlling or coercive conduct" to the Criminal Code. Witnesses testified that acts or threats of animal abuse should be included within the definitions.

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Permission to Reprint

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

For Additional Information

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

The Link Training Calendar

More and more organizations are recognizing the value of training their staffs, multi-disciplinary groups, and the general public that preventing and responding to animal abuse can prevent other forms of family and community violence.

Here are some of the many training opportunities coming up — both in-person and virtual — in coming months. Click on the underlined hyperlinks for specific details and registration information.

If you're conducting a Link training, please let us know at least a month in advance so we can include it in the Calendar. And if you're looking for a speaker, please contact us so we can refer someone to you from our Speakers' Bureau.

LINK Training Opportunities

April 8-11 — Honolulu, Hawai'i: Paul Needham will present on The Link at the 21st Annual [Hawaii International Summit](#) of the Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma.

April 10 — (online): RedRover and Greater Good Charities will hold a [Don't Forget the Pets training workshop](#) on creating and sustaining housing programs for people and pets in crisis.

April 11 — Elkton, Md.: [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a workshop on creating and sustaining pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and the homeless.

April 12 — Augusta, Maine (online): Phil Arkow will present "We're All in This Together: Pooling Limited Animal Control Resources to Help People and Animals" at the Maine Animal Control Association's yearly training.

April 12-13 — Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Sask., Canada: Margaret Doyle, Dennis Smithson and Jill Gibson will present "Getting Out of the Silo," and Dillon Dodson will present "Social Work in Animal Care Spaces" at the 2024 [Saskatchewan SPCA Gathering for Animal & Human Welfare](#).

April 14 — Tokyo, Japan (online): The Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Good Canine Citizens will present a [webinar](#), "What is the 'LINK'? The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence."

April 15-18 — Springfield, Mo.: Mark Kumpf of the [Animal Control & Care Academy](#) will teach a unit on Proactive Animal Control, including responding to domestic violence situations, as part of the Advanced ACO Certification Course.

April 17 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

April 23-25 — San Diego, Calif.: Phil Arkow will be a keynote and workshop speaker at the 24th Annual International Family Justice Center [Conference](#).

April 24 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Claire Coughlin and Nikki Thompson will lead a webinar for Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) and the Crisis Center North on The Link between animal abuse and child maltreatment.

April 27 — Austin, Texas: Shelby Bobosky of the Texas Humane Legislation Network will present "Recent Texas Cases Involving the LINK: The Basics on Recognizing and Investigating The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence" at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

April 27 — Orlando, Fla.: Harbor House's annual [Paws for Peace Walk & Run](#) will raise funds for the pet-friendly shelter and awareness about domestic violence and its effect on pets and their owners.

April 29 — May 3 — Springfield, Mo.: "The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence" will be included in the 40-hour National Animal Cruelty Investigations training curriculum for [Level 3 Expert Animal Cruelty Investigators](#) offered by the University of Missouri Extension's Law Enforcement Training Institute.

May 9 — New York City, N.Y.: The Urban Resource Institute will celebrate the [10th anniversary](#) of its People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) co-sheltering program.

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

May 15 (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 Advocacy's [National Victim Assistance Academy](#).

May 17 — Columbus, Ohio: The [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#) and the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges will conduct a day of technical assistance for judges and child protective services officers on an overview of The Link and including issues involving animals in family and juvenile court cases.

May 17-18 — San Antonio, Texas: Dillon Dodson will present "Social Work's Role in Preserving the Human-Animal Bond: From Animal Sheltering to Prevention and Early Intervention," and Zoë Agnew-Svoboda will present The BestyBnB Blueprint: Bridging the Gap between Animal Welfare and Social Services," at the [HSUS Animal Care Expo](#).

May 20-22 — Gainesville, Fla.: The University of Florida's Veterinary Forensic Sciences Laboratory will host the 2024 [Animal Forensic Investigations Conference](#).

June 3-7 — Concord, N.C.: "The Relationship of Animal Abuse and Family Violence" will be included in the 40-hour National Animal Cruelty Investigations training curriculum for [Level 3 Expert Animal Cruelty Investigators](#) offered by the University of Missouri Extension's Law Enforcement Training Institute.

June 4-5 — Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Maya Gupta will conduct a [training](#) for the ASPCA and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office on animal cruelty investigations.

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

June 21-25 — Austin, Texas: Rachel Touroo will discuss how veterinarians can be expert witnesses, and Jody Lovejoy will discuss how hospitals can develop a Standard Operating Procedure for addressing suspected animal cruelty, at the [AVMA Convention](#).

July 16 — (online): Phil Arkow will present "The Missing LINK in Social Work: Addressing Animal Abuse to Improve Delivery of Services to Vulnerable Victims" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

July 17 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Aug. 21 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Aug. 26 — Westminster, Colo.: Hannah Tomazweski, LSW, of the Denver Dumb Friends League, will present "A Field Guide to 'The Link'" at the [Colorado Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Sept. 13-14 — Cleveland, Ohio: The 8th [International Veterinary Social Work Summit](#) will be held.

Sept. 16-19 — Albuquerque, N. Mex.: The National Adult Protective Services Association will hold its Annual [National Conference](#).

Sept. 16-20 — Madison, Wis.: "The Relationship of Animal Abuse to Domestic Abuse" will be presented as part of the [Wisconsin Humane Officer training program](#) offered by the University of Missouri Extension's Law Enforcement Training Institute's National Animal Cruelty Investigations training curriculum.

Sept. 18 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Sept. 23 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): A webinar for Pennsylvania's Keystone Link Coalition and the [Crisis Center North](#) will address The Link between animal abuse and elder abuse.

Sept. 30—Oct. 1 — Washington, D.C.: The NCJFCJ 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.



Oct. 16 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Oct. 18-20 —Portland, Ore.: The Animal Legal Defense Fund will hold the [32nd Animal Law Conference](#).

Nov. 5 (online): Jessica Chapman and David Rosengard of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present "Recognizing the Role of Trauma in Violence Against Animals" in a [webinar](#) for the Justice Clearinghouse.

Nov. 19 – (online): Phil Arkow will present "Connecting the Dots in Military and Civilian Families: Animal Abuse's Links to Other Family Violence" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Nov. 20 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Dec. 3 (online): Andrew Campbell will discuss the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and childhood perpetration of animal cruelty in a webinar, "School Shooters and Adverse Childhood Experiences" for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Dec. 18 (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

The LINK... in the NEWS

Son Found Mentally Incompetent in Killing of Mother and Family Dog



A Dubuque, Iowa man who told police his mother had been practicing "witchcraft" was initially found to be mentally competent to stand trial for her death and the bludgeoning of the family dog. Police responding to a call about a deceased woman said her son,

Tyler Dazey, 28, had a hatchet in his bedroom. The [Dubuque Telegraph Herald](#) reported that the mother had lacerations to her face, neck and head and that several fingers had been chopped off. A police search also found the family dog had died from a significant head injury. Family members said Dazey had a history of mental illnesses, including schizophrenia, and defense attorneys pursued a defense of insanity. Tazey was found not competent to stand trial, and was sent to a psychiatric hospital and prison for treatment and possible additional competency hearings.

Killer Who Streamed Grotesque Cat Killing Gets Life for Murder

A British transgender woman who livestreamed a grotesque video of feeding a dead cat into a blender before killing a man was sentenced to life imprisonment. The presiding justice said Scarlet Blake, 26, had an "obsession with harm and death," [The Sun](#) reported. Before murdering Jorge Martin Carreno by hitting him over the head with a vodka bottle, strangling him and throwing him in a river, Blake had streamed the graphic video which included stripping the cat's fur and removing its heart "as a memento," then boasting to friends about a "desire to open up a person."

Pedophile Gets Suspended Sentence for Child/Animal Sex Abuse

A British pedophile who had what [news media](#) called a "sickening stash" and a "vile collection" of child and animal sex abuse images on his phone was sentenced to eight months in prison, which was suspended pending his completing 35 days of rehabilitation activities, signing the sex offender registry, forfeiting and destroying his phone, and abiding by a sexual harm prevention order for the next 10 years. Karl Davenport, 46, of Eversley in Widnes, had 355 images and videos of child rape and child sexual abuse and seven extreme pornographic images portraying an act of intercourse with an animal.

Jealous Boyfriend Charged with Shooting Ex-Girlfriend's Horse



A jealous ex-boyfriend who accused her of cheating has been charged with shooting and killing her horse in a drunken rage. The [Idaho State Journal](#) reported that Shawn Brayden Jones, 24, of Moreland, Idaho, was charged with felony malicious injury of property for shooting "Bree," a 12-year-old American Quarter Horse that the woman had owned for nine years. A Bingham County sheriff's deputy said Jones, whose breath smelled of alcohol and who was under a probation order, reportedly admitted shooting the horse with a .22-caliber rifle. Jones faces up to five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

You Can Help Us Create Safer Communities!

The National Link Coalition is the only international education and advocacy organization working to prevent animal cruelty, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse by showing how they are linked. As the global resource center on The Link between animal cruelty and human violence we train multidisciplinary professionals, showcase programs, and publicize legislation and research to foster collaborations that create safer communities by recognizing that when animals are abused, people are at risk, and when people are abused, animals are at risk.

I.R.S. 501c3 tax ID
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Join us!



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