



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



**A NOTE TO OUR READERS:**

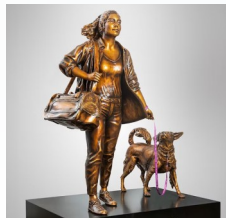
After a much-needed vacation, this June-July issue of The LINK-Letter will bring you up-to-date on all the latest news in the world of The Link.

**Top Stories in This Issue:**



**Who's required to report domestic violence and animal abuse?**

*(Pages 1-4)*



**Purina statue honors domestic violence co-shelters**

*(Page 5)*



**Bill would add animal abuse to NCANDS system**

*(Page 17)*

**National Link Coalition Compiles List of State Mandated Reporting Requirements**

As the Link movement to inspire cross-reporting among animal, child, elder, and domestic abuse agencies gains momentum, state and territorial laws and regulations throughout the U.S. are now requiring or permitting certain professionals to report animal cruelty, often with immunity from civil or criminal liability from confidentiality restrictions, and to mandate appropriate training. To facilitate the confusion surrounding who is mandated or allowed to report, the National Link Coalition has compiled what is believed to be the [first comprehensive list of mandated reporters of animal cruelty](#).

The processes for mandating reporting animal cruelty, abuse and neglect are neither as formalized nor as systematized as those for mandatory reporting of child, elder and domestic abuse, despite the fact that animal abuse crimes are misdemeanors or felonies and frequently predictors or compounding factors of domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse. Reporting animal abuse is important not only for the animals' welfare, but also because when animals are abused, people are at risk; and when people are abused, animals are at risk.

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## CROSS-REPORTING... and The LINK

### 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 75 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.*

### National Link Coalition Compiles List of State Mandated Reporting Requirements

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Unlike reporting systems protecting human family members, only Delaware has a centralized state hotline that coordinates and responds to reports. In all other states and jurisdictions, animal cruelty reports are investigated by independent, local municipal or county animal control/animal services departments, non-profit humane societies or SPCAs, or law enforcement. Contrary to popular belief, local Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are not branches of the ASPCA, nor are local humane societies divisions of the Humane Society of the U.S.

To further assist individuals wishing to report suspected animal cruelty, child maltreatment, domestic violence or elder abuse, our [National Directory of Abuse Investigating Agencies](#) lists 6,500 cities and counties where reports may be made.

Recognizing, responding and cross-reporting cases of violence against

animals or humans via the Link bridges interagency disconnects. If the prevention of animal, domestic, child and elder abuse is to gain momentum and realize potential, it is necessary for all [stakeholders](#), each contributing its expertise and perspective, to intensify Linked approaches that transcend disciplines to build engagement and interaction that better protect vulnerable people and animals.

The prevention of abuse and neglect is critical to protecting our communities. Mandated Reporter training helps reporters to better understand their state and territorial laws and reporting responsibilities, and to identify and address issues of cruelty, abuse and neglect.

This project was undertaken in collaboration with [MandatedReporters.com](#), which maintains even more inclusive lists of who is mandated to report child maltreatment, domestic violence, and abuse of the elderly and disabled in all U.S. states and territories.



### **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.

### Who Is Mandated to Report Suspected Domestic Violence?

Over the National Link Coalition's 15-year history, we have worked to increase interdisciplinary cross-reporting of animal abuse and human violence. Today, reporting of suspected animal abuse is mandated or permitted in 43 states for veterinarians, 14 states for child protection workers, and 10 states for adult protection workers. Concurrently, animal control and humane officers are mandated or permitted to report child abuse in 29 states, and elder abuse in 22 states.

But what about domestic violence? Given that domestic violence survivors are adults and able to decide whether they want to risk filing a report, are there any states where reporting of domestic violence by professional agencies is mandated?

The answer is complicated. Forty-five states have longstanding laws requiring a variety of medical personnel to report gunshot and knife wounds to law enforcement, or burn wounds to fire departments. Seventeen states have expanded these provisions to include other types of injuries, many of which may or may not have been caused in a domestic violence altercation.

California, Colorado, Kentucky, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Tennessee are the only states where physicians and other health care providers are specifically mandated to report cases of suspected domestic violence or sexual assault to law enforcement agencies.

Eleven states mandate medical personnel to report to law enforcement any cases where the patient is believed to be the victim of a "crime," a "criminal offense," or an "offense of violence," but not specifically domestic violence. These include Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

New Hampshire makes it a misdemeanor for a person treating a gunshot wound or other injury caused by a violent act to fail to notify law enforcement. However, this person is excused from reporting if the victim is over 18, has been the victim of a sexual assault offense or abuse and objects to the release of any information to law enforcement. This exception does not apply if the victim of sexual assault or abuse is also being treated for a gunshot wound or other serious bodily injury.

*(Continued on Page 4...)*

#### STATES WITH MANDATED REPORTING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT

##### CALIFORNIA

Health practitioners report to law enforcement any patient believed to be suffering from a wound or physical injury resulting from abusive or assaultive conduct, sexual assault or attempted sexual assault, or from a firearm. **(Cal. Penal Code §§11160 and 11161)**

##### COLORADO

Physicians, nurses and other health care providers report any wounds believed to be intentionally inflicted on a person or any other injury that the physician has reason to believe involves a criminal act, including injuries resulting from domestic violence to local police. **(C.R.S. § 12-36-135)**

##### KENTUCKY

Any person including but not limited to physician, law enforcement officer, nurse, social worker, cabinet personnel, coroner, medical examiner, mental health professional, alternate care facility employee, or caretaker, to report to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services when they have reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has suffered abuse or neglect. Adult is defined as a person, without regard to age, who is the victim of abuse or neglect inflicted by a spouse. **(KRS § 209A.030)**

##### NORTH DAKOTA

Physicians or physician assistants report to local law enforcement any wound, injury or physical trauma inflicted by the individual's own act or by the act of another by means of knife or gun, or, when the physician has reasonable cause to suspect the injury was inflicted in violation of criminal law. When a report of domestic violence or physical injury resulting from a sexual offense is reported in accordance with this section, the physician must provide the individual with information regarding a domestic violence sexual assault organization or other victim's assistance program. **(N.D. Cent. Code § 43-17-41)**

*(Continued...)*

# CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK

*(Continued from Page 3)*

Pennsylvania likewise mandates health care professionals and administrators to report any injuries that were inflicted in violation of penal law, but makes an exception: if the injury was inflicted by an individual who is the current or former spouse or sexual or intimate partner; has been living as a spouse or who shares biological parenthood; and the victim has been informed of the physician's duty to report and that report cannot be made without the victim's consent and the victim does not consent to the report; and the victim has been provided with a referral to the appropriate victim service agency.

No states address animal control or humane officers having a responsibility to report domestic violence. Similarly, no states require domestic violence agencies to report suspected animal abuse to humane or animal control services or law enforcement.

Only 16 states require or encourage medical professionals to receive continuing education training on screening for signs exhibited by abused women, treatment for spousal or partner abuse, lethality and risk issues, the impact of domestic violence on children, and availability of community resources: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, and West Virginia.

Ohio requires the development of courses in recognizing the signs of domestic violence and its relationship to child abuse for nurses, doctors, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and marriage and family therapists; however, none of these professionals are required to take the courses. Tennessee includes domestic violence in the training curriculum but only for EMS personnel; Oklahoma has a similar provision limited to anesthesiologist assistants.

The above information was provided by [MandatedReporter.com](http://MandatedReporter.com); updates and corrections are welcomed.

## STATES WITH MANDATED REPORTING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT (cont.)

### OKLAHOMA

Criminally injurious conduct which appears to be or is reported by the victim to be domestic abuse, or domestic abuse by strangulation, domestic abuse resulting in great bodily harm, or domestic abuse in the presence of a child, shall be reported to the nearest law enforcement agency. However, any physician, surgeon, resident, intern, physician assistant, registered nurse, or any other health care professional examining, attending, or treating a victim is not required to report such domestic abuse if the victim is over age 18 and is not incapacitated, unless the victim requests them to do so orally or in writing. In all cases what is reported to be domestic abuse shall clearly and legibly be documented by the health care provider and any treatment provided. In all cases, the health care provider shall refer the victim to domestic violence and victim services, including the number of the statewide hotline. **(22 Okl. St. § 58)**

### TENNESSEE

Any health care practitioner licensed or certified under Title 63 (excluding veterinarians) who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a patient's injuries are the result of domestic violence or domestic abuse, shall report to the department of health, office of health statistics, on a monthly basis. Identifying information shall not be disclosed. **(Tenn. Code Ann. § 36-3-621(C)(1) )**

## STATES WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

<b>Alaska</b>	Alaska Stat. § 18.66.310
<b>California</b>	Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §2191(h), §2196.5, §2091.2, and Cal. Pen. Code §13823.93
<b>Colorado</b>	C.R.S. §§ 26-7.5-101 and 26-7.5-103
<b>Connecticut</b>	Conn. Gen. Stat. § 20-10b
<b>Florida</b>	Fla. Stat. § 456.031
<b>Kentucky</b>	KRS § 194A.540
<b>Minnesota</b>	Minn. Stat. § 135A.153
<b>New Hampshire</b>	RSA 173-B:20
<b>New Jersey</b>	N.J. Stat. § 52:27D-43.36
<b>New York</b>	NY CLS Exec § 575
<b>Ohio</b>	ORC Ann. §4723.25, §4731.282, §4732.141 and §4757.34
<b>Oklahoma</b>	59 Okl. St. § 3206
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	35 P.S. § 7661.3
<b>Tennessee</b>	Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-140-52
<b>Washington</b>	ARCW § 43.70.610
<b>West Virginia</b>	W. Va. Code § 48-26-503

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

### Purina Unveils “Courageous Together” Statue to Promote Pet-Friendly Shelters



“Good Morning America” aired a [two-minute segment](#) on May 6 featuring an interview with Nina Leigh Krueger, CEO of Purina, describing the company’s partnership with RedRover’s [Purple Leash Project](#) since 2019 to fund domestic violence shelters that want to build housing facilities for survivors’ pets. Calling the process “a symbol of hope for women going through one of the most difficult situations in their lives,” the sponsored segment unveiled a dramatic “Courageous Together” statue to raise awareness and take action because there are not enough services for survivors and their pets.

“Only 17% of shelters today are pet-friendly, and that’s not a place where we really want to be,” said Krueger.

Purina commissioned the “Courageous Together” statue of a woman and her dog. “The statue really depicts

that first critical step of a survivor leaving her abusive situation with her pet. The Purple Leash Project is really all about creating that tough conversation, that critical foundation, where we don’t have to make a choice between a survivor and her pet,” said Krueger. “We can save lives on both ends of the leash.”

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*“We can save lives on both ends of the leash.”*  
—Nina Leigh Krueger

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Krueger announced that the statue will tour around the country, including at the Westminster Kennel Club in New York and the Walmart LPGA Championship in Rogers, Ark. In September.

The “Courageous Together” bronze sculpture was created by Kristen Visbal, the artist who created the famous “Fearless Girl” statue in New York City of a young Latina girl staring down Wall Street’s charging bull; it was later relocated to the street in front of the New York Stock Exchange.

“The widespread impact of domestic violence is evidenced by startling, somber statistics,” Visbal said. “Through the creation of these sculptures portraying the bravery and bond between people and their pets, we hope to inspire survivors to walk away with courage and their pets in tow.”

#### *Join Us In Our Mission!*

**Please help us educate and advocate to promote greater legislative, public and professional understanding of, and response to, The Link between animal abuse and other family and community violence! 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 contribution.**

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

## Coercive Animal Abuse is Domestic Violence in Arkansas

It has recently come to our attention that Arkansas is among the states in which acts of animal abuse intended to coerce or control a domestic partner fall within the state's statutory definition of domestic violence.

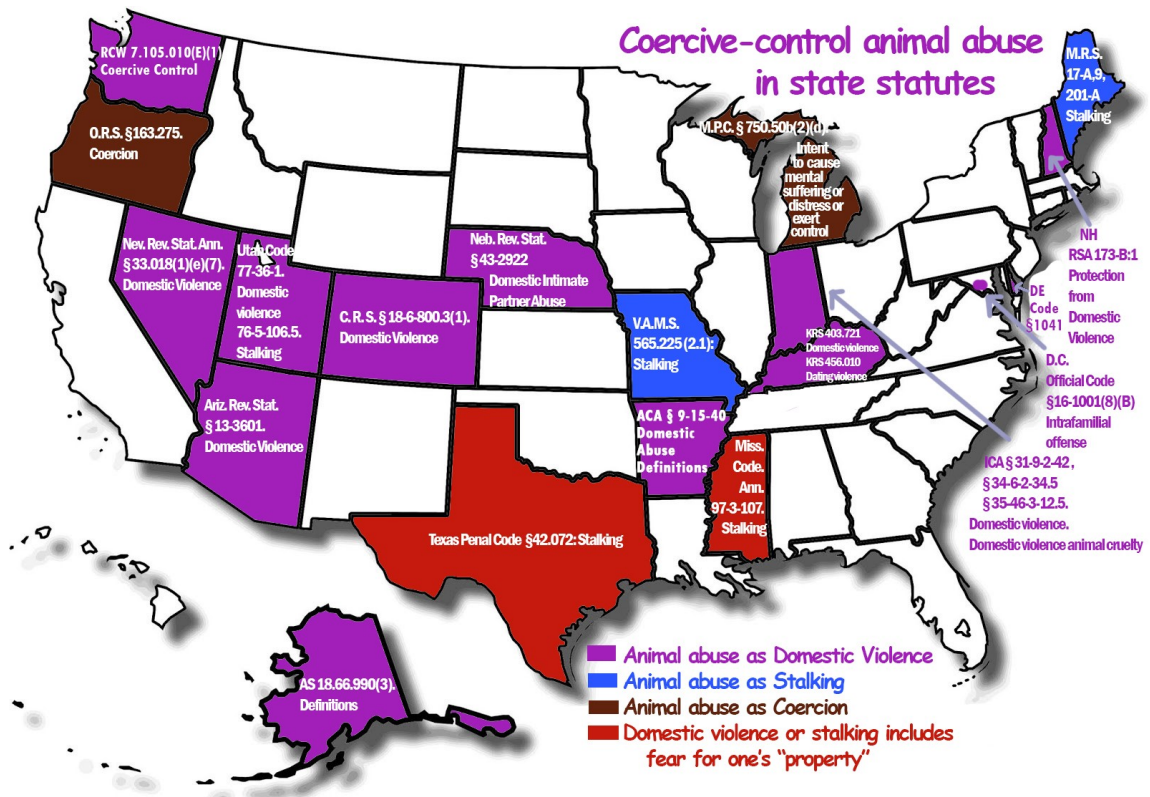
In 2007, the Arkansas enacted the Spousal Abuse Safety Planning Act. Among its provisions, the law amended the definitions in **ACA § 9-15-403** to read:

“Spousal abuse” includes emotional abuse, physical abuse, or sexual abuse committed by a spouse against his or her spouse. “Emotional abuse” is further defined as including “harming the pet of a spouse.”

Sixteen states plus the District of Columbia are now believed to recognize in statutes that animal abuse is a specific, defined form of domestic violence or stalking: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Texas, Utah, and Washington. Tennessee had a similar 10-year-old law that was inexplicably deleted in 2023. (See the [November 2023 LINK-Letter](#)).

Several other states criminalize coercive or intimidating acts of animal cruelty without specifically including these within the definition of domestic violence:

**Connecticut C.G.S Sec. 46b-38a** defines a “family violence crime” as including threatened violence that constitutes fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, or a pattern of threatening between family or household members.



**Michigan M.P.C. § 750.50b(2)(d)** makes it a felony to threaten or intentionally harm an animal “with the intent to cause mental suffering or distress to a person or to exert control over a person.”

**Minnesota M. S. A. § 343.21** allows courts to impose double penalties for felony animal torture or cruelty that is done to threaten, intimidate, or terrorize another person.

**Oregon O.R.S. §163.275** defines the crime of coercion as instilling a fear, one of which is the unlawful causing of physical injury to an animal.

In the **United Kingdom**, the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** added “controlling or coercive behavior” within the definition of domestic abuse. “Controlling or coercive behavior” includes “using animals to control or coerce a victim, e.g. harming or threatening to harm, or give away, pets or assistance dogs.”

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

## OVC Announces July Deadlines for Applying for Ten \$300-\$500K Grants for Pet Co-Sheltering

The U.S. Office for Victims of Crime has [announced its process](#) for applying for 10 OVC grants of up to \$500,000 each to provide funding for shelter and transitional housing and other assistance to victims of domestic violence and their companion animals. The deadlines for applying are: 11:59 pm EDT on July 15, to register with the System for Award Management and submit Forms SF-424 and SF-LLL via Grants.gov; and then 8:59 pm EDT to submit the full application at JustGrants.usdoj.gov.

OVC expects to make up to 10 awards of \$300,000 - \$500,000 each for up to a 36-month period of performance to begin on October 1, 2024. Examples of program activities that may be considered for funding in-

clude: purchasing kennels; installing pet amenities; partnering with veterinarians to provide medical care; assisting with housing relocation; providing pet boarding services; undertaking shelter modifications; and other activities related to providing services to support housing domestic violence victims and their pets together.

The grant program, authorized through the passage of Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act, is open to eligible organizations including city, state, township, and tribal governments, as well as organizations that work with survivors of domestic violence and/or pets.



## Masculinity Cited as Root Issue in Violence Against Women and Animals

An article in the [Canadian edition of \*The Conversation\*](#) argues that the commonalities linking violence against women and animals may be partly explained by traditional notions of masculinity, and that studying violence toward women and animals can help develop strategies to prevent both.

The connection between abuse of animals and abuse of women “might not seem immediately obvious, but the way a person treats animals can be an indication of how they are likely to treat women,” write Laleh Dadgardoust, Colleen Dell and Renata Roma of the University of Saskatchewan. “Considering the Link between traditional masculinity and attitudes toward women and animals could provide valuable insights for developing new prevention and intervention strategies for sexual violence against women,” they add.



Laleh Dadgardoust, Colleen Dell, Renata Roma

They describe traditional notions surrounding masculinity that are often based on ideas about men being strong, heterosexual and avoiding roles and behaviors seen as feminine, often leading to their justifying and committing violence and sexual violence against women. Citing research documenting a Link between violence against women and violent behaviors towards animals, they note that few Link studies specifically address the role that traditional masculinity plays in violence against animals or sexual violence against women. “However, the general link between violence against women and animals suggests it is important to examine further,” they write.

The lack of agency and autonomy afforded in both women and animals reflects broader systemic inequalities; recognizing this can help identify situations of violence. Acknowledging how attitudes toward animals are intertwined with those toward women can help improve prevention and intervention strategies for sexual violence and inform our understanding of sexual violence against women.

“Exploring violence towards animals and sexual violence toward women might initially seem far-fetched,” they conclude. “However, child protection legislation in the United States originated from animal cruelty legislation. Understanding the connection between the abuse of women and animals can make our communities safer and respectful spaces for all.”

## CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

### Mental Health Professionals Sought for Child Abuse Research Survey

A team of researchers at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia are continuing



their study to **Katharine Wenocur, left, & Kirby Wyckoff** learn more about how various professionals respond when a case of childhood animal cruelty becomes known. Following up from a series of Zoom videoconferences, Katharine Wenocur and Kirby Wyckoff are now seeking participants via an online survey to learn more about how mental health professionals respond when a case of childhood animal abuse becomes known.

The title of the study is: “Professional Responses to Animal Abuse in Childhood: A Mixed Methods Exploration”. This phase of the study consists of an internet-

based survey, which will ask about participants’ professional knowledge and opinion regarding several brief case examples, and some general questions regarding any relevant training and professional preparation they have received. The survey will take about twenty minutes to complete.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Possess a master’s degree or higher in a professional mental health discipline (psychiatry, clinical psychology, school psychology, social work, professional counseling, marriage and family therapy).
- Work in a clinical capacity (assessment, diagnosis, and/or ongoing mental health treatment) with children and adolescents (under age 18).

Participation is entirely voluntary and any information provided will remain strictly confidential. To participate, click this hyperlink: [https://redcap.link/animal\\_abuse\\_survey](https://redcap.link/animal_abuse_survey)

## FIRST RESPONDERS and THE LINK

### Texas Considering Designating Animal Control Officers First Responders

The [Texas Humane Legislation Network](#) is considering organizing a formal process to designate animal control officers as “first responders,” as they are often the first law enforcement and social services personnel on the scene where animal cruelty and other forms of family violence have occurred. Whether these officers are affiliated with police or sheriffs’ departments, other municipal or county agencies, or nonprofit humane organizations, they frequently serve ex officio in first-responder situations.

Texas animal control professionals (animal field services, animal care, animal protection, etc.) have roles rooted in community engagement, public safety, and animal welfare as they have been on the frontline

of protecting communities, said THLN in announcing a webinar to consider this concept. “Their roles have expanded to include providing community support and outreach, investigating animal cruelty and neglect, and saving animals (and sometimes their owners) in immediate danger. But under Texas law, professionals in Texas animal control are not considered “first responders.”

THLN believes that animal control professionals play a crucial role in maintaining public safety and ensuring the well-being of both humans and animals in communities and consequently should be considered first responders. “By advocating for a first responder classification, animal control professionals can educate their communities

and advocate for receiving training, resources, and equipment necessary to perform the critical services they provide to their communities,” THLN added.



The webinar included: a background on the role of animal control professionals and how they are already performing first responder tasks; how to educate their communities and local leaders on their roles; and how to advocate for animal control professionals to be considered a first responder.

## Report Examines Status of Courtroom Animal Advocacy Programs



The Brooks Institute for Animal Rights Law and Policy, an animal law think-and-do tank dedicated to advancing animal law academics, scholarship, and policy-making in a broadly collaborative environment, has released the [results of a research project](#) reviewing the

current status of Courtroom Animal Advocacy Programs (CAAPs) in criminal courts based on the insights of 36 interviews with relevant experts in the field. The report explores benefits, challenges and questions surrounding this potential tool for animal advocacy.

Three overarching perspectives on Courtroom Animal Advocacy Programs emerged from the interviews:

- Active advocacy for these programs but acknowledging that more research and reflection are needed.
- Some are dubious about CAAPs or tentatively oppose them, primarily due to concerns about increasing incarceration rates and the lack of empirical data on CAAPs.
- Most interviewees seemed cautiously supportive of CAAPs, but have no involvement in them and would like better information about their impacts before coming to any firm conclusions.

CAAPs entered into criminal justice processes in 2016 when Connecticut enacted “Desmond’s Law,” giving courts the discretion to appoint an advocate to serve the “interests of justice” and present information about the interests of animal victims in cases involving cruelty and neglect of cats and dogs. Advocates draft briefs, conduct research, gather pertinent information, and make recommendations in criminal cases that involve animal victims. Maine passed a similar law (“Franky’s Law”) in 2019, which reportedly has not been implemented. Even in Connecticut, only 13% of animal cruelty cases have had an advocate assigned.

Proposals for CAAPs to serve the “interests of animals” and/or the “interests of justice” have been introduced unsuccessfully in New York, New Jersey, Florida, New Hampshire, Michigan, Illinois, Nevada, and Rhode Island. The [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#) has promulgated an updated model of Connecticut’s law with several substantive changes, including serving the interests of “justice” rather than “animals; more clearly outlining advocates’ minimum and permissive duties to create more separation between advocates, prosecutors, and defense counselors; and broadly outlining the training required to serve as a courtroom advocate.

The interviews identified potential benefits of CAAPs:

- Representing and safeguarding animals’ interests in legal proceedings, which advance justice for animals and prevent future animal-related crimes.
- Preventing isolated incidents from escalating into broader community problems and crimes against humans.
- Enhancing public awareness.
- Fostering a judiciary that is more sensitive to animal-related issues.
- Supporting the court system with complex animal cruelty cases.
- Alleviating the workload of judges, prosecutors, and defense counselors.
- Providing educational opportunities for law students.

However, notable concerns were also articulated:

- Potential emphasis on retribution and incarceration rather than rehabilitation.
- A potential to perpetuate or even exacerbate systemic racial and economic disparities in prosecutions.
- Limiting CAAP cases only to dogs and cats.
- The voluntary and subjective appointment of advocates.
- The limited experience and training of advocates, including their knowledge of animal behavior and human-animal relationships.
- Uncertain sustainability of the infrastructure needed to support the appointment, training and supervision of advocates.

*(Continued on Page 10)*

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

*(Continued from Page 9)*

Not identified in the report were other concerns, such as the potential for well-intentioned but untrained advocates to actually interfere with the prosecution team's gathering of evidence; and that CAAPs may not be necessary in cases where prosecutors are already highly experienced and specialized in animal cruelty cases.

The report identified an issue which is seen as being highly contentious: By allowing advocates to present the interests and experiences of animal cruelty victims to the courts, CAAP laws could eventually remove animals from their current and historic legal categorization as property, thereby serving as a foundation to pursue legal standing for animals and potentially paving the way for both criminal and civil suits to be filed directly on behalf of animal victims. "By making the distinction between sentient animal victims and non-sentient property, having courtroom advocates may be an intermediate step on the path toward true legal representation for animals," the report notes.

Most interviewees emphasized how little they know about the effects of CAAPs; due to a lack of robust data, there are currently more questions than answers. Interviewees acknowledged that obtaining answers to these questions, such as how to identify, select, and adequately train courtroom advocates and the impact of CAAPs on prosecution and conviction rates and recidivism, will be challenging.

### New Mexico Law Enforcement Learns about The Link

Representatives of Animal Protection of New Mexico discussed The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence and ways that collaboration can solve these problems at the 24th Judicial Law Enforcement Training Conference in Las Vegas. Alan Edmonds, APNM's Cruelty Response and Advocacy Director, and Daniel Macy, Senior Director of Community Partnerships, educated law enforcement on APNM programs and how they could be beneficial while in the field.

At right: APNM's Daniel Macy speaks with District Attorney Thomas Clayton after the Conference. Photo: APNM



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*for animal rights law & policy* INC.

The report suggests future research might better understand the potential impact of CAAP laws by examining analogous systems in other criminal justice areas of family violence: Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children and elderly adults, and guardians ad litem.

"CAAP laws are a potentially important tool to advocate for animals subjected to cruelty, but they are one of several tools that could accomplish similar goals," the report concluded, describing such alternatives as animal-specific prosecutors, animal-specific courts, amicus briefs, expert witnesses, and increased training to empower animal control officers. "For policymakers and others deliberating CAAPs, it is important to consider the role of such programs within the broader set of anti-cruelty efforts in their particular legal system."

- Green, C. (2024, January). *A Summary of Expert Opinions Regarding Courtroom Animal Advocacy Programs*. Wheaton, Ill.: The Brooks Institute for Animal Rights Law and Policy.



## Ohio Family Court Judges Learn About The Link

A Link training for the Franklin County, Ohio, Court of Common Pleas Division of Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branch drew 50 interested participants and received stellar coverage in the court's "Gavel" newsletter regarding how the human-animal bond can affect domestic relations court cases and can help judges and court staff immensely.

Judge John Romero and Martha-Elin Blomquist of the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges, and Kathleen Wood of the Animal Legal Defense Fund, presented the training, "Interconnections between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence: A matter of Community and Family Safety," on May 17. Romero and Wood both serve on the National Link Coalition's Professional Advisory Committee.

The program explored how as more Americans keep pets and more of us see them as part of the family, companion animals can play an important role in a variety of domestic relations and juvenile

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***"If somebody is committing violence to a human, then it is statistically more likely they are committing violence to a companion animal as well."***

***—Kathleen Wood***

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court cases. They presented details of how victims of domestic violence delay escaping their relationships over concerns about what will happen to family pets. In many cases of child abuse or neglect, children often find comfort in the family pets and miss them



**Martha-Elin Blomquist (left), Kathleen Wood, Franklin County Judge James Brown, and Judge John Romero address the participants at the Link training.**

terribly if they're removed from their homes; some abused children go on to abuse their pets. Meanwhile, abusers can exploit the bonds with companion animals to threaten, coerce or terrify their victims.

They emphasized how crucial it is for professionals working in both animal welfare and domestic and juvenile court settings to understand these dynamics and family safety. The training emphasized the value of cross reporting among professionals including veterinarians who may notice signs of domestic abuse in families that bring pets in for care.

The training was a continuation of an initiative launched last year when ALDF and the NCJFCJ con-

ducted the first-ever Judicial institute on the Link for family and juvenile court judges across the country ([See the November 2023 LINK-Letter](#)). Several participants from Franklin County, Ohio reported a need for wider training on the Link for a wide range of stakeholders in their county.

Blomquist, Wood and Romero also had an opportunity to tour the Family Justice Center which assists pro se litigants escaping domestic violence, and helps them to navigate the many complex legal challenges that come along with filing for protection orders or criminal prosecution.

"If somebody is committing violence to a human, then it is statistically more likely they are committing violence to a companion animal as well," Wood told the audience.

# VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

## Veterinary Forensics Conference Highlights The Link



Adam Stern

“The relationship between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence is very significant,” said Adam Stern, in describing to Gainesville, Fla. TV station [WUFT](#) the results of the University of Florida’s first Animal Forensic Investigations Conference. More than 140

veterinarians, attorneys, law enforcement officials and students gathered to discuss the latest investigative research and share their skills with a wider audience.

Stern, a professor of forensic pathology at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine and the director of the International Society for Animal Forensic Scientists, emphasized how animal cruelty investigations should be treated with the same care and practices as those for human crimes. The purpose of the conference was

to spread this idea and provide professionals with the tools needed to bring animal cruelty perpetrators to justice.

“We’re trying to break down those barriers and show everybody that they do have the skills,” Stern said. “Sometimes they need to learn a few new things because it is different. But everybody is able to investigate it.”

Twenty-one featured speakers presented information over three days that will be valuable to veterinarians, investigators and prosecuting attorneys. Plans are already underway for additional animal forensic conferences in 2025 and 2026. “The whole long-term thing is to really get justice for animals and prevent future animals and even people from being victims,” Stern said.

## Swedish Manual Helps Veterinarians Identify and Respond to Link-based Animal Injuries

Our colleagues in Sweden, Se Sambandet (See The Link), in collaboration with the Swedish Association for the Protection of Animals (Svenska Djurskyddsföreningen) have developed an action plan (“Handlingsplan”) aimed at veterinary clinics and other animal health personnel to provide guidance in suspected cases associated with the Link. The [36-page brochure](#), published in 2018, is based around the National Link Coalition’s Venn diagram demonstrating the interlocking circles of animal abuse, child maltreatment, domestic violence, and elder abuse, and the Links Group UK’s four-step model of response. The booklet includes background information about The Link, specific action steps for identifying and responding to the four types of family violence, resources, and guidelines to help the practitioner in recognizing and responding to non-accidental injuries (NAI) in animals.



The manual is part of a larger program to provide Swedish practitioners with Link training. In 2017, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences included a 1/2-day theoretical training on NAI and The Link in the third-year veterinary course. In 2024 the subject is being included in the full course syllabus.

## Veterinary Social Worker Sought to Counsel Staff on Link Issues

The MedVet hospital in Garden City, Idaho (a suburb of Boise) is seeking a Veterinary Social Worker to counsel clients through pet loss and bereavement and to advise staff on ethical decisions regarding reporting suspected animal abuse. The position calls for a LCSW who will provide support to veterinary team members on wellness, crisis management, interpersonal rela-

tionships; and support to clients on crisis interventions, pet euthanasia, end-of-life decisions, and individual and family grief counseling.

Apply for the position at <https://jobs.jobvite.com/medvet/job/oopStfws> .

# Raising LINK Awareness

## Naturewatch Link Campaigns Explain Why Animal Cruelty Occurs

“To be able to prevent crime, it is essential to understand why it happens. Without this, any response will only be superficial.”



That’s the watchword of the Naturewatch Foundation, a British registered animal welfare charity that launched a Link-themed “[Protect Animals. Protect People](#)” campaign in England and Wales in 2023 to train police officers, law-

yers and animal groups that when animals are safe from cruelty, it helps people too. Additional trainings have been conducted in Canada, Italy, Moldova, Australia, the U.S., and the European Parliament.

Naturewatch hosted an event at the historic home of animal welfare pioneer William Hogarth ([See the May 2023 LINK-Letter](#)) to celebrate the work of Hogarth and explore why the human-animal violence Link has still not been fully recognized for the part it plays in domestic relationships, families and communities.

A Naturewatch [web page on The Link](#) emphasizes that “those who harm animals harm people too. We know

that keeping animals safe has a direct impact on human welfare and that this connection transcends borders. Studies about all animal cruelty should be seen as a ‘red flag’, especially when the motivation of that cruelty is also about inflicting harm on people.” It notes that “animal abuse rarely occurs in isolation.”

Police training campaign manager Mark Randell ([See the February 2022](#), [May 2021](#) and [February 2019 LINK-Letters](#)) describes how he gets police to appreciate the significance of The Link. The training “explains the importance not just of recognizing the animal-human bond but why abusers use that to inflict



Mark Randell

harm on the animal and to those who care for them. Once we explain WHY animal cruelty should be taken seriously, once it has been contextualized, then it is as if the light has been turned on in areas that were previously dark, and advancing animal welfare can happen. This campaign has been very successful in reaching audiences that can make real changes.”

## Link Featured in Syndicated Radio Broadcast



Listeners to nationally syndicated radio commentator Steve Dale learned about

The Link in June, thanks to his extensive interviews with National Link Coalition President & Secretary Phil Arkow. The interviews, which aired both on his national broadcasts and locally on [WGN radio](#) in Chicago, described how animal abuse is a sentinel indicator that something is clearly wrong, so if animals are abused likely there’s additional violence in the home. Arkow explained why

people are reluctant to leave domestic violence situations if they have nowhere to shelter with pets. And when this happens, animals and/or humans may likely continue to be harmed.

The interviews covered the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act and how the RedRover/Purina [Purple Leash Project](#) is helping to implement this bipartisan legislation. The National Link Coalition has not only supported changing laws, but also supports studies which provide data needed to make the laws possible.


Dale noted how 97% of people in a domestic violence situation say they feel “trapped” and can go nowhere if there is nowhere to take their pets. He noted that with the lack of pet-friendly co-sheltering programs in the Windy City, the Anti-Cruelty Society, PAWS Chicago and Chicago Animal Care & Control offer options for temporary housing, including finding hotel rooms for survivors in pet-friendly hotels.

Dale serves on the National Link Coalition’s Professional Advisory Committee.

# Raising LINK Awareness

## Animal Cruelty Called a Social Problem Threatening Safety

Japan's Animal Literacy Research Institute has published a [new article about The Link](#), describing the roots of animal cruelty and appropriate responses.

 The article, which is available in both Japanese and English, describes animal cruelty as “a social problem that threatens not only the animals that become targets, but also the safety and security of society as a whole.” It calls animal cruelty and its Links to human violence “a means of domination” as well as a learned behavior, often triggered by witnessing other people harming animals.

“There are many elements involved in violence against animals. Whatever the reason, violence against animals should never be tolerated, and perpetrators of violence deserve severe penalties. However, at the same time, when seeking a solution that is close to each case, it becomes clear that the response required by the perpetrator is different,” the article concludes.

“As animal cruelty has been shown to be linked to violence against humans, it may be time to recognize animal cruelty as a problem for society as a whole and consider a more sophisticated response.”

## Student Abstracts Invited for Anthrozoology Conference

Undergraduate and master's students, recent alumni, and Ph.D. students who are passionate about anthrozoology and the positive and negative aspects of human-animal relationships are invited to submit an abstract to present at the 4<sup>th</sup> Anthrozoology as International Practice Student Conference in Human-Animal Studies. The free, online conference will be held Nov. 17-19 and is a perfect opportunity for first-time presenters to speak to a welcoming audience of like-minded individuals. The conference is organized by Exeter University's [Anthrozoology program](#) in the UK as a way to build a supportive network of early-career peers. The deadline for [submitting an abstract](#) is July 31.

## COVID-19 and THE LINK

### Irish Study Explores Link and Behavioral Factors Affecting Dogs During and Post-Pandemic

The complex reasons why dogs are acquired and/or surrendered – all of which were complicated by the covid-19 lockdowns – are explored in a recent study from Ireland which is reporting that the relationships between animal abuse and domestic violence, and children abusing animals, were additional considerations affecting pets during the pandemic. Elizabeth Ann Walsh, of the Cork Pet Behavior Center, conducted interviews with the Dublin SPCA, Dog's Trust and three Italian shelters for comparison purposes, to investigate the welfare of dogs during restrictions. An Garda Síochána (the National Police Service of Ireland) were also contacted to clarify the situation in relation to dog theft and domestic abuse, which is strongly associated with animal abuse. The police data indicated that while

dog thefts did not increase during the restrictions, domestic abuse incidents rose by 20%. The study also reveals that one-quarter of people who acquired pets during the pandemic did so on impulse, with less than two hours' research, primarily to accompany themselves during the isolation, anxiety, stress, and depression created by the lockdowns. Meanwhile, shelters in Ireland and the UK are reporting that relinquishments of pets have reverted to – or exceeded – pre-pandemic levels, similar to findings from the U.S.

-- Walsh, E.A. (2023). *Assessing the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the welfare and on the behavior of puppies and dogs in Ireland. Journal of Applied Animal Ethics*



### A Stolen Dog Feels Like Losing a Child

The theft of a dog not only has adverse implications for the animal, but can lead to a sense of powerlessness, grief and loss for the owner akin to what a parent feels with the death of a child. Some participants in a British study said the loss of a dog, society's trivializing of the impact, the law's treating the incident as "stolen property," and the lack of closure due to the theft, was more intense than the death of a friend or relative. The trauma is exacerbated post-pandemic because more people acquired dogs during the lockdowns and there has subsequently been a 250% increase in reported dog thefts.

- Venaktramanan, A., & Roberts, L. (2024). The experiences and needs of dog "owners" affected by dog-theft. *Human-Animal Interactions, 12*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2024.0004>

### What Are Veterinarian's Responses to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence?

A recent review from Brazil highlights the contribution of the veterinarian in the combat against domestic violence. In this context, the relevance of the veterinary professional in public health and in the service of justice is discussed. The authors researched existing literature on the possible Link between violence against humans and animal cruelty. This study offers simple actions that the veterinarian can perform in cases of domestic violence that have animal involvement. The authors conclude that addressing this problem requires not only immediate protective measures, but also multidisciplinary actions of prevention, diagnosis and notification, whether in the service of health or justice. The veterinarian is seen as an important sentinel in the suspicions of violence; however this position requires qualification and multidisciplinary involvement.

-- Sant'Ana, L.V., & Reis, S.T.J. (2020). A Crueldade animal como possível indicador de violência doméstica. De que forma a medicina veterinária pode contribuir? [Animal cruelty as possible indicator of domestic violence. How veterinary medicine can contribute?] [Portuguese]. *Medvop - Revista Científica de Medicina Veterinária - Pequenos Animais e Animais de Estimação, 15*(46), 79-86.

### Brazilian Review Describes "Link Theory" as Preventing Crimes

A Brazilian review of Link literature reports that animal abuse appears to be a common phenomenon among all populations and needs to be given additional attention because, under "Link theory," violence against animals can extend to other crimes. The authors cite studies that show that animal abusers are five times more likely than non-abusers to commit violent crimes against people; four times more likely to perform crimes against property; and three times more likely to have a record of narcotics offenses. However, most animal crimes are ignored due to a lack of reporting. The authors identify veterinarians as a critical source of identifying cases of abuse against animals, thereby contributing to the prevention of future violence against animals and people. They conclude that because animal maltreatment is sentinel for violence against humans, law and health professionals should treat animal cruelty as a public security problem.

-- Rufino, P.H.Q., Sousa, F.d.S., Belettini, S.T., Dissenha, A., & Boscarato, A.G., et al. (2024). Maus trato a animais e teoria do elo [Animal maltreatment and Link theory]. *Brazilian Journal of Implantology and Health Sciences, 6*(4), 2603-2621. [Portuguese].

### Ecofeminist Need for Pet Co-Sheltering Explored

A chapter in a new book about ecofeminism and animal welfare addresses The Link and the need to include companion animals in domestic violence and homeless shelter programs. "As companion animals tend to share the physical spaces of their humans and are apt to face similar vulnerabilities, this exclusion is notable," writes Rebecca Deutsch. Citing how human victims of domestic violence are likely to remain in unsafe environments far longer than they would have if companion-animal-friendly domestic violence shelters were more readily available, she identifies existing exemplars of shared spaces of safety. The chapter explores risks faced by companion animals within animal shelters and the harmful effects of isolation in abusive and shelter contexts upon already vulnerable populations. While safety must be maintained, she identifies ways to foster kinship and connection.

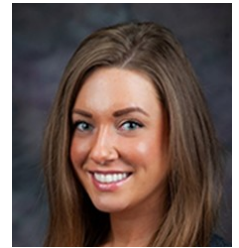
-- Deutsch, R. (2024). Shelters. In C. Taylor (Ed.). *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Animals* (pp. 240-252). Routledge.

### Study Links Types of Intimate Partner Violence with Species of Animals Abused

While multiple research has identified a relationship between animal abuse and intimate partner violence, there is a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between IPV and the species of animals abused. A new study that interviewed 851 participants explores the bivariate relationships between different types of IPV victimization (e.g., psychological, physical, and severe IPV) and partners' abuse of cats, dogs, small pets, and horses. Results from the study indicate that there are differences between type of animal abused in relationship to IPV and highlights the need for future research to examine types of animal abuse separately.

Chelsea Spencer, in the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Kansas State University, reports that the strongest association was between the partner's abuse of cats and severe IPV victimization; The partner's cat abuse was associated with a 1,232% increase in the

likelihood of severe IPV for women and a 945% increase for men. Cat abuse and dog abuse were significantly associated with all types of IPV, abuse of small pets was associated with physical and severe IPV, and horse abuse was not significantly related to IPV.



Chelsea Spencer

The study also examines the relationship between types of animal abuse (neglect, emotional abuse, threats, physical abuse, and severe physical abuse) for cats and dogs and IPV. Cat neglect was most strongly associated with severe IPV and increased the likelihood of it by about 3,700%. Dog neglect increased the likelihood of severe IPV by approximately 1,600%.

-- Spencer, C.M. (2024). *An exploration of type of animal abuse and intimate partner violence*. *Anthrozoös*, DOI: 10.1080/08927936.2024.2360790

### Link Cited in Need for Veterinary Forensics in Cases of Cat Abuse

Japanese researchers studying the differences between accidental and non-accidental injuries in cats emphasize that "the detection of animal abuse is important not only for animal welfare but also for human health because the abuse of companion animals, such as cats, has often been reported as a precursor to human killing." They cite Link literature describing how animal abuse, particularly repeated abuse, is an independent risk factor for violence against humans and a potential relevance for child abuse and domestic violence. "Detailed examinations of animals suspected to have been killed by abuse could offer public health information that could contribute to the recognition of potential human violations and their prevention. Veterinarians are called upon to play a role," they argue.

- Kihara, Y., Yamaguchi, R., Chiba, F., Torimitsu, S., & Nakajima, M., et al. (2024). *Utility and limitations of postmortem computed tomography in animal abuse suspected cases: A case series study of cats*. *Forensic Imaging*, 37, 200587.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fri.2024.200587>



***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.**

# ANIMAL THERAPY INTERVENTIONS and OFFENDERS

## Prison-based Training Programs Benefit Dogs and Offenders

There is extensive evidence that prison programs where offenders, many of whom have had their own behavioral issues, use positive reinforcement techniques to successfully train dogs with their own behavioral issues which have resulted in their being surrendered to animal shelters where they faced the risk of euthanasia without the prison-based interventions. The inmates learn new skills and benefit from the dogs' companionship.

A new study from Scotland is reporting that prison-based dog training programs can contribute to positive outcomes for dogs, as well as for humans, if conducted appropriately. The researchers studied the behavior and training performance of dogs in a prison-based program for rescue dogs in which the prisoners find value in helping the dogs find permanent homes.



**Rebecca Leonardi** Dogs attended the prison 1–3 times per week, under staff supervision and instruction. The results showed that the rescue dogs had improved performance on training tasks. Their behavior also changed; dogs rested or relaxed more in their kennels after the dog training program than before it started, although other behaviors were not affected. Kennel staff rated the dogs' behavior as becoming more desirable and less undesirable after the dog training program. However, some behavior and welfare issues associated with relinquishment persisted.

-Leonardi, R.J., Vick, S.-J., & Buchanan-Smith, H.M. (2024). Participation in a prison-based training programme is beneficial for rescue dogs. *Animals*, 14(11), 1530; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani14111530>

## LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

### Bill Would Add Animal Abuse to Federal NCANDS System

A bill that would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to include data on animal abuse in the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) has been re-introduced in Congress. **H.R. 8733, the Child and Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act**, was introduced on June 13 by Rep. Ann Kuster (D-NH) with four bipartisan cosponsors. State child protection agencies provide data about 700,000 cases annually to the federal government under NCANDS, which tracks national trends in child abuse and neglect. However, children's exposure to animal abuse as a risk factor is not currently included. The bill would provide a better foundation for child abuse screening, prevention, and treatment programs and would benefit children, families, and pets. The measure, then numbered H.R. 763, died in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. The current bill is in the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.



**Rep. Ann Kuster**

### Maryland Bill Extending Criminal Prosecution of Minors Defeated

A new juvenile reform law enacted in Maryland has deleted a provision that would have allowed law enforcement officers to charge a young child with aggravated cruelty to animals. **HB 814**, signed into law by Gov. Wes Moore on May 16, retained existing provisions that allowed courts to have jurisdiction over children who are at least 10 years old and are alleged to have committed a crime, but do not allow children under age 13 to be charged with a crime.

A companion measure in the Maryland General Assembly, **SB 744**, would have allowed youths between the ages of 10-12 to be charged with aggravated animal cruelty. The Senate bill was held in committee, allowing the modified House version to go through. Maryland defines aggravated cruelty to animals as including sexual contact with an animal, and mutilation, torture or cruel killing or beating of an animal. Offenders can be sentenced to three years in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine and may be ordered to submit to psychological counseling and be barred from possessing or residing with an animal.

## LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

# THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

With many 2024 state legislatures still in session, we're following 137 Link-themed bills in 26 states, Congress and Canada. The bills in the lists that follow 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

**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.

**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.

**H.R. 8733, the Child and Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act,** would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to include data on animal abuse in the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) clearinghouse for information. The bill is in the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

### ARIZONA

**HB 2076 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have expanded definitions animal cruelty that are also 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 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have banned individuals convicted of domestic violence — which in Arizona includes coercive acts of animal cruelty — from possessing firearms.

**HB 2238 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have allowed 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 have prohibited the respondent from possessing firearms.

**HB 2241 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have expanded the definition of bestiality.

## 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** was vetoed by the Governor.

It 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.

**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.

## COLORADO

**SUCCESS!!!** **HB 24-1350** requires child custody dispositions to consider evidence related to the use of coercive control on the child. "Coercive control" now includes threatening to harm or kill an animal with which the individual or the individual's child or relative has an emotional bond. It was signed into law on June 3.

## FLORIDA

**SUCCESS!!!** **SB 86** requires the Office of the State Courts Administrator to issue free wallet-sized laminated "Hope Cards" to petitioners 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.

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

## GEORGIA

**HB 217** and **SB 255** died in committee. They would have expanded dog-fighting 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.

**SB 418** died when the General Assembly adjourned. They would have required the basic and in-service training courses for all peace officers to include animal fighting and recognition of animal abuse.

## HAWAII

**HB 1980** and **SB 2684** passed the House but died in the Senate. It declared 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," and would have increased the penalty for cock-fighting to a felony and impose fines on persons who attend or gamble on a cock-fight.

**HB 1580** died in the Senate. It declared 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," and would have increased the category of offense and penalties for animal cruelty, animal fighting, and sexual assault of an animal.

**SB 30** was never acted upon. It would have expanded domestic violence pet protection orders to allow children to file for a protection order or a temporary restraining order even if the child was not a victim of domestic violence.

## IDAHO

**HB 512** died when the legislature adjourned. It would have 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** died when the legislature adjourned. It would have limited 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** died in committee. They would have allowed petitioners for protective orders to also seek to prevent the respondent from possessing firearms or ammunition.

**HB 3294** died in committee. It would have expanded the definition of domestic violence abuse to include the infliction of fear of imminent conduct related to animal cruelty, 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** died in committee. It would have made 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

**SUCCESS!!! SF 2180 and HF 2318** expand the statutory definition of bestiality to include organizing, promoting, conducting, promoting, permitting, filming, distributing, possessing, participating as an observer of an act involving a sex act with an animal, or engaging in a sex act in the presence of a minor.

**HF 472 and SF 316 died when the legislature adjourned.** They would have granted 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”) died when the legislature adjourned.** They would have required animal control officers to be trained on recognizing child abuse and mandate animal control officers to report dependency, neglect, or abuse of a child.

**SB 243 died when the legislature adjourned.** It would have made cockfighting and allowing a child to attend any animal fight, currently a misdemeanor, a felony.

## MARYLAND

**SB 17 and HB 667 died when the General Assembly adjourned.** They would have established 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.

**SB 744 died in committee.** It would have allowed minors aged 10-12, to be charged with aggravated animal cruelty.

Purple = Domestic Violence  
Dark Blue = Child Abuse  
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## MASSACHUSETTS

**SUCCESS!!! H.4744** adds “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.

**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.

**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.

**S.2703** would add threatening to commit cruelty or abuse to an animal connected to the family or household member to the definition of “coercive control.”

## 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.”

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

**HB 5587** would add additional points to sentencing guidelines if a companion animal is killed as a result of another crime.

**HB 5593** would add additional points to sentencing guidelines for sexual penetrations of a companion animal.

## MINNESOTA

**SF 3324 and HF 3300 died in committee.** They would have allowed courts to appoint pro bono attorneys as advocates to represent the interests of the animal, and require Office of Animal Protection personnel to report suspected child and elder abuse to the Department of Human Services, and child and adult protective services employees to report suspected animal cruelty to the Office of Animal Protection, with immunity from civil and criminal liability.

**SF 3542 and HF 3799 died in committee.** They would have created a 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.”

**HF 4215 died in committee.** It would have awarded state grants to place therapy dogs in local law enforcement agencies to assist peace officers suffering from job-related trauma and PTSD.

## MISSOURI

**HB 1695, SB 1259 and SB 995 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have required animal control officers/ humane investigators and child/adult protective services to cross-report abuse. All persons in the child and eligible adult protection and welfare system would have been mandated to complete one hour of training 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 investigators would have been 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** died when the legislature adjourned. It would have replaced "domestic abuse" with the more encompassing term "abuse" to include incidents or patterns of behavior 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.

**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 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 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 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.

**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.

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

**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.

**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 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.

**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.”

**NEW THIS MONTH: A 10592 and S 9629** would establish the housing people and animals together grant program to expand access for co-sheltering homeless people and victims of domestic violence with companion animals.

## 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.

**SUCCESS!!! HB 4145** creates two new crimes of aggravated animal abuse in the first degree to include creating, duplicating, disseminating, financing, or possessing visual recordings of “crush” videos — persons maliciously killing or torturing an animal.

**SUCCESS!!! SB 1574** adds sexual abuse of a corpse to the list of sex crimes for the purpose of sex offender reporting and clarifies that humane special agents are “law enforcement officials” for the purpose of receiving driver’s license and identification card photos from the Department of Transportation.

## 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.

**HB 1210 and SB 1105** would amend the Domestic Relations title to allow courts to grant temporary ownership rights over companion animals in domestic violence and child protection orders and direct defendants from harming, possessing, transferring, or relocating the animal, or entering the property of anyone sheltering the animal.

**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.

**SUCCESS!!! SB 55** orders 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 to ensure that children’s health, welfare and safety in custody determinations are of paramount importance. The law also defines domestic abuse as a pattern of abuse that can include abuse of a partner, spouse, child or pet.

**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.

## RHODE ISLAND

**H 7163 died in committee.** It would have expanded existing law, which allows courts to include household animals in protection orders, to allow courts to award custody of the pets to the plaintiff.

Purple = Domestic Violence

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**SUCCESS!!!** **H 7970** requires 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.

**H 7236 and S 2655 died in committee.** They would have added animal cruelty, malicious killing or injury of an animal, and abandonment of an animal to the statutory definition of domestic violence.

### TENNESSEE

**HB 2068 and SB 1782 died in committee.** They would have increased penalties for cockfighting from a misdemeanor to a felony and add a fine of \$1,000—\$2,500 for attending a cockfight.

**HB 1875 and SB 1767 died in committee.** They would have expanded the definition of "racketeering activity" to include committing, conspiring to commit, aiding, attempting to aid, soliciting, coercing, facilitating, or intimidating another person to commit 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 died when the legislature adjourned.** It would have made it a misdemeanor to allow a minor child under age 18 to attend a dog- or cock-fight.

**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

**SUCCESS!!!** **H.27** adds committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates a family or household member to the definition of "coercive controlling behavior" for the purposes of a plaintiff's seeking a domestic relief from abuse order.

### WEST VIRGINIA

**HB 4935 died in committee.** It would have created a new misdemeanor crime of hoarding of animals.

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

### WYOMING

**HB 77 was defeated.** It 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

**Bill C-332** would add to the Criminal Code a new crime of controlling or coercive conduct, defined as a "pattern of conduct" with intent to cause the accused's intimate partner to believe their physical or psychological safety is threatened, including actual or threatened violence against their animal. It would also add this offense to the criteria for determining the accused's eligibility to have a firearms license.

## 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](http://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.



To subscribe to The LINK-Letter, just [click here](#). Please tell us where you're located and if you're with an agency. Thanks!

# 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

**July 11 (online):** Lauryn Day, Chief of the Animal Abuse Unit of Florida's 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office, will present "Animal Cruelty Prosecution: Attempt and Conspiracies" in a [webinar](#) for the Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

**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.

**July 19 – Hartford, Conn. (online):** Phil Arkow will conduct a Link training for the Connecticut [Department of Children and Families](#).

**July 22-23 — Phoenix, Ariz:** Lee Chitwood, Rosa Figarola and Kathy Hessler will present "When Pets Are Family: The Human-Animal Bond in Divorce and Child Custody Case Decision Making", and Jill Hollander will present "In the Shadows: Animal Cruelty as Coercive Control in the Exploitation of Elders, Vulnerable Adults and Children" at the [87th Annual Conference](#) of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

**July 23 – Kansas City, Mo. (online):** BestyBnB will conduct a [webinar](#), "Safety Planning with Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Pets."

**July 24 -- Birmingham, Ala.:** [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold an in-person training workshop on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

**July 29 — Washington, D.C.:** Katie Campbell of RedRover will present "Getting to "Yes!" and Staying There - Building Support for Pet Housing Programs" at the National Organization for Victim Advocacy's [50th Annual Training Event](#).

**Aug. 1 — Spokane, Wash.:** The Veterinary Forensic Sciences Laboratory, Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service, Washington Animal Control Association, and International Society for Animal Forensic Sciences will be hosting a [4-hour animal cruelty workshop](#).

**Aug. 3 — Tokyo, Japan (online):** The Animal Literacy Research Institute and the Japanese Association for the Promotion of Canine Good Citizens will feature Sakiko Yamazaki in a [webinar](#), "The Association Between Animal Abuse and Crime: Is Animal Abuse a Precursor of Crimes?"

**Aug. 8 -- (online):** [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a virtual presentation featuring The Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence discussing the importance of including pets in survivor safety plans.

**Aug .13 -- (online):** [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a virtual training workshop on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

**Aug. 15 -- (online):** [Don't Forget the Pets](#) will hold a virtual presentation featuring the RedRover Safe Housing grants team where we'll review sample budgets and MOUs and learn how to make your application stand out from the crowd.

**Aug. 20 – Kansas City, Mo. (online):** BestyBnB will conduct a [webinar](#),” Positive Impact: Pets and Mental Health.”

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

**Aug. 25 — San Diego, Calif.:** Phil Arkow will present “‘It’s Either You or the Dog!’ Addressing the Increased Risks of Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence in Military and First Responders’ Households,” and participate in a Keynote Panel on the Links between Animal Abuse, Child Abuse and IPV in the Military,” at the Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma’s [29th International Summit on Violence, Abuse and Trauma Across the Lifespan](#).



**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:** Phil Arkow will present “Using the VSW Experience to Close the ‘PAWS Gap’ in Social Work Training and Practice” at the 8<sup>th</sup> [International Veterinary Social Work Summit](#) will be held.

**Sept. 16 — Burien, Wash.:** Jenny Edwards will present “[Animal Sex Crimes](#)” in a criminal justice training for the Washington Animal Control Association.

**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):** Mary Rautkis and Jessica Bibbo will lead 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 National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges and the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present the [Judicial Institute](#) on the Human-Animal Bond and The LINK Between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence: Issues in Family Law Cases.

**Oct. 10 — Galveston, Texas:** Phil Arkow will present “Partnering to Protect ALL Vulnerable Family Members — People AND Pets” at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Texas [Adult Protective Services Conference](#).

**Oct. 10 — The Hague, The Netherlands:** [MENDOO](#) (Mens en Dier Somen Naar Herstel) will conduct a congress on The Link.

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

**Oct. 16-17 — Lismore, N.S.W., Australia (online):** Phil Arkow will present “What can we learn from the introduction of animal protection and custody orders across the USA?” as part of a two-day conference for [Lucy’s Project](#).

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



**Oct. 28-30 (online):** The University Institute of Research in Police Sciences of the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain, the University of Florida, The International Society for Animal Forensic Sciences, and the International Scientific Working Group - Animal Forensic Sciences will conduct the [II International Virtual Meeting in Animal Forensic Sciences](#).

**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. 13-15 — Richmond, Va.:** The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Animal Legal Defense Fund will hold the [13th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

**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.

**Nov. 28-29 — Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online):** The 10th annual [Prosecution of Animal Abuse conference](#) will be conducted.

**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. 10 (online):** Katie Campbell will present “Collaboration: The Secret Ingredient to Housing People and Pets in Crisis,” in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

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

**May 7-9, 2025 — Daytona Beach Shores, Fla.:** The [Animal Forensic Investigations Conference](#) will be hosted by the University of Florida’s Veterinary Forensic Sciences Laboratory, in collaboration with The Maples Center for Forensic Medicine and the International Society for Animal Forensic Sciences.

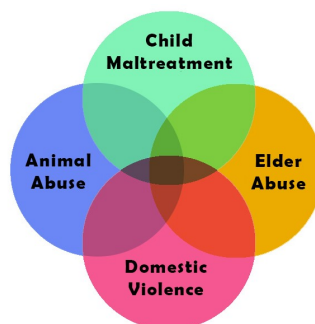
## THE LINK... in the NEWS

### “Barnyard Gone Bad” Investigation Leads to 115 Counts of Child & Animal Neglect



Pennsylvania State Troopers responding to an animal neglect investigation charged a couple with 115 counts of animal and child neglect. [WPXI-TV](#) reported that Kenneth and Nicole Hess of Slippery Rock were charged after 61 malnourished alpacas, dogs, horses, chickens, cats and ducks were found at their

home. Thirteen animals had died from starvation, dehydration or freezing to death, said an animal shelter director who described the scene as a barnyard gone bad. Five children lived inside the home which was covered with garbage, feces and urine. Butler County CYC took the children into custody and declared the home unfit for children.



### What is The LINK?

**L**egislation...  
**I**ntervention...  
**N**etworking...  
**K**nowledge...

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

## THE LINK... in the NEWS

### Suicide-Peticide Incident Injures Ex-Girlfriend's Service Dog



A man who committed suicide following a shootout with Henderson County, N.C. sheriff's deputies apparently also shot his former girlfriend's service dog. The [Hendersonville Times-News](#) reported that Hayden Elias Brook, 29, died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head following a disturbance in a campground where he threatened people with a gun, assaulted the ex-girlfriend and threatened to shoot her dog. Brook reportedly fled the scene and began shooting at deputies after he wrecked his vehicle. The woman said her dog, a German shepherd named "Dumbo," had been missing since the incident but she found him in the woods near the campground 13 days later with three gunshot wounds. Dumbo was expected to recover following multiple surgeries. The three deputies involved in the shootout were placed on administrative leave pending a full investigation.

### Child Abuse Investigation Leads to Dogfighting Charges



Sheriff's deputies in Charleston County, S.C. investigating the death of an infant child also filed multiple charges relating to alleged dogfighting and other crimes. [WCIV-TV](#) reported that deputies found the dead child and 15 dogs that appeared to be fighting pit bulls and alleged dogfighting paraphernalia. Sandy Gathers, 41, of Ladson, is facing two counts of animal fighting and baiting, one count of conspiracy, and 15 counts of unlawful possession of a firearm by a person convicted of a crime. Two dogs rescued from the scene were placed with the Charleston Animal Society.

### North Dakotan Gets 8 Years for Microwaving Kitten, Terrorizing Ex-Girlfriend

A Fargo, N.D. man who microwaved his ex-girlfriend's kitten to death and terrorized her for not returning from a Pink concert so he could use her phone ([See the October 2023 LINK-Letter](#)) was sentenced to eight years in prison. Carlos Perez, 24, was convicted of aggravated domestic assault, terrorizing and cutting his

### Man Who Shot Ex-wife with Crossbow Charged with Arson, Animal Cruelty



A man who was on parole for shooting his ex-wife with a crossbow allegedly set fire to his mother's house while she was still inside, killing her two dogs. George Dennison, 67, of Ottumwa, Iowa, was charged with arson and two counts of animal abuse and was scheduled to be tried on June 4. Dennison took a plea deal to avoid prison time for shooting his ex-wife in 2022 and had been sentenced to 12 years parole on charges of attempted murder, domestic abuse assault and intimidation with a deadly weapon. Police said he set fire to his mother's house on Nov. 21, 2023; the [Ottumwa Courier](#) reported that his 84-year-old mother survived but her two dogs died.

### Man Charged with Throwing Toddler, Killing Dog



An Altoona, Pa. man was charged with child endangerment and animal cruelty for allegedly throwing a toddler so hard that it killed the Chihuahua on which the child landed. The [Altoona Mirror](#) reported that Bryan Rey Morales Gracia, 34, was arrested for allegedly holding the child and smacking him several times before throwing the 18-month-old boy down on top of the dog. The child was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

ex's finger with a knife. The defense tried to argue that Perez's childhood had been incredible challenging after losing both parents and a brother to a series of incidents, including a drive-by shooting, the [Fargo In-Forum](#) reported.

## 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!**



**NationalLinkCoalition.org**



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