



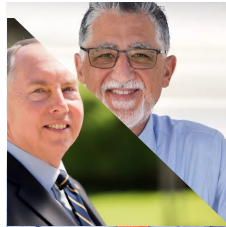
A monthly report of news from
**THE GLOBAL RESOURCE CENTER ON THE LINK BETWEEN
ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



Top Stories in This Issue:



The Link doesn't stop for a disaster
(Pages 1-3)



California bans Link offenders from having firearms
(Page 4)



"Pet-Nups" address pet custody in contentious divorces
(Page 5)

An Editorial:
All Creatures Safe and Sound

As I compile this issue of *The LINK-Letter*, our home/office in Etowah, N. C. was very fortunate to have been spared the wrath of Hurricane Helene. The 400-mile-wide storm barreled through the vulnerable valleys of our Blue Ridge Mountains and wreaked heartbreaking havoc on our immediate communities. I'm sure all of you have seen the catastrophic images and read about the tragic loss of life and property. Many of you inquired about our safety, and we thank you sincerely for your concern. We, unlike many of our neighbors, are OK.



Ironically, my wife and I evacuated when there was no indication when the power might be turned back on (some neighborhoods waited 15 days, and some still don't have potable water). We actually fled *TO* Florida to escape a hurricane! We stayed with family in Sarasota — who had just returned from their own traumatic evacuation from Helene — only to need to retreat back to North Carolina to escape Hurricane Milton. Fortunately, my family's house was also spared, although their neighborhood is a wreck.

So, what does all this have to do with The Link?

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Violence doesn't stop for a disaster

Extensive research shows that [natural disasters increase family violence](#) and trigger forced separations from the emotional comfort of pets. Disasters create both short- and long-term conditions that are ripe for fostering animal, child, domestic and elder abuse. As we reported in the [March 2024](#) and [April 2024 LINK-Letters](#), significant psychological distress and increased risks to people's safety occur not only in domestic violence but also during and after natural disasters. People may have to make the agonizing decision not to evacuate to a place of safety, so that they can stay with and protect their pets. Forced separation or abandonment of companion and farm animals may lead to feelings of intense grief, guilt and trauma, and a decline in psychosocial functioning. Increased anxiety and acute stress contributes to the impact of short- and long-term mental health issues which can lead to an increase in interpersonal and interspecies violence.

When a disaster overwhelms vulnerable communities, the [New York Times](#) reported, it tends to have worse outcomes, and the recovery is harder. With a death toll in the hundreds and many people still missing, many residents are experiencing the psychological stress of grief, loss and trauma. One doctor described an uptick in anxiety stemming from the financial toll after the storm took away people's homes, cars and jobs. Rural communities are particularly vulnerable, with increased levels of poverty leading to greater social and economic pressures and heightened health challenges, including depression and addiction.

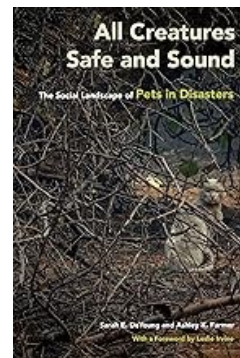
Evidence suggests that between a third and half of all persons exposed to natural disasters will finally develop mental distress, such as PTSD, depression or anxiety disorders. Personal threats to life, loss of loved ones, property loss, immense destruction, breakdown of social systems, and collapse of social cohesion and harmony are the primary causes. These are exacerbated by the scarcity of basic provisions, law enforcement's inability to cope with the scale of dislocation, feelings of powerlessness, aggravation caused by bureaucratic delays, and the perception of inadequate governmental responses to help victims. These distresses can develop into violence, with women, children, elderly, low-income and people who have been exposed to a previous traumatic event most vulnerable to developing mental distress.



"Blanco," a cat separated from his family in Burnsville, N.C., sought safety on a power line. They were eventually reunited. (Photo: Best Friends Animal Society)

Natural disasters escalate the [risk of child maltreatment](#) due to weakened child protection systems and disruption of preventative mechanisms. Families that are more vulnerable to loss of food and shelter commit violence against children more frequently. Emergency housing increases risk of some types of child abuse. Sexual violence against girls and physical violence against boys after emergencies are common forms of violence.

"Disasters can exacerbate conditions for animal cruelty," wrote Sarah E. DeYoung and Ashley K. Farmer in describing the social landscape of pets in disasters in *All Creatures Safe and Sound*. The traumatic distress of disasters and relocations can change pets' behaviors, and owners who fail to recognize the reasons for these changes often respond with abuse and neglect.



They added that disasters do not cause spikes in crime and looting, but animal cruelty and abandonment occur during disasters, as do incidents of police shooting dogs they perceive to be dangerous. Pet rescues may be constrained by officials who refuse to let volunteers into disaster zones where looting or other crimes may be occurring.

(Other studies suggest that violence increases in emergencies, but the reported rate of violence is less than the actual rate due to lack of required infrastructure and reporting mechanisms.)

(Continued on Page 3)

“It can’t happen here....”

For years all of us have seen the images of disastrous hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires and floods and thought “it can’t happen here.” National organizations, including the ASPCA, HSUS and American Humane, have long offered on-site disaster relief efforts. When I was working in animal shelters, disaster preparedness was just starting to become a concern and many shelters began making successful preparations to evacuate and care for the animals if and when disaster struck. (Many, sadly, still have not.)

But it did happen here and it was a wake-up call — not just for animals but for vulnerable people who are at risk as well. As we learned during the pandemic, when domestic abuse rates spiked with survivors trapped with their abusers, violence doesn’t take time out for a disaster. It will take time to fully evaluate the emotional fallout from Helene and Milton, but it is probably safe to say that all forms of family violence were affected by the disruptions and dislocations caused by these back-to-back catastrophes.

Bringing out the worst... and the best

I recently attended what was to have been the annual fundraising gala of Safelight, our local pet-friendly domestic violence and family justice center (*See the [September 2024 LINK-Letter](#)*). The event had been quickly transformed into a Night of Hope, a vigil to remember the victims who perished and the survivors who are still trying to get their lives back together. As in the pandemic, domestic violence families were trapped in homes from which they could not escape until the flood waters receded, the downed trees and power lines were cleared away, and the roads rebuilt.

Safelight set a shining example of resilience and community spirit. Its 24/7 hotline and 911 were the only emergency service lines that stayed open when the power failed. Their thrift shop donated clothing to families in desperate need. They rented an Airbnb near the shelter so staff — many of whose own homes were devastated — could continue to serve the shelter’s residents, often in 12-hour shifts.

Helene brought out the worst in people, often with violence. There were shootings in gas stations. A utility company had to post a sheriff at their office because of threats to the employees. FEMA crews had to de-camp from one county due to angry threats.



Volunteers brought supplies to isolated mountain communities via mule train (Photo: Grace Toberer)

But Helene — like so many other disasters — also brought out the best in people. Mountain folk are proudly self-reliant, and it didn’t take long for neighbors to show up with chainsaws, excavators and tractors to begin clearing pathways for the utility crews and first responders. Churches everywhere set up tents to distribute donated food, water and clothing. Restaurants and supermarkets gave away food. Neighbors shared their generators and gasoline. People were asking each other not only, “How are you doing?” but also, “What do you need?” Volunteers brought supplies to isolated mountain homes on foot, trailbikes, ATVs, and even pack mules.

As we in western North Carolina slowly recover — as well as our neighbors across Florida and the sites of future disasters — we are reminded of the remarkable resilience of the American people in times of crisis. But we’re also reminded of the increased threats and dangers that such devastation can wreak on fragile social systems and individuals’ psyches, and the impact this can have on people and animals who only want to live their lives safe and sound.

CRIME PREVENTION... and The LINK

Link Prompts California to Ban Firearms from Family Violence Offenders



Sens. Roth (left) and Portantino

Citing the likelihood of animal cruelty escalating into acts of violence against persons, California has enacted a wide-ranging law that prohibits persons convicted of animal cruelty after Jan. 1, 2025 from possessing a firearm for 10 years.

SB 902, sponsored by Sens. Richard Roth (D-Riverside County), and Anthony Portantino (D-San Fernando & San Gabriel Valleys), was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sept. 24.

The firearms prohibition extends to other misdemeanor crimes of family violence, including offenders convicted of child and elder abuse, sexual battery, stalking, and corporal injury to a spouse, cohabitant or fellow parent. It also applies to individuals subject to specified restraining orders.

The measure requires the Attorney General to establish and maintain an online database, the Prohibited Armed Persons File.

“California has led the country in ensuring firearms do not fall into the hands of those that have demonstrated violent tendencies in an attempt to prevent future violence against others,” wrote the bill’s authors. “Given the nu-

merous studies showing that animal abuse is a predictor of violence against humans, California needs to ensure dangerous people with a history of animal abuse are prohibited from owning and possessing firearms for at least 10 years.

“Animal cruelty is a predictor of current and future violence, including crimes of assault, rape, murder, arson, domestic violence, and sexual abuse of children. The majority of interpersonal violence victims who report co-occurring animal cruelty are also concerned the

abuser eventually will kill them and should

“Animal cruelty is a major indicator that someone is capable of serious violence against humans.”

— Senators Roth & Portantino

be considered at extremely high risk of suffering severe injury or death.

“By ignoring such a blatant warning sign, California is putting people at risk. Misdemeanor animal abuse is a major indicator that someone is capable of serious violence against humans,” they concluded.

The bill had the endorsement of 31 national, state and local law enforcement, prosecution, gun safety agencies and associations. It passed the Assembly 76-0 and the Senate 37-3.

In a similar bill Linking animal cruelty with other crimes, Gov. Newsom signed into law **AB 2917**, the Hate-Based Gun Violence

Protection Act. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Rick Chavez Zbur (D—Los Angeles) allows courts to include a history of animal cruelty among the criteria in determining whether to issue a gun violence restraining order.

Existing California law allows courts to prohibit a purchase or possess a firearm or ammunition for a period of 1-to-5 years if the subject of the petition poses a significant danger of harm or self-harm. Grounds for considering whether such an order should be issued include recent acts or threats of violence or the unlawful or reckless use of a firearm.

The new law allows courts to consider evidence of cruelty to animals, stalking, the respondent’s threats of hate-crime violence against groups, and the respondent’s attempts to advance a political objective or to interfere with another individual’s constitutional rights, such as voting. “When hate is armed with a gun, we cannot wait for these threats to be acted upon,” wrote Zbur.



Rep. Zbur

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and The LINK

Media Explore “Pet-Nups” for Animal Custody in Divorces

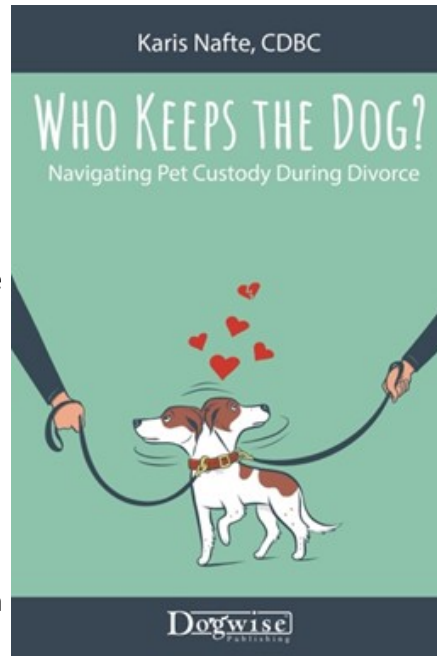
With many domestic violence situations ending in contentious divorces, eight states, the District of Columbia and the Canadian province of British Columbia have enacted laws allowing courts to specify pet custody arrangements in marriage dissolutions. The most recent such law, enacted this summer in Rhode Island ([See the August 2024 LINK-Letter](#)), prompted the *Washington Post* to explore this issue further in a [September 8 article](#).

“Pets are often, I think, used as leverage between parties who are going through a bad time,” said Mary Vidas, a matrimonial and family lawyer in Philadelphia who has helped many clients with pet custody. Vidas recalled one case where a pet died during the divorce proceedings and the ex-partner refused to tell Vidas’ client where the animal’s ashes were buried. “Talk about cruelty,” Vidas told the *Post*.

Reporter Sara Murphy also interviewed Karis Nafte, a dog behaviorist whose new book, *Who Keeps the Dog: Navigating Pet Custody During Divorce*, addresses such issues as visitation rights, the children’s pets, and unusual species of animals.

One possible solution, Nafte suggested, is for couples to plan ahead and get a “pet nup” – a prenuptial agreement as to what a couple will do with their pets should they break up. This concept is apparently working successfully in the United Kingdom and a template is available as a free download from the [Blue Cross animal charity](#).

The newspaper article was later picked up in a three-minute Apple News podcast. Host Shumita Basu interviewed Murphy, who described the case of a woman named Sharyn who had recently gone through a divorce. Even though the divorce was amicable, it was difficult trying to figure out what to do with “Ozzie,” a miniature Australian shepherd.



Sharyn travels for work, so to avoid uprooting Ozzie from a stable home she allowed her ex to keep Ozzie for awhile, but she added a clause to the divorce agreement stating that Ozzie would stay with her once her work schedule permitted it.

“These kind of written-out arrangements drive home just how much our relationships with our pets have changed over the years,” said Murphy, citing a recent Pew Research Study that found that 97% of Americans consider their pets to be members of the family.

Murphy theorized several ideas as to why human-animal bonds seem more intense these days. With fewer couples having children, pets can become “the repository for that love we have. We don’t have fights with our pets in the same way we have fights with the people in our lives,” she said. In addition, more people are living alone.

“When break-ups happen it’s hard to decide who should say goodbye to the pet,” Murphy said. While the legal system is trying to play catch-up with more states allowing divorce settlements to specify custody arrangements, joint custodies can be problematic.

Murphy related her interview with Nafte who regularly would see dogs that were acting out because of the stress of the divorce. “People mean well, but 50-50 week on/week off arrangements are definitely not good for pets,” Murphy said.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINK NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

New South Wales Defines Animal Abuse as Coercive Control

A [new law](#) that became effective on July 1 in the Australian state of New South Wales makes coercive control a criminal offense when a person uses abusive behaviors towards a current or former intimate partner with the intention to coerce or control them. The criminal offense captures repeated patterns of physical or non-physical abuse used to hurt, scare, intimidate, threaten or control someone.

The definition includes acts of animal abuse. In the context of coercive control, animal abuse involves using the emotional bond a person has with an animal to intimidate or control the person.

This may include:

- Intentionally letting a person's pet out of the house or yard.
- Selling or giving away a person's pet without their permission.
- Hurting or threatening to hurt someone's pet.
- Killing or threatening to kill someone's pet.

Other acts that fit within the definition include: child abuse; sexual abuse; reproductive abuse; making threats; social isolation; financial abuse; harassing, monitoring and stalking; emotional abuse; and violence and intimidation.

Implementation of the law followed the 2022 passage by the NSW Parliament of the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act of 2022. A joint select committee had recommended a criminal offense for coercive control. That Act also provided for a definition of domestic abuse in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence Act) of 2007, which became effective July 1, 2024.

New South Wales joins Victoria, Queensland, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Capital Territory with laws defining intimidating acts of animal abuse within their definitions of domestic or family violence. Similar laws are in place in the U.S. in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Texas, Utah, Washington, and the District of Columbia. A Tennessee law was inexplicably deleted in 2023.

Parliament Mulls Pet Custody Law in Divorce Settlements

The Australian Parliament is considering amending the Family Law Act of 1975 to address the issues of animals in domestic violence situations and divorce proceedings. The Family Law Amendment Bill of 2024 would enable the court to control and manage the conduct of property and other non-child-related proceedings, including addressing family violence.

The amendment would add "companion animal" to the definitions that courts can consider in decisions regarding the family's "property." It would not include assistance animals or those kept for business or agricultural purposes. In considering what orders the court should make in property settlements, the amendment would allow the court to order that only one party to have ownership of an animal or that the animal be sold.

The court could take into account:

- (a) the circumstances in which the companion animal was acquired;
- (b) who has ownership or possession of the companion animal;
- (c) the extent to which each party cared for, and paid for the maintenance of, the companion animal;
- (d) any family violence to which one party has subjected or exposed the other party;
- (e) any history of actual or threatened cruelty or abuse by a party towards the companion animal;
- (f) any attachment by a party, or a child of the marriage, to the companion animal;
- (g) the demonstrated ability of each party to care for and maintain the companion animal in the future, without support or involvement from the other party;
- (h) any other fact or circumstance which, in the opinion of the court, the justice of the case requires to be taken into account.

The Australian law, if enacted, would follow a trend that began in the U.S. in 2016 on the state level. Currently, courts in Alaska, California, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia can specifically award custody of a feuding couple's animals to the party deemed by the court to be in the animals' best interests.

Australian Guidelines Offer Aid to Victim Survivors with Family Animals

An Australian family services agency has published extensive [guidelines](#) designed to increase the ability of the domestic violence shelter (refuge) sector to accommodate family animals and support survivors escaping family violence with pets. [Safe and Equal](#), based in the Australian state of Victoria, published the guidelines in 2023 as part of its Family Animals in Refuge Project in collaboration with refuge providers.

Supporting Victim Survivors of Family Violence with Family Animals is a 24-page manual that shares learnings from service providers who are assisting victim-survivors of family violence with family animals. The resource offers an opportunity for dialogue, reflection and action to build on existing practices to support the safety, wellbeing and recovery of family animals and victim survivors.

(The guidelines specifically use the term *victim survivor* to incorporate adults, young people and children who have experienced family violence. And it uses the term *family animal*, rather than pet and companion animal, to emphasize that pets in Australia, as in the U.S., are widely considered members of the family.)

The guidelines are needed because “in the context of family violence, animal abuse is often a coercive tactic used by adults using family violence to: emotionally harm and control victim survivors; intimidate and manipulate victim survivors into compliance; silence victim survivors from disclosing the abuse; assert supremacy as the sole or primary object of affection; create an environment of fear within the home; stop victim survivors from leaving the relationship; or as retribution for leaving and coerce victim survivors into returning to the relationship.”

In addition, the guidelines cite research indicating that 85% of survivors reported that their animals had experienced behavioral changes as a result of the family violence, making it more difficult for them to integrate into a foster home, animal shelter or boarding kennel.

Describing how fear for animals’ welfare is often a barrier to human victims seeking safety, the guidelines offer recommendations to refuge agencies to address issues involved with family animals, including:

- Increasing the ability to access a pet-friendly refuge.
- Temporary accommodation for family animals.
- Maintaining connections with family animals through visitations.
- Expenses incurred with animal care and accommodation.
- Effective conversations with victim survivors regarding their animals.
- Options for transporting animals.
- Vaccination, microchipping and licensing.
- Including pets in Family Violence Intervention Orders and divorce or separation agreements.
- Regulations governing animals in rental housing units.
- Retrieving a family animal.
- Safety planning that includes animals.
- Counseling survivors whose animals have been abused or killed.

— Wilson, J. (2023). *Supporting victim survivors of family violence with family animals*. Carlson South, Vic., Australia: [Safe and Equal](#).

The logo consists of the words "SAFE" and "EQUAL" stacked vertically in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. A pink plus sign is positioned to the right of the word "SAFE".

Rhode Island Now the 47th State with a Pet-Friendly Shelter

Allie Phillips, Founder & CEO of [Sheltering Animals & Families Together](#), informs The LINK-Letter that the Women’s Resource Center, serving Newport and Bristol, Rhode Island, will become the first shelter in that state to have a pet-inclusive domestic violence shelter. Over 300 shelters in 47 states now allow all members of families to heal together from the trauma of intimate partner violence.

Literature Review Examines Domestic Abuse Link in Multiple Countries

A Link literature review from Spain explains that animal abuse is an instrumental form of violence used in intimate partner violence and domestic violence and often leaves victims with psychological scars. The study analyzed the presence of animal abuse in cases of intimate partner and domestic violence and the extent to which the affective relationship the victims have with their pets can influence the decision to leave their homes, fleeing from the aggressor.

The review examined studies from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, and the U.K. and the types of physi-

cal, psychological and sexual violence. It concludes that animal abuse is directly related to the fact that women who are victims of domestic violence delay leaving their home and do not ask for help, as they fear that they themselves or their pets will suffer reprisals from the aggressor. It encourages facilities to allow human and animal victims of domestic violence to cohabitate together.

-- Barbosa-Torres, C., Bueno-Galán, M.M., Bueso-Izquierdo, N., & Cantillo-Cordero, P. (2024). *Intimate partner violence and domestic violence linked to animal abuse: A review of the literature. Current Psychology.*
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06731-w>

Another Opportunity for Link Awareness: The VA

The National Link Coalition recently conducted a “lunch-and-learn” session about domestic violence in military-connected households for the Birmingham, Ala. VA Medical Center. We were surprised to discover that each of the 158 VA facilities now has an [Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program](#) (IPVAP).



The IPVAP was established in 2019 to develop toolkits, fact sheets, and relationship and health safety assessments. These support the program’s mission to provide a network of services to veterans, their families and caregivers, and VA employees who use or experience IPV.

These programs can be quite extensive; Amanda Phillips, IPVAP Coordinator in Birmingham, told us that they serve 74,000 veterans in their 24-county catchment area. Patients are screened annually to identify any IPV issues. Strong correlations have been found between IPV and the high incidence of PTSD and traumatic brain injury among military personnel returning from combat. The program is also active in educating local community agencies about the VA’s resources that might be beneficial for their clients.

WANTED:

Pet Protection Order Testimonials

The National Link Coalition is compiling information on the effectiveness of laws in 40 states that specifically allow courts to include animals in protection-from-abuse orders. We’re asking attorneys, advocates, survivors and others who have obtained a Pet Protection Order to let us know how the process worked and what the outcomes were. We’ll keep the plaintiffs’ names confidential.

Please email your testimonial to us at arkowpets@snip.net. Many thanks!



Please [click here](#) to make a tax-deductible donation to help keep The LINK-Letter’s news, trainings, and information flowing freely.

Your gift helps us protect vulnerable people and animals from violence, abuse and neglect.

Thank you for caring!

Veterinarians Urged to be First Responders in Animal Cruelty Cases



“As veterinarians, the importance of our role in providing care to animals in our community is clear. Less clear is why it is equally important the role includes participating in the response to animal cruelty.”

Kris Otteman Those of the opening words of Kris Otteman, Linda Fielder and Emily Lewis in a cover article in the current issue of [Veterinary Practice News](#). The creators of [Victim to Verdict LLC](#) (See the [December 2023 LINK-Letter](#)) encourage practitioners to recognize that their daily work not only demonstrates an allegiance to the Veterinarian’s Oath, but also exemplifies “our capacity to carry out our duty as a first responder to animal cruelty.”

The article explores the compelling reasons why veterinarians have an obligation to serve as first responders against animal cruelty, and presented insight and guidance to help alleviate their concerns and hesitations about fulfilling that role. Practitioners, they write, have an obligation to intervene before the neglect of an animal becomes criminal.



Linda Fielder

They emphasize that mandatory and permissive veterinary reporting laws are important because of clear Links between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, and because animals are depending on the profession to be their advocates. “These laws stem from an understanding animals are reliant on their caretakers for their survival needs, often powerless to resist their abusers, and are incapable of reporting or articulating mistreatment that befalls them,” they write. “They rely on us, as first responders, as experts, to identify when there is a problem and come to their aid – be it through provision of resources and education or through a report to an enforcement agency.”



Emily Lewis

They respond to common reservations veterinarians express about reporting suspected animal abuse:

- It is not the veterinarian’s responsibility to determine whether a crime has occurred; law enforcement will be responsible for conducting an investigation that may or may not set in motion charges leading to a criminal prosecution.
- Reporting suspected cruelty in good faith is unlikely to hurt the business or reputation; failure to report is more likely to be seen by the public as a blemish on a professional reputation.
- Confidentiality restrictions may not be an issue when potential animal cruelty is observed; state practice acts and the AVMA position statement allow veterinary-client confidentiality to be waived.

They recognize that while reporting laws have continued to trend legislatively across the U.S., the majority of veterinarians still feel inadequately trained or prepared to recognize and report suspected animal maltreatment, making the need for more such training “dire.”

They encourage veterinarians to reach out to knowledgeable colleagues, trainers and experts to “embrace your role as a first responder” and to “prepare yourself to respond when – not if – it walks through your door.”

— Otteman, K., Fielder, L., & Lewis, E. (2024, November). *Fighting against animal cruelty. Veterinary Practice News, 36(11), 16-19.*

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and The LINK

Register Now for Graduate Certificate in Veterinary Forensic Medicine

The deadline for applying to the five 3-credit online graduate certificate courses in Veterinary Forensic Sciences at the University of Florida is November 15. The courses are designed to help veterinary and other professionals gain qualifications for work in veterinary forensic sciences and further career advancement, and to better understand The Link between animal abuse and human violence.

The five core courses, all offered completely online, are:

- Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence
- Animal Crime Scene Processing
- Scientific and Legal Principles of Forensic Evidence
- Veterinary Forensic Medicine
- Forensic Entomology

Workshop to Address Veterinarians' Power to Advance Advocacy for Animal Welfare

While many veterinary professionals are understandably reluctant to potentially jeopardize their practice by getting involved in such Link-related activities as reporting suspected animal cruelty or responding to cases of domestic violence among their clients and staff, other veterinarians are recognizing “the power of the veterinary voice” as trusted experts to speak out for animal welfare.

That’s the theme of a workshop to be conducted at the [2025 Animal Care Expo](#) of the Humane Society of the U.S., scheduled for April 18 in Las Vegas, Nev. Four members of HSUS and their Veterinary Medical Alliance will present “Veterinary professionals as animal advocates: The power of the veterinary voice.”

The theme of the workshop is that veterinarians and their staffs can play a key role in advancing animal advocacy, given the leadership position the profession holds on issues pertaining to animal health and welfare. The panelists will offer ideas on how their colleagues can maximize their impact to improve animal welfare in veterinary clinics, in animal shelters, in their local communities, and at the local, state and national levels.



The program attracts both U.S. and international students and is designed for:

- Practicing veterinarians
- Veterinary technicians
- Individuals involved in shelter medicine operations
- Animal control officers
- Law enforcement officials
- Forensic investigators

For full details visit the Veterinary Forensic Sciences graduate programs [website](#).



Clockwise, from top left: Dorsey, Martinez, Hodges, and Goff

The panelists will discuss in-person and virtual communications, written resource materials, social media and podcast outreach, — and both the challenges and opportunities for veterinary professionals to partner collaboratively with animal advocates to champion the well-being of all animals.

Speaking at the workshop will be:

- Gloria Dorsey, Georgia State Co-representative of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Alliance (HSVMA).
- Michelle Gonzalez, Ohio State Co-representative of the HSVMA.
- Barbara Hodges, HSVMA Program Director.
- Rebecca Goff, Nevada State Director at HSUS.

SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Humane Society Initiates Innovative One Health Program

With growing interest in the social work field to place social workers in animal shelters (*See the [February 2023](#) and the [July-August 2022 LINK-Letters](#)*) and with the ongoing development of the One Health movement that parallels The Link (*See the [September 2018 LINK-Letter](#)*), we were pleased to learn that the Humane Society of Greater Dayton, Ohio, has combined these two ideas into an innovative program.

The [One Health Program](#) was launched in March to provide comprehensive support and resources to the shelter's veterinary clients and to pet owners facing challenges. The One Health program will also coordinate with the humane society's cruelty and neglect investigations

"This initiative underscores the organization's commitment to

serving not just the animals in their care, but also people and their owned pets," the humane society said in its announcement. The cornerstone of the One Health Program is the recent appointment of Kristina Hill, MSW, LISW as the dedicated One Health Program Manager to assist clients who may be experiencing pressing needs affecting their overall world.

Hill's role as the One Health Advocate includes working through a multitude of community social services agencies to assist clients with needs such as food insecurity, homelessness, utility insufficiency, financial hardships or other struggles. "The program aims to offer guidance, support, and advocacy in order to connect people with needed resources to ensure both owners and their pets can thrive."



"Being in a state of need can be overwhelming especially when you may be struggling to help your furry family members. Accessing the resources you need, outside of veterinary care, to help you or your family can be complex and unclear," said Brian Weltge, President & CEO. "This new program will operate as a liaison and advocate for guiding and connecting our clients to the vital resources available in our community to address their needs. Our One Health Program will pave the way to more peace of mind & comfort for our clients and their families."

Position Open at Center for Veterinary Social Work

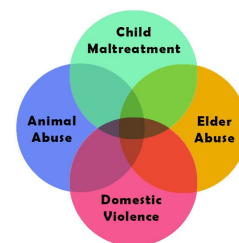
The Center for Veterinary Social Work at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville has



posted a job opening for a social worker in the College of Veterinary Medicine's Office of Outreach and Engagement. The position's primary purpose is to help individuals improve their quality of lives through counseling and advocacy and to lead and oversee Animal Loss Programming.

Animal-related grief and bereavement counseling is one of the four pillars of Veterinary Social Work; the other three are: intentional well-being for veterinary personnel; animal-assisted interventions; and The Link between human and animal violence.

Details of the position and prerequisites are available [online](#).



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK

Massachusetts Reduces Cross-Reporting Restrictions

A new law enacted in Massachusetts on Oct. 9 will make it easier for state officials working in the prevention of abuse of children, the elderly and the disabled to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect.

Under previous law, employees and contractors of the Department of Children & Families, the Department of Elder Affairs, and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission were permitted to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or animal control officers “during any investigation or evaluation.” The timeframe for this reporting had been interpreted to apply only to the 10-day investigation period. Link advocates said that timeframe was too restrictive and promoted **H.4911** which now allows officials to report at any time, not just during the investigation.

The bill, led by Sen. Adam Gomez (D - Springfield) and Rep. Jack Patrick Lewis (D - Middlesex), also now prevents DCF from factoring in a dog’s breed in whether a family can adopt or foster a child. Under prior law, no child under age 12 could be placed in a home with a Rottweiler, pit bull or German shepherd, or a dog



Sen. Adam Gomez (left) & Rep. John Patrick Lewis which mixes at least 2 of these breeds. Under the new provisions DCF can request that pre-adoptive or foster parents provide a behavior/temperament assessment, history of dangerous incidents, spay/neuter status, the number of animals in the home and their housing conditions, and/or veterinary records of any animal in evaluating whether the environment is suitable for the child.

“Dogs should be judged as the individuals they are — not based on outdated and long-ago-disproven stereotypes. Policies that target specific dog owners based on the size, weight, or perceived breed of their pet discriminate against those who properly train and socialize their dogs. Families are broken or kept apart due to these types of policies,” wrote the [Massachusetts SPCA](#) in supporting the legislation.

ANIMAL CONTROL... and THE LINK

Animal Control Officers Seen as “Secret Weapon” in Link Investigations

“Animal control officers can get access.”

That was the advice that Nicole Howland, the Domestic Violence Prosecutor for the Lexington County, S.C. Sheriff’s Department, told members of the South Carolina Animal Care & Control Association, regarding their unique ability to gain access to potential crime scenes where law enforcement officers cannot go.

“Because people will underestimate animal control officers, it gives you a lot of power, and you can prevent future violence against older people and children,” she said. “You will get access to houses that law enforcement doesn’t, and offenders don’t see you as a threat. They only see you as a dogcatcher.”

Howland told the audience that they are true professionals although the public “demonizes” them. But, she added, “Don’t underestimate your value. When



Nicole Howland (left), and Marli Drum from SCACCA, participated in the South Carolina Animal Care & Control Association’s Link training. you walk through that door you may be the first step to prevent someone from being hurt.” ACOs investigating an animal issue may find a meth lab. “Animal control is that secret weapon that law enforcement should utilize more.”

Howland was part of a half-day training session that also featured the National Link Coalition’s Phil Arkow, who described The Link and how animal care and control agents can play a vital role in responding to and preventing all forms of family violence.

Raising LINK Awareness

Police Address The Link for Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In Virginia:

Police Department Dedicates Event to The Link

K9 Krawl 5K

A FREE walk to bring awareness to domestic violence and the LINK to animal cruelty



The Fairfax County, Va. Police Department commemorated Domestic Violence Awareness Month by staging a K9 Krawl 5K on October 12. The free walk, which was designed to bring awareness to domestic violence and the LINK to animal cruelty, fulfilled expectations of being a “pawsome” experience. The event featured a Best Dressed Dog Costume Contest, a demonstration from the police department’s K-9 unit, a raffle, and other activities.

In Wyoming:

Pet Parade Highlights The Link

“Why a pet parade? Pets provide support for many individuals, especially victims who are in an abusive relationship,” said Vanessa Weekly, Police Department Victim Witness Coordinator in Evanston, Wyo. “The abusive person uses pets by threatening harm to control victims to stay in the relationship. We want to take the opportunity to support our pets who help many of these victims and survivors who experience violence or abuse.”

Weekly spoke to the [Bridger Valley Pioneer](#) at the first of two Pets and People Against Violence Awareness walks staged in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month by the Uinta County Sexual Assault and Family Violence (SAFV) Task Force. The event drew attention to The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence



Participants of the Evanston Pets and People Against Violence Awareness Walk pose for a group picture on Saturday, Oct. 5.

and the need for more shelters to become pet-friendly. Currently, there are five pet-friendly shelters in Wyoming, but none in or near Evanston.

SAFV Task Force Director Jesse Barnes related the experiences of two clients who experienced The Link first-hand. One former client was threatened through abuse of her puppy, which was gifted to her by her abuser during the wooing

or apology phase of the relationship, “just like flowers,” Barnes said, only to be eventually cruelly killed. Another victim wouldn’t leave her ranch because too many beloved animals would be left behind. “She was choosing violence over safety to make sure her animals would be taken care of,” Barnes said, noting that Wyoming is one of 40 states where animals can be included in protection orders.

Raising LINK Awareness

2014 Link Panel Discussion Rediscovered



The National Link Coalition has rediscovered a video of a 10-year-old panel discussion about “The Link between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” that was one of the first programs to bring Link awareness to college and community audiences. The program was

held at Millersville University in Pennsylvania and was moderated by Debra Vredenburg-Rudy, then a professor and currently the chair of the psychology department at the university.

“It’s a very difficult topic, it’s not a pretty topic, but it’s a topic that we all need to be aware of,” Vredenburg-Rudy told the audience.

The program came about as a result of a question raised by a student in her social psychology class about what a therapist should do if a client is abusing a pet or knows that animal abuse is occurring in the house.

Panel members were Phil Arkow from the National Link Coalition; Kate Cavanaugh from the Organization for Respectful Care of Animals (ORCA); Lancaster County Assistant District Attorney Christine Wilson; Anne Acker from Safe Home; and Samuel Knapp from PA Psychological Associates.

The video was brought to our attention and [uploaded to YouTube](#) by Bob Rudy, husband of Debra Vredenburg-Rudy and a candidate for the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives.

UK Parliament Hears “Protect Animals Protect People” Link Message

Members of the [Links Group UK](#), the [Naturewatch Foundation](#) team and the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group introduced Members of Parliament to their “Protect Animals Protect People” campaign at an “Animal Abuse within Domestic Abuse” event on Oct. 22. The event reached decision-makers to explain why when animals are protected, people are too.

Mark Randell, Naturewatch campaign manager, said the event was supported by 21 Members of Parliament from 6 different parties, highlighting that preventing abuse is about collaboration. Rebecca Stephens, Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Links Group Trustee, called for integrated safeguarding between human and animal welfare services and highlighted the importance of veterinary social work. “It was an in-



Speakers gather at the Protect Animals Protect People event at Parliament

credible experience to speak with MPs and professionals across various disciplines about The Link. This was a fantastic opportunity to shine a light on the importance of

interdisciplinary collaboration around safeguarding, using the veterinary social work model as an example,” she said.

Link in Later Life to be Featured

The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life will conduct a [webinar](#) on Dec. 17 on “Addressing Pet Safety with Victims of Abuse in Later Life.”

Panelists will be: Claire Coughlin, Director of the Animal Welfare Institute’s Companion Animal Program; Victoria Ferguson-Young, Victim Services Coordinator at NCALL; and Barbara Huewe, advocacy supervisor at the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center in Fargo, N. Dak.

News from LINK COALITIONS

“Deep Dive” Webinars Help People and Pets to be “Safer Together”



Crisis Center North
Providing direction to victims of domestic violence

Pennsylvania’s Keystone Link Coalition, in collaboration with

Pittsburgh’s Crisis Center North, has posted [recordings of three recent webinars](#) that address The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and other forms of family and community violence. The webinars train service providers in all fields to be better equipped to stop abuse at the lowest possible level by recognizing the co-occurrence of human and animal abuse. If abuse is stopped in a family when a pet becomes the first victim, it may never develop further to harm a child, a spouse, or others.

The first webinar, *“Safer Together: Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services,”* features the National Link Coalition’s Phil Arkow. The 90-minute program provides an overview of The Link, how it impacts different vulnerable populations, and the need for social services, animal care and control and veterinary organizations to share information in a coordinated response to family and community violence.

“Safer Together: Deep Dive into Child/Animal Abuse,” focuses on “connected abuse under one roof.” Claire Coughlin of the Animal Welfare Institute and Nikki Thompson of the Bucks County, Pa. SPCA led the 90-minute discussion on animal abuse’s impact on children, how to report suspected child maltreatment, and a case study of an animal hoarding situation.

“Safer Together: Deep Dive into Elder/Animal Abuse” featured Jessica Bibbo, Janet Hoy-Gerlach and Mary Rautkis ([See the October 2024 LINK-Letter](#)). They described the benefits and challenges of pet ownership among older adults, the need for cross-reporting elder and animal abuse, and questions about animals that should be asked during intakes to address risks and build on strengths.

Canadian Group Helps Domestic Violence Survivors with Pets

With research indicating that 56% of domestic violence survivors in British



WARM HEARTS
PET SAFE HAVENS

Columbia delay leaving their abusers out of concern for their pets’ welfare, but less than half of BC’s shelters are pet-friendly, a group of advocates have formed the [Warm Hearts Pets Safe Havens Association](#) to help survivors find resources and safety for themselves and their pets.

The association is a group of human and animal service professionals who value their lives with their pets, and who imagine what it must be like for survivors to be separated from their pets, who are members of their families.

The group has developed four separate resource packages to support keeping domestic violence survivors together with their animals:

- **The Animal Welfare Organization Pet Safe Policy Package** is for agencies who want to partner with another organization to care for pets while their people stay in the shelter.
- **The On-Site Pet Safe Policy Package** is for agencies that want to welcome pets to stay with their people in the shelter.
- **The Boarding Pet Safe Policy Package** is for agencies that want to partner with a boarding facility to care for the pets of people in shelters.
- **The Foster Pet Safe Policy Package** is designed for agencies that have community volunteers who are willing to foster the pets of domestic violence survivors in shelters.

The association has also compiled a list of resources to help survivors locate: support for mental health, addiction, Indigenous, child and pet issues; shelters and transition houses and what to expect there; support services for homeless individuals; and veterinary care.

LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

We're following 144 Link-themed bills in 27 states, Congress and Canada. The bills are color-coded as follows:

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

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

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

USA—FEDERAL BILLS

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. 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. 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.

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.

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.

S.321 would create a new misdemeanor or crime of stalking and extend federal firearms restrictions to individuals subject to court orders restraining them from stalking someone from a current or former dating relationship, including making them fear for their pet, service animal or emotional support animal.

H.R. 8923, the Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act of 2024, would establish an Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the U.S. Department of Justice.

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.

SUCCESS!!! **HB 2241** expands the definition of bestiality to now include possessing, distributing and purchasing images of a “real person” (i.e., no AI) engaged in sex with a “real” animal. Bestiality remains a felony; possessing the media is a misdemeanor.

CALIFORNIA

SB 89 died in committee. It would have expanded 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 had passed the Senate but died in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

SUCCESS!!! **SB 902** prohibits persons convicted of animal cruelty after Jan. 1, 2025 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 died in committee. They would have expanded 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 died in committee. It would have made 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.

SUCCESS!!! **AB 2917** expands 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.

DELAWARE

SUCCESS!!! **SB 198** adds the possession, ownership, sale or manufacture of animal fighting paraphernalia to existing statutes making animal fighting a Class E felony.

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

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.

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 cockfighting to a felony and impose fines on persons who attend or gamble on a cockfight.

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.

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 would allowed petitioners for protective orders to also seek to prevent the respondent from possessing firearms or ammunition.

Purple = Domestic Violence
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Orange = Court Animal Advocates
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Light Blue = Link & Other Crimes

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.

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.

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MARYLAND

SB 17 and HB 667 died. They would have established each animal harmed in an act of animal cruelty as a separate offense and that convictions and cruelty sentences could not be merged with convictions and sentences for co-occurring crimes.

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

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.

SUCCESS!!! H.4911 allows employees of the Department of Children & Families, the Department of Elder Affairs, and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission to report suspected animal abuse at any time, not just during the course of their investigations. It also prohibits DCF from using a dog’s breed as a factor in whether a family can adopt or foster a child. DCF can request that pre-adoptive 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.

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.

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.

HB 6024 would authorize courts to appoint, on the court’s own motion or the motion of any party, uncompensated attorneys and law students to serve as volunteer advocates to represent the interests of the animal or the interests of justice in criminal prosecutions related to the animal’s treatment, welfare, or custody.

HB 6014 would authorize grants under the Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment board for domestic violence shelters to include survivors’ pet animals.

HB 6013 would allow victims of crime to be compensated from the state crime victim services agency for temporary pet boarding and pet deposit expenses.

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.

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

A 291 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.

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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have established a misdemeanor crime of knowingly causing a minor to attend an animal fight.

A 39 and S 5309 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have provided 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have amended penal law to create new crimes of animal cruelty when a companion animal is intentionally injured or killed 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have made 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,” died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have allowed 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have moved the state’s anti-cruelty statutes from the Agriculture and Markets Law to the Penal Law.

A 1276 and S 7812 “Bella’s Law,” died when the Assembly adjourned. 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,” they would have required 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.

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A 5504 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have required every county 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have enabled veterinarians to receive continuing education credit for providing pro bono veterinary care services to individuals in domestic violence and homeless shelters.

A 111 and S 1659 died. They would have created court-appointed attorney and law student advocates for animals in civil and criminal animal welfare cases, to represent the interests of the animal.

A 433, A 1507 and S 294 ("Buster's Law") died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have prohibited 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 394 and A 1430 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have increased the penalties for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child.

A 5405 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have caused 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.

S 5337, S 8471 and A 7303 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have added animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption.

A 3908 and S 5947 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have required 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have required offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals to undergo psychiatric evaluation and appropriate treatment for mental illness.

A 340 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have included felony animal cruelty offenses among the crimes which would prohibit possession of a firearm.

A 1639 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have required 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony.

SUCCESS!!! A 8604 and S 8063, the "Hope Card Act," offers any protected party of a final order of protection either a digital image of the final order 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 died when the Assembly adjourned. It would have defined harming, interference, harassment or intimidation of a service animal belonging to a current or former family member as a "domestic violence crime."

A 10592 and S 9629 died when the Assembly adjourned. They would have established the housing people and animals together grant program to expand access for co-sheltering homeless people and victims of domestic violence with pets.

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 642 would allocate \$2,000,000 per year to local law enforcement agencies to investigate and enforce violations of gambling and animal fighting laws.

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 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.

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

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.

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.

SUCCESS!!! SB 1018 allows child abuse witnesses and victims to have access to an animal to provide emotional support or mitigate emotional trauma during the proceeding.

HB 2477, the Victims of Violence Safe Employment Act, would require employers to allow employees to take a leave from work if they or a family member are victims of abuse of a vulnerable adult which includes "an act of violence against, or the taking, transferring, concealing, harming or disposing of, an emotional support or service animal owned, possessed or held by a vulnerable adult."

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.

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 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 "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.

Permission to Reprint

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

For Additional Information

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

WEST VIRGINIA

HB 4935 and HB 5146 died in committee. They would have created a new misdemeanor crime of animal hoarding.

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.

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.

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

Nov. 12 — Reno, Nev. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Military and Civilian Family Courts: Animal Abuse’s Links to Other Family Violence” in a webinar for the [National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges’](#) National Resource Center on Military Connected Families and the Courts.

Nov. 12 — Kansas City, Mo. (online): Zoë Agnew-Svoboda will present a [live demo session](#) of the BestyBnB platform to help agencies locate and arrange temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence survivors.

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](#). Presentations will include “The Link/Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty” and “Animal Fighting.”

Nov. 14 — Salem, Ore. (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a training, “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse,” for the State of Oregon [Department of Human Services](#).

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 [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar.

Nov. 19 — Kansas City, Mo. (online): Zoë Agnew-Svoboda of BestyBnB will present “[Pet Advocacy 101](#)” to help social services agencies better address the welfare of pets and their owners.

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

Nov. 25 — Porto, Portugal (online): Allie Phillips will present a webinar on “Sheltering Animals & Families Together: Keeping Domestic Violence Survivors Safe” for [Associação Plano J](#), a Portuguese association of domestic violence agencies.

Nov. 28-29 — Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): The 10th annual [Prosecution of Animal Abuse conference](#) will include Roshni Ladny and Deborah Wilson describing the World Link Coalition’s work in raising Link awareness in Europe and beyond, and Debra Danco and Monique St. Germain from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

Nov. 29 — Chester, U.K.: The Links Group UK and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association North West region will present a [day-long training](#) on “How to Recognize and Act on Non-Accidental Injury and Domestic Abuse: Training for Large, Small and Equine Veterinary teams — a Multi-Agency Approach.”

Dec. 2 — Raleigh, N. Car.: Phil Arkow will present “Practical Guidance for the Effective Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse & Neglect” to the North Carolina State University [College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

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. 3 — Greensboro, N. Car.: Phil Arkow will present “Kids, Critters and Vulnerable Adults: Connecting the Dots between Animal Abuse and Human Violence” in a training for the Guilford County [Department of Social Services](#), Animal Services, and Family Justice Center.

Dec. 5 (online): Allie Phillips will present a webinar on “Sheltering Animals & Families Together: Keeping Domestic Violence Survivors Safe” for the [Florida Partnership to End Domestic Violence](#).

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. 14 — Tokyo, JAPAN (webinar): Sakiko Yamazaki of the [Animal Literacy Research Institute](#) will conduct a webinar on “The Association between Animal Abuse and Child Abuse: Protecting Children and Animals Comprehensively”

Dec. 17 — Madison, Wis. (online): The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life will conduct a [webinar](#) on “Addressing Pet Safety with Victims of Abuse in Later Life.”

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

Feb. 19, 2025 — Springfield, Ill. (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a training webinar for [Prevent Child Abuse Illinois](#).

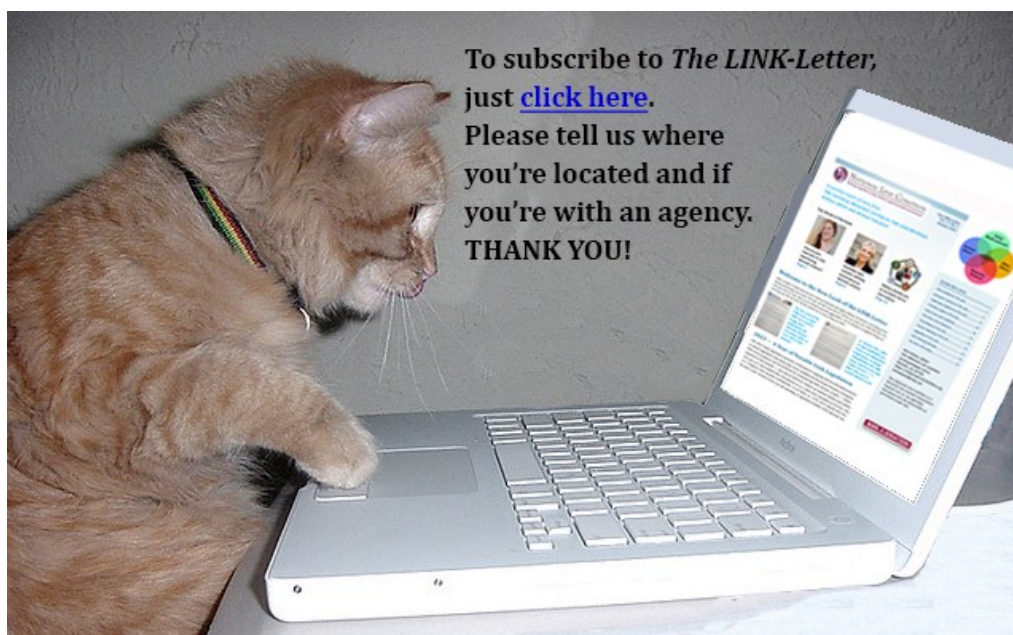
March 7, 2025 — Indianapolis, Ind. (webinar): Phil Arkow will present “‘It’s Either You or the Dog!’ Addressing the Increased Risks of Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence in Military and Civilian Households” to the [Indiana University School of Social Work Alumni Association](#).

April 15-18, 2025 — Las Vegas, Nev.: Several workshops at the [HSUS Expo](#) will focus on Link-themed cross-community collaborations, including: “Under One Roof: How Intake Data Can Streamline Human and Animal Services Collaboration”; “Community Outreach 101: Creating a Support Services Program Using the Pets for Life Approach”; “How Law Enforcement and Veterinarians Can Partner to Prevent Animal Cruelty”; “Co-Sheltering: Keeping Pets with Their People in Temporary and Emergency Housing”; “Veterinary Professionals as Animal Advocates: The Power of the Veterinary Voice”; and “Veterinary Social Work: The What, Why and How”;

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.

May 13-16, 2025 — Clearwater, Fla.: Temple Grandin and Marty Becker will headline the 2025 Conference of the [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#).

June 24, 2025 (online): Phil Arkow will present “Pet Protection Orders: A Powerful Tool to Respond to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).



THE LINK... in the NEWS

Woman Charged with Killing Cat in Oven During Domestic Incident



In what Watertown, N.Y. police called a domestic incident, a woman has been accused of killing another woman's cat by putting it in an oven. [WWNY-TV](#) reported that Lilith West, 19, is said to have killed the cat belonging to Natasha West, and also stole a cell phone. The relationship between the two women was not specified. Lilith West was charged with aggravated cruelty to animals.

Texan Charged with Killing 12 Dogs During Arguments with Girlfriend

Bowie County, Texas Sheriff's deputies have charged Stuart Duncan Hammonds, 24, of Simms, with 12 counts of animal cruelty for allegedly adopting or picking up 12 stray dogs and then killing them during raging arguments with his girlfriend. Deputies investigating reports of missing dogs said they immediately noticed the smell of decaying animals when they visited the home of Hammonds and his girlfriend, the [Texarkana Gazette](#) reported. Several of the animals had evidence of head trauma consistent with having been shot.



Suspect on the Lam Since 2021 To be Tried on Link Charges

An Ohio man who had been on the lam since 2021 for allegedly shooting and strangling two dogs during a domestic violence dispute will finally be tried. [WFMJ-TV](#) reported that Gary L. Smith, 46, of Smith Township, had been indicted by a Mahoning County grand jury on four felony counts of animal cruelty but disappeared after failing to attend a court hearing in May 2021. He was arrested in 2023 on unrelated cocaine and trespassing charges. Humane Agents from Animal Charity of Ohio said what started as a case of domestic violence ended with Smith using the animals as pawns.

Woman Charged with Dismembering and Cooking Mother and Torturing Dog

A Kentucky woman who was charged with shooting, stabbing and murdering her mother, dismembering her, and cooking the remains in a pot has also been charged with animal torture. Torilena Fields, 32, of Mount Olivet, was indicted by a Robertson County grand jury on the charges, the [Lexington Herald-Leader](#) reported. Police said that Fields refused to come out of the house after officers found her mother's body in the backyard near a bloody mattress. Officers called in a special response team and deployed gas inside the house and conversed with Fields using a robot. After several hours, she exited with blood on her face, hands and clothing, according to an arrest citation. While searching the home, officers found a steel pot in the oven containing Trudy Fields' charred remains. Fields was charged with murder, abuse of a corpse, tampering with evidence, obstruction of governmental operations, and torture of the dog. Men who had been hired by the mother to do work on the property and who had initially found the body said Fields was "casting spells" and acting "confrontational" towards them.

THE LINK... in the NEWS

Cops Call Hurricane Victim an “Idiot” for Allegedly Killing His Dog When the Power Went Out



A Rockledge, Fla. man was behind bars for allegedly shooting his dog because Hurricane Milton had knocked out the power. Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey [said](#) John Burgos, 72, was drunk when he shot and killed his dog, named “Flick,” after the hurricane left 3.4 million people without power. Burgos allegedly started shooting out of anger and hit the dog. “He still shows no remorse for what happened,” Ivey said. “He said when he was told that his dog had died ‘Man, FP&L [Florida Power & Light] made me do that.’ No, you’re an idiot. That’s what made you do this. Not FP&L. Don’t be blaming other people for you killing your dog.” Burgos was charged with animal cruelty, using a firearm while under the influence of alcohol, and shooting in a dwelling.

Landlord Charged with Breaking-and-Entering and Shooting Tenants’ Cat



A North Carolina man already facing extensive domestic violence and other charges was arrested again and charged with felony counts of animal cruelty, injury to personal property, and breaking & entering. Landlord Dustin Timothy McCormack, 37, of Morganton was arrested by Burke County Sheriff’s officers for allegedly breaking into his tenants’ residence while they were on vacation and kicking and shooting their cat. [WHKY-TV](#) reported that deputies had surveillance video footage from the residence and also from McCormack’s Facebook page relating to the incident. McCormack also has misdemeanor charges pending in Burke County for two domestic violence protective order violations, cyberstalking, expired registration card or tag, assault on a female, speeding, and resisting, along with a charge of reckless driving in Iredell County. McCormack told [WSOC-TV](#) that he only intended to scare the cat, which, he said, the tenants were not allowed to have.

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.

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.

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