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Please [click here](#) to make a Valentine's Day donation to the National Link Coalition to honor or remember a pet, a loved one, or a victim of abuse.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

American Bar Association Urges More Protections for Pets



The American Bar Association's House of Delegates has just adopted a highly significant resolution that urges all federal, state, local, territorial and tribal governments to enact legisla-

tion that protects individuals by protecting their pets in family law and civil restraining order proceedings. Citing extensive Link research and existing family law legislation in several states,

Resolution No. 504 calls for increasing access to justice by:

- Making provisions for the safety of pets in domestic relations proceedings, including considering the existence of a prior history of family violence and/or animal cruelty;
- Protecting victims of violence by including protections for pets in civil protection orders; and
- Promoting greater emergency and transitional shelter and housing options, as well as improving access to pro bono legal services to facilitate the safe housing and legal representation of victims with pets.

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Federal Tax ID: 92-2607909.
Donations are tax deductible as permitted under law.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

American Bar Association Urges More Protections for Pets

(Continued from Page 1)

The Resolution details the increase in pet ownership among people who overwhelmingly consider their animal companions as family members. Consequently, “Pets are often targeted when there is abuse occurring within a household or within an intimate partner relationship. We can protect people by protecting pets,” it reads.

“Given the growing understanding of the Link, this Resolution provides a roadmap for civil legal tools designed to support families with pets, including protecting victims by protecting their pets, and building upon existing federal and state laws designed to keep victims and their pets safe from abuse.”

Resolution No. 504 notes that it furthers ABA’s goal of advancing the rule of law and eliminating bias in such gender-based crimes as domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. The Resolution also promotes ABA’s goal of promoting pro bono and public service “by raising awareness regarding the Link between domestic violence and animal cruelty and by improving access to legal pro bono services to facilitate safe housing and legal services for victims with pets.”

The Resolution addresses the need to consider pets’ welfare in family law proceedings. “Pets have historically been treated in family law disputes like inanimate assets to be divided by the parties – if they are considered at all in some jurisdictions,” and sometimes even relegated to a status below that of other property, it states. It cites a 2014 survey by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers that reported more than 25% of attorneys had seen increases in disputes about pets.

The Resolution strongly encourages the inclusion of pets in protection orders. “Given the strong correlation between DV and other forms of human and animal abuse, when a victim seeks protection from the courts via a civil restraining order, it is essential that the order protect at-risk pets as well,” it states.

“The deep bond between victims and their pets often results in victims sacrificing their own safety to protect their pets from abuse. This can quite literally be a life-or-death decision,” it continues.

“When courts consider the safety and well-being of pets when issuing POs [protection orders], victims may be more inclined to report abuse and leave dangerous situations where they and their pets might otherwise face severe harm or death. By disrupting DV and associated animal cruelty, POs can also limit children’s exposure to these harmful experiences, which may contribute to better psychological and behavioral outcomes in the long term.”

The Resolution describes how more domestic violence shelters are becoming pet-friendly, but once survivors are

“We can protect people by protecting pets.”
— ***ABA Resolution No. 504***

discharged from shelters they face “significant ongoing challenges” in securing transitional housing that also accommodates their pets. Attorneys can play vital roles for survivors by providing pro bono services in preparing clear legal documents including temporary shelter agreements, foster care waivers and liability releases, and foster parent contracts.

The Resolution was brought forward by the Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section, the Family Law Section, and the Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence. Founded in 1878, the ABA has approximately 1.3 million attorneys, judges, law students and other legal professionals as members.

A [video](#) of compelling, emotional and first-person testimony by some of the Resolution’s champions is available on the ABA website.

“The ABA has a chance to demonstrate forward-thinking leadership and build upon the progress of existing laws by urging governments to enact laws permitting courts to protect victims by including pets in POs in cases involving DV, dating violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder and other vulnerable adult abuse, and stalking. Such laws have the potential to disrupt complex patterns of interpersonal violence and safeguard the wellbeing of humans and animals alike,” it concludes.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Who Gets the Dog? Canadian Case Shows Complications of Custody

Because many domestic violence cases end in divorce, and decisions about custody and disposition of property can be contentious when it comes to family pets, we've been following the progression of laws in eight states, the District of Columbia, and the Canadian province of British Columbia that allow courts to determine custody in what the court deems to be the animals' best interests. Our colleagues at Canada's [National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty](#) shared this case with us involving the disputed ownership of a 10-year-old Yorkshire Terrier named "Meg". While [Franco v Franco](#) falls under the purview of Canadian and Ontario laws, we thought we'd show you this example of some of the dynamics involved in these challenging cases:

The wife sought a declaration that she owns Meg, requiring the husband to immediately return Meg to her or that she be awarded possession of Meg until further agreement or that the parties share possession of Meg on an alternating week basis temporarily following the parenting schedule with their daughter. Her husband had bought Meg for her as a gift; she supported her argument with documentation including a purchase agreement naming her as the owner, veterinary records, and a microchip registration.

The husband sought the same relief, taking the position that because he had purchased Meg, he was her rightful owner and that pets are not subject to shared custody or best-interest considerations.

At issue before the court was whether the wife or husband owns Meg or, if the court was not prepared to make an interim ownership determination, which party should have possession of Meg pending trial. Their nine-year-old daughter resides equally between the two parties; it was decided after they separated that it was in the daughter's best interests to spend as much time as possible with Meg, so they agreed to share possession of Meg on an alternate week basis so that she spent the weekends with their daughter.

This arrangement worked until November 2023, after a brief attempt at reconciliation failed and the husband was away for the month of October, leaving Meg exclusively under the wife's care. After the husband retrieved Meg to presumably resume their previous schedule, he advised the wife that he would not be returning Meg to her, which she called a unilateral decision made without notice. The husband then kept Meg exclusively until the motion hearing.

The court explored two approaches in determining pet ownership:

- the traditional method focusing on who purchased the animal;
- and a broader approach considering factors like care, control, and maintenance.

The court acknowledged that "there may be a temptation to determine what party would be best able to look after a household pet, given that people who have pets generally think of them as family members," but added that

"the developed law is that a dog is to be treated as property." The court followed such factors as who purchased, raised and cared for the animal as well as what happened to the animal after the relationship changed.

The court noted conflicting evidence regarding which party provided Meg's primary care, and the husband's lack of explanation as to why he denied the wife access to Meg after November 2023 though she had made numerous attempts to come to an agreement about time-sharing. The court was also concerned that further conflict could arise that would not be in their daughter's best interests should Meg's ownership not be determined. There was also evidence that the husband had been working to undermine the wife's claim to ownership, despite her submission of many documents attesting to it.

The court ultimately ordered Meg be immediately returned to the wife and required the husband to transfer any related documentation. The wife was also awarded \$5,000 in legal costs, citing her reasonable litigation expenses.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

New York State Bill Would Fund Co-Sheltering Programs

A bill has been reintroduced into the New York State General Assembly that would establish a statewide grant program to facilitate co-sheltering pets with their people.

S 673, sponsored by Sen. Monica Martinez (D—Suffolk County) would establish the Housing People and Animals Together grant program to expand access for co-sheltering victims of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness with companion animals.

If enacted, the program would be administered by the Office of Children & Family Services and the



Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance. Nonprofit organizations and municipal shelters that provide housing for homeless individuals would be eligible for grants to implement and maintain co-sheltering of pets.

Grants could be used: to provide veterinary care for animals; to renovate facilities to incorporate kennels and other infrastructure; training and technical assistance to staff; and supplying food, supplies and equipment for the animals. The bill does not define how large the grant fund would be.

New York is believed to already have 17 pet-friendly domestic violence and homeless shelters, including 11 that are part of New York City’s Urban Resource Institute’s People and Animals Living Safely co-living program.

Two similar bills, **A 10592** and **S 9629**, failed to get out of committee during the 2023-2024 legislative session. The current measure is in the Senate Committee on Social Services.

New Mexico is believed to be the only state with a state-funded program to assist shelters. In 2024 New Mexico extended funding for pet-inclusive domestic violence shelters in the state’s 2025-26 budget bill, which 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.

Kentucky Bill Would Expand “Coercive Control”

A bill in the Kentucky General Assembly would expand the state’s existing recognition of intimidating animal cruelty as domestic violence by also defining it as “coercive control.”

HB 96, introduced by a bipartisan coalition of three male and three female representatives, would define “coercive control” to include intimidating, controlling or compelling conduct by damaging, destroying, threatening to damage or destroy, or forcing the other person to relinquish domestic animals.

It would also include: communicating, either directly or indirectly, the intent to harm the other person’s domestic animals, including by use of physical violence; and causing isolation of the other person from domestic animals, defined as dogs, cats and other household pets.

Kentucky already includes “the infliction of fear of such imminent



conduct, taken against a domestic animal when used as a method of coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge directed against a family member or member of an unmarried couple who has a close bond of affection to the domestic animal” within its definition of domestic violence.

Multiple states are modifying their definitions of intimate partner violence to include a number of acts considered “coercive control”. Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington already include intimidating animal cruelty within their definitions of coercive control.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Three Pet-Friendly Shelters Make Local News

Three pet-friendly domestic violence shelters recently made local news, drawing additional attention to how victims often refuse to leave abusive situations out of fear for their animals' welfare, and how keeping the entire family together can impact both people and animals and enhance recovery.



Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc.
The Battered Women and Children's Shelter

It may have been a stretch of unusually cold weather, or just something more random, but in one of the few times since the

[Battered Women's and Children's Shelter](#) in San Antonio, Texas began to accept pets in 2022, the dog kennels were empty. Shelter officials reached out to [Lonestar Live](#) and [KSAT-TV](#) to remind residents of the pet co-sheltering services that are available.

The shelter currently can accept only dogs, but officials are working on creating a space for cats. Family Violence Prevention Services, which operates the shelter, [appealed to the public](#) for financial donations to help operate the shelter – and kindly asked the public to not offer in-kind donations as they have no storage space for pet supplies.

In Marietta, Ga., LiveSafe Resources announced that in addition to its 40-bed emergency shelter for people, survivors will soon be able to bring their pets thanks to four new pet shelter units being built. The [Marietta Daily Journal](#) reported that the shelter's kennels were constructed with the assistance of Greater Good Charities.



The [Baton Rouge, La. Advocate](#) reported that the Iris domestic violence shelter, which serves eight parishes, is undergoing renovations to become pet-friendly.



RedRover volunteers are adding a weather-protected outside kennel, fenced-in play areas, and window-mounted "catios". Ten bedrooms in a pet-friendly wing are having carpeting replaced with solid surface flooring. Each pet owner will receive a pet bed, a basket of toys and pet supplies to take with them after they've left the shelter.

Webinar Explains Pennsylvania's New Pet Protection Orders



Reps. Sappay (left) & Mihalek

[LINK-Letter](#) has created an opportunity to explain the new law to the many professions involved.

The long-awaited passage of legislation making Pennsylvania the 41st state to allow courts to include pets in domestic violence protection orders

(See the [December 2024](#)

In response, members of Pennsylvania's Keystone Link Coalition and Crisis Center North will present a virtual [workshop](#) on Feb. 25 explaining "Pennsylvania's Pet Protection Orders: A New Tool to Protect Families and Pets."

House Bill 1210, sponsored by Pennsylvania State Representatives Christina Sappay and Natalie Mihalek, is now known as **Act 146** and was signed into law by Governor Josh Shapiro on November 18. Act 146: Protecting Families and Pets in Crisis aims to help domestic abuse victims leave dangerous situations with their entire families, including their pets.

"This webinar will summarize what this legislation means, and its implications for human and humane services. It will aid professionals in our goal to encourage policy and program opportunities and action to establish and enhance the implementation of Pennsylvania's pet protective order," explained Vicki Deisner of the Keystone Link Coalition.



Vicki Deisner



What is The LINK?
Legislation...
Intervention...
Networking...
Knowledge...

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Massachusetts Bills Would Award Custody in Pets' Best Interests



Two bills introduced into the Massachusetts state legislature would take one of the most compre-



hensive looks at **Rep. Meghan Kilcoyne** the processes by which courts handling property dispositions in divorce settlements could assign custody in the animals' best interests.

SD. 133 and HD. 797, introduced by Sen. Michael Moore (D—Worcester) and Rep. Meghan Kilcoyne (D—Worcester), would allow courts handling divorce and separation agreements to consider, in assigning ownership, care and custody of a pet, “the best interests of the animal, including the animal’s health, safety, comfort and well being and whether any party or family member residing with any party has a history of abuse, cruelty or neglect to animals or humans.”

The bills propose adding another statute that would allow parties in the divorce to file for either sole or joint custody of any pets. The court could consider:

- Each party’s history with the animal, including in acquiring the animal and subsequent amount of time spent, expenses incurred, and caregiving responsibilities undertaken such as feeding, walking, playing, grooming, training, and veterinary visits;
- The emotional attachment of each party to the animal and, if relevant, of any children in the household; and
- Whether any party or person residing with any party has a history of abuse, cruelty, neglect, or violence toward animals or humans including those resulting in a conviction, continuance without a finding, or abuse prevention order.

In awarding shared custody of a pet, the court would order a division of care and custody, including, but not limited to, the division of time and expenses such as food, toys, grooming, training, and veterinary visits.

Before the court awards custody of a pet the animal would not allowed to be transferred, encumbered, concealed, or disposed of without the written agree-

ment of all parties or an order of the court. Either party could seek a temporary order regarding custody, care, and payment of expenses of the animal. At any time prior to the court’s decision, the parties may enter into an agreement allocating the sole or shared custody of the pet.

Contentious disputes over pet custody may be particularly problematic in cases where domestic violence has been involved. Currently, eight states and the District of Columbia specifically allow courts to award custody based on the animals’ best interests. The Massachusetts proposal has perhaps the most detailed provisions of any of the existing laws.

Pennsylvania to Try Again to Address Pets in Divorces

Pennsylvania legislators have again introduced a bill that, like eight other states, would help courts award custody of pets in divorce settlements based on the animals’ best interests.

HB 97 would recognize that “companion animals are living beings that are generally regarded as cherished family members that offer their owners companionship, security and assistance,” and as a “special category of personal property” need to be granted special consideration in the division of property during marriage dissolution. Parties could enter into an enforceable agreement regarding the care and/or possession of companion animals. The court would consider such factors as:

- The period of time and financial responsibility of each party who would possess the animal.
- Whether the pet was acquired before or during the marriage.
- The animal’s basic needs.
- Who has been facilitating veterinary care and social interaction for the animal.
- Which party provides compliance with state and local regulations.
- Which party has the greater ability to financially support the animal.

Similar bills failed to make it out of committee in 2017, 2019 and 2023.

CRIME PREVENTION... and THE LINK

N.J. Assessment Links “No Lives Matter” Extremists with Animal Cruelty

In our [January 2025 LINK-Letter](#), we included several articles describing how the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has recognized animal cruelty as one of a number of threatening or concerning behaviors that, when included with other suspicious warning signs, could predict acts of intended targeted violence.

Those warnings were further amplified in the wake of two tragic, and apparently unrelated, incidents that occurred over New Year’s Eve festivities. In one incident, a U.S. Army veteran who had apparently been radicalized by ISIS plowed a rented pickup truck into a crowd of revelers in New Orleans, killing and injuring dozens.

In the second incident, an active U.S. Army sergeant killed himself as he exploded his rented Tesla cybertruck in front of the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas, injuring at least seven passersby.

While examining the motivations or political affiliations of these two perpetrators of targeted violence, The [New York Times](#) noted a case earlier in December when FBI agents arrested a man, Brad Spafford, at a farm outside Norfolk, Va., on a charge of illegal possession of a short-barrel rifle; investigators reportedly found more than 150 pipe bombs and other explosive devices on his property. The FBI said it was the largest cache of homemade explosives ever found.

The Virginia case included references to a far-right ideology called “No Lives Matter,” a nihilistic movement that the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness said promotes targeted violence, mass killings, criminal activity, and acts of self-harm and animal abuse.



The New Jersey office published a [“Threat Landscape”](#) assessment calling No Lives Matter an offshoot of a broader “accelerationist” movement which seeks to accelerate radical social change through sabotage and violence.

No Lives Matter uses encrypted messaging platforms to partner with white racially motivated extremists, recruit like-minded individuals, and publish tactical guides to “sharpen” members’ skills in making poisons, constructing improvised explosive devices and “manhunting” victims.

“No Lives Matter follows an accelerationist extremist ideology and promotes targeted attacks, mass killings, and criminal activity, and has historically encouraged members to engage in self-harm and animal abuse,” the New Jersey Threat Landscape said. It quoted No Lives Matter materials stating that “societal standards should not exist. They are to be crushed by any means possible. If they comply to the societal standards[,] they are mundane,” and encourages the “spread of terror to all who are mundane.”

No Lives Matter reportedly announced in a post on its Telegram channel partnerships with a European neo-Nazi group called Mordwaffen Division and with a Russian-based white racially motivated extremist group called the Maniac Murder Cult. Describing its affiliation with the Russian group, No Lives Matter posted “We can strike anywhere, at any time.”



Arizona
Legislature

Arizona Bill Would Ban Firearms from Animal Cruelty Offenders

HB 2211 in the Arizona state legislature would allow petitioners to file for a “severe threat order of protection” to prevent a respondent who has threatened or committed injury, death or cruel mistreatment of an animal from possessing a firearm.

The measure would allow petitioners to seek a severe threat order of protection based upon “the respondent making a credible threat of death or serious physical injury, or committing or attempting to commit, an act of violence that resulted in or was intended to result in death or serious physical injury to self or others or cruel mistreatment of an animal” within the previous six months. Violation of the order would be a Class 4 felony.

The measure would allow petitioners to seek a severe threat order of protection based upon “the respondent making a credible threat of death or serious physical injury, or committing or attempting to commit, an act of violence that resulted in or was intended to result in death or serious physical injury to self or others or cruel mistreatment of an animal” within the previous six months. Violation of the order would be a Class 4 felony.

CRIME PREVENTION... and THE LINK

Book Explores Child Abuse and Childhood Animal Cruelty Among the Primal Roots of Torture

Link research is cited in a new self-published book from Sri Lanka that examines in depth the motivations that cause humans in general, and law enforcement officials in particular, to torture. P. Saliya Sumanatilake, a retired state prosecutor for the Sri Lanka Attorney General's Department and a member of the Human Rights Commission, spent a year researching writings on police committing interrogative, punitive and oppressive torture.

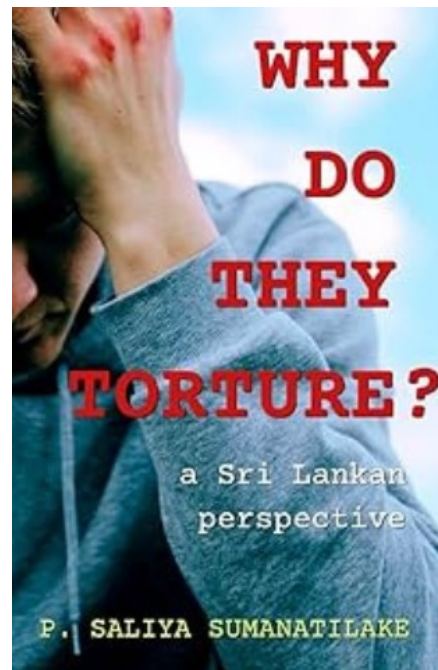
Noting that many nations pay only lip service to the universal ban on torture, he argues that "in order to effect torture, one must not only be incited but also disposed toward it." He examines numerous psychological and criminological underpinnings for the practice of torture which has persisted cross-culturally since antiquity.

He references early Link literature describing overlapping instances of child and animal abuse, corporal punishment and animal cruelty, and youths who apathetically "experiment" with torture by harming or killing animals. He argues that such incidents "evinced

cruelty as a disposition both innate and germane to the human child, and hence the human being." Discounting other criminological theories tracing cruelty to perpetrators' economic, environmental, ethnic and gender-based reasons, he argues that cruelty "needs no prompting whatsoever from either desired domination or repressed rage to manifest."

This results in behaviors found among police, prison guards and soldiers who justify their own acts of cruelty because they have so frequently observed it among others, he suggests.

He describes child battery as a pivotal practice that perpetuates cruelty among mankind; victims grow up and beat, mistreat and torture others due to an inner compulsion to repeat their own history without the slightest feeling of sympathy for their victims. Similarly, corporal punishment becomes a child's script that teaches children that it is morally alright to use violence. *(Editor's note: Not all children who experience abuse go on to commit violence.)*



"Human beings do have the potential to be both divinely compassionate and devilishly cruel," he concludes, arguing that innate cruelty is a congenital trait that renders every human being a potential torturer. "Cruelty appears so primal and akin to man that even with much (mundane) effort one could only attenuate, but not eradicate, it."

-- Sumanatilake, P.S. (2023).
Why Do They Torture?
A Sri Lankan Perspective. [Author](#).



Animal Welfare
Institute

Grants Available to Study NIBRS Research Data

The Center for the Study of NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System) Animal Cruelty Data, managed by the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), is offering two \$5,000 grants to support research projects where analysis of NIBRS animal cruelty data plays a central role. This funding opportunity is designed to promote innovative research that analyzes animal cruelty data

and informs prevention and intervention efforts.

Eligible applicants include master's and doctoral students who are interested in analyzing animal cruelty data as part of their graduate studies. For more information, or to access the application, please visit:

<https://awionline.org/content/nibrs-animal-cruelty-data-research-award>.

LAW ENFORCEMENT... and THE LINK

New York Cites Link to Try to Move Cruelty Laws into the Penal Code



Linda Rosenthal

It's hard to believe, but there are 13 states in which animal cruelty laws are not contained in the Penal Code — including New York where they are contained in the Agriculture and Markets law. “The placement of these laws suggests that cruelty to animals is not a ‘real’ crime since it is not in the penal law and

diminishes the seriousness of such crimes,” emphasizes New York State Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal.

Rosenthal will once again try to correct this situation through the introduction of **A 1432** and **A 1885** into the New York State Assembly. The measures would relocate the state's anti-cruelty statutes into the Penal Code from the Agriculture & Markets Law.

In a memorandum justifying the need for the bills, Rosenthal cites academic studies that “have found a clear link between animal cruelty during youth and violence against humans as an adult” and numerous documented studies that show that “there is a direct Link between acts of cruelty to animals and violence toward others, including child abuse, spousal abuse, elder abuse and other violent behavior.”

Veterinary Forensics Program Organizes Animal Cruelty Task Force

Citing “an established Link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence, which professionals commonly refer to as ‘The Link,’” Adam Stern, a professor of veterinary forensic pathology in the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine, announced the formation of a North Florida Animal Cruelty Task Force.

The task force is a collaborative effort involving State Attorney's Offices covering Volusia, Flagler, St. Johns, Putnam, Baker, Bradford, Union, Levy, Gilchrist, Alachua, Duval, Clay, and Nassau counties in the 4th, 7th and 8th Judicial Circuits. “The development of this animal cruelty task force is an essential step in breaking the cycle of violence,” Stern told the [Gainesville Sun](#). “This task force will enable agencies to pool resources, share intelligence, and develop educational programs to protect animals throughout the region.”

Noting that The Link underscores how animal abuse is often a precursor to or occurs alongside other forms of violence, including child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse, Stern added, “The goal of this task force is to enable law enforcement, animal services, veterinarians and the State Attorney's offices to collaborate effectively in investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty crimes throughout north Florida.”

Task force members include agents from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, county animal services, county sheriff's offices and local law enforcement.



Adam Stern conducts a training on animal cruelty investigations and evidence handling.

“There are multiple external factors that impede animal abuse investigations and the successful prosecution of those who commit animal cruelty,” Stern said. “The development of an animal cruelty task force is a major step forward in the fight against animal cruelty in north Florida. This new task force will address several issues, including allowing investigating and prosecuting agencies to meet to discuss how to improve investigations, allow the UF Veterinary Forensic Sciences Laboratory to provide educational training to task force members, and allow members to focus their resources and efforts on these unique crimes.”

“Animal cruelty is a serious offense that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way,” added R.J. Larizza, state attorney for the 7th Judicial Circuit. “I fully support the development of this task force, as it will allow us to more effectively hold individuals accountable for committing animal cruelty.”

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

Hawai'i Tries to Protect Children from Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse

A bill in the Hawai'i State Legislature would allow minor children to file for an order of protection or a temporary restraining order — which could include protecting the family's animals — if they live in a house where domestic violence has occurred.

The extensive preamble to **SB 460** reads, "The legislature finds that in households where abuse of a parent or guardian occurs, children who witness the abuse are also victimized despite not being physically harmed. These children have a higher risk for long-term physical and mental health problems and are also at greater risk of experiencing anxiety, experiencing depression, and exhibiting violence in a future relationship.

"Due to the trauma, these children are more likely to exhibit behaviors such as fighting, bullying, lying, or cheating. These children are often more disobedient at home and at school and are more likely to have social competence problems such as poor school performance and difficulty in relationships with others. Children who witness domestic violence are also more likely to resolve conflict by using violence."



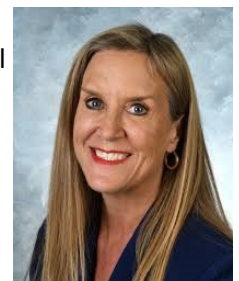
From left: Sens. Rhoads, Fukunaga and Moriwaki

The bill, sponsored by Sens. Karl Rhoads, Carol Fukunaga and Sharon Moriwaki, would give these minors standing to file for protective and restraining orders which would, among other provisions, prohibit the respondent "from taking, concealing, removing, threatening, physically abusing, or otherwise disposing of any animal identified to the court as belonging to a household, until further order of the court."

Hawai'i has allowed judges to enjoin respondents in protection orders from removing or harming animals since 2009.

Kentucky Bill Would Name Animal Control Officers as Mandated Reporters

A bill in the Kentucky General Assembly would require animal control officers to receive training on recognizing child abuse and would add animal control officers to the list of people with a duty to report dependency, neglect or abuse of a child.



Rep. Susan Witten

HB 194 ("Kyan's Law"), introduced by Rep. Susan Witten (R—Louisville), would require the Commonwealth to provide comprehensive evidence-informed training courses for animal control officers on recognizing and reporting child physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. The courses could be delivered in person or virtually. All current ACOs would be required to complete the training by Jan. 31, 2026; future ACOs would have to complete the training within 120 days of being hired, appointed or contracted.



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!

Australian Study Reveals Gaps in Child and Animal Cross-Reporting



Damien Riggs

The early intertwining of child and animal protection organizations in the U.S. also occurred in Australia. Yet despite laws aimed at protecting both children and animals, current child protection practice in Australia is largely treated as separate from animal protection – despite state departmental mandatory reporting guidelines that include mention of animals as a potential indicator of child abuse and specific directions to ask about animal cruelty, neglect and sexual abuse as part of initial assessments. While mandated reporters of child abuse, such as police officers, must notify child protective services when concerns arise during an animal welfare investigation, animal welfare staff are not mandated reporters. Cross-reporting has not been formally extended through legislation.

“These gaps in cross-reporting practices constitute a risk for both children and animals,” write Damien Riggs and colleagues at Flinders University and the University of Canterbury in a recent study. They call this separation of child and animal protection a concern, given growing research demonstrating The Link.

Congressional Bill Again Tries to Include Animal Abuse in Data

An effort to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to include histories of animal abuse in the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) has been re-introduced in Congress. H.R. 712, introduced by Reps. Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) and Julia Brownley (D-CA), would provide a better foundation for child abuse screening, prevention and treatment programs and would benefit children, families, and pets.

Similar bipartisan measures ([See the June-July 2024](#) and [August 2020 LINK-Letters](#)) failed in two previous Congresses. State child protection agencies provide data about 700,000 cases annually to the federal government under NCANDS, which tracks national trends in child abuse and neglect. However, children’s exposure to animal abuse as a risk factor is not included.

Their study investigated a South Australian child protection service’s psychosocial assessment practices relating to potential animal welfare concerns – specifically, instances of potential animal abuse mentioned in child protection referrals. Out of 5,780 referrals made to child protective services, they reviewed 40 cases from the Adelaide area in which referrals mentioned animal mistreatment, human-human violence, or Links between animal-and human-directed violence. They drew two conclusions:

- Child protection referrals that mention animals may prompt the assessing clinician to consider this aspect of the child’s environment; however, clinicians rarely ask about animals in the home unless prompted.
- Psychosocial assessments which include considerations about animals in the home may increase the likelihood that child abuse allegations are substantiated.

The authors raised concern that in the absence of legislative mandates, cross-reporting between child and animal protective services “is currently dependent on the knowledge and motivation of individual staff members.” Recognition of co-occurring child and animal abuse, provision of appropriate training, and establishing reporting pathways for sharing information between the two sectors would improve reporting and assessment practices.

“These gaps in cross-reporting constitute a risk for both children and animals.”

“Given The Link between animal- and human-directed abuse, any child protection notification where it is noted that animals live in the home – even where animal abuse is not mentioned – should trigger consideration of the welfare of animals,” they concluded. “The same is also true when animal abuse notifications are made: that this should trigger notification to child protection agencies when children are present in the household. This highlights the importance of cross-reporting, so as to ensure the best possible outcomes for both children and animals.”

-- Riggs, D.W., Baum, N.G., Taylor, N., & Beall, J. (2022). Reports of animal abuse in child protection referrals: A study of cases from one South Australian service. *Child Abuse Review, 31*(1), 91-98.

ELDER ABUSE... and THE LINK

Study Notes Risks of Self-Neglect and Animal Hoarding as Well as Positive Benefits of Pets for Older Adults



From left: Joshua Zoanetti, Janette Young & Torben Dahl Nielsen

While human-animal bond studies and animal-assisted interventions programs have long touted the potential physical and psychological health benefits of pets for older adults, a new scoping review of the literature offers a reality check describing potential hazards that pets pose for elders — including risks of self-neglect and animal hoarding.

The researchers, veterinarians and social workers in Adelaide, Australia, searched 11,868 articles and noted a strong bias in most reports encouraging positive aspects of pet guardianship for older adults. However, “there is a need to be cognizant of the risks and cau-

tions,” they write, “to proactively prevent or reduce negative impacts on both people and animals, particularly in the context of potentially frail older individuals.”

They identified three primary categories of pet-related risks to older adults: zoonotic, physical and psychological. The identified mental health risks included grief from the loss of a pet, self-neglect to care for animal companions, and animal hoarding.

Self-neglect was referenced in 71 retrospective case reports gathered from professionals dealing with hoarding. The majority of older animal hoarders satisfied criteria for self-neglect. They cited studies from the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium that

reported that 17% of animal hoarders’ homes had been condemned or deemed unfit for human habitation; 25% of the animals involved had to be placed in temporary or permanent protective care.

“The positive effects of companion animals on geriatric depression, dementia and loneliness are documented in the literature,” they concluded. “The risks, however, are much less studied. There is a need to develop strategies that address the negatives of pet guardianship so that the many positive impacts can continue to be part of older adults’ (and their pets’) lives.”

— Zoanetti, J., Young, J., & Nielsen, T.D. (2024). A scoping review of the risks posed by companion animals to older adults. *Anthrozoös*, 37(5), 1015-1031. doi: 10.1080/08927936.2024.2351278

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For Additional Information

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



CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK

Two States Try Again to Enact Two-Way Cross-Reporting

MISSOURI:

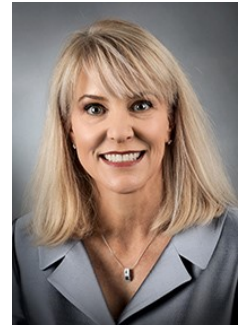
One of the nation's most comprehensive efforts to establish full two-way cross-reporting has been reintroduced into the Missouri House of Representatives after failing to be approved in Missouri in 2022, 2023 and 2024 (See the [February 2023 LINK-Letter](#))

SB 65, sponsored by Sen. Tracy McCreery (D – St. Louis County), would make animal control officers and animal humane investigators mandated reporters in cases of abuse and neglect of children, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons. They would be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employ-

ment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect.

The bill would create a full two-way cross-reporting program with a mandated reporting requirement for certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel to report cases of animal abuse or neglect. They would have to call a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association who would then report the alleged abuse or neglect to appropriate law enforcement officials, county or municipal animal control officers, or animal cruelty investigators.

Protective services employees with direct contact with children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons would be required to receive one hour



of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in animals.

Mandated reporters who fail to make a report would be subject to professional licensing board discipline and a potential fine.

“Abusive adults may utilize cruelty towards a pet to control the actions of others within the home. Often, families that come to the attention of child protection services or domestic violence shelters are also known to local humane societies or animal control agencies because of the problems of animal abuse.

“Pets are often the first victims of family or neighborhood disputes that escalate into violent and even fatal human encounters. Children may repeat such abuse that they have learned at home and direct it towards animals.

“This proposal serves to halt the spread of violence and maltreatment to children and animals in the household.”



NEW YORK:

Maybe the 16th time is the charm...

Deborah Glick

The New York State Assembly will, once again, consider mandating cross-reporting of child and animal abuse in the Empire State. Similar bills have been introduced in 15 consecutive legislative sessions since 2001.

A 1391, sponsored by Deborah Glick, would require persons charged with enforcing anti-cruelty laws to file a report when, in the performance of their duties, they have reasonable cause to believe that abuse or maltreatment of a child has also occurred.

The bill would further provide that

persons charged with the responsibility of filing a report of child abuse or maltreatment would also have to file a report of suspected animal cruelty, with immunity from the restrictions of confidentiality.

Reports of suspected animal cruelty would be phoned or faxed immediately to peace officers or SPCA agents in the jurisdiction; oral reports would be followed by a written report within 48 hours.

A memorandum justifying the need for the bill states, “Approximately 70% of households in the U.S. which have young children also have pets. A mounting body of evidence has linked acts of animal cruelty to other serious crimes and antisocial behaviors.

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Second Article Cites Need for More Veterinary Forensics in Japan

While the education and practice of veterinary forensic medicine has received increasing attention in recent years in the United States and Europe, Japan is currently lagging behind in the development of this new aspect of animal cruelty investigation and prosecution. A new review of veterinary forensic medicine and its current status and prospects in Japan suggests that the situation regarding animals in Japan has changed dramatically in recent years, and the need for veterinary forensic medicine is increasing.

Shin-ichi Nakamura, in the veterinary pathology laboratory at Okayama University of Science, writes that veterinary forensics now accompanies the traditional role of veterinary pathology and has risen in popularity “due to stricter global regulations concerning animal welfare and the importance of this field from the perspective of preventing harm to humans.” Citing Link research, Nakamura adds that while both human and veterinary forensics establish medical decisions that can be applied in criminal justice, civil justice, public health, and social welfare, veterinary forensics addresses even more issues because it involves a wide variety of animal species and an interdisciplinary approach.

“However, veterinary forensic medicine has not yet been established as a discipline and is still being practiced in an exploratory manner, especially in Japan,” Nakamura writes. But the 2019 revision of Japan’s animal welfare law marked a major turning point in the field of veterinary forensic medicine in Japan as the

law made it mandatory for veterinarians to report cases of animal abuse or suspected animal abuse to relevant authorities without delay.

“The increasing need to substantiate animal cruelty cases with each amendment to the law, combined with the proliferation of social media that has exposed the inappropriate treatment of animals, has marked the starting point for a major focus on veterinary forensic medicine,” Nakamura continues. Meanwhile, because veterinary malpractice has increased in recent years as veterinary medicine has become more sophisticated, forensic veterinary medicine is now required even for veterinary lawsuits.

“Veterinary forensic medicine is still in its early stages, particularly in Japan, where it has yet to be systematized, and there is a lack of case studies and research,” Nakamura concludes, citing challenges: insufficient cooperation among practitioners, police and the government; a shortage of facilities for conducting necropsies; and a lack of veterinarians trained in the specialty.

The article follows a theme similar to another article in the journal that called for international collaboration to overcome the shortage of veterinary forensic laboratories in Japanese veterinary colleges (*See the [December 2024 LINK-Letter](#)*).



-- Nakamura, S. (2025). A concise review of veterinary forensic medicine in Japan: Current status and perspectives. *Journal of Toxicologic Pathology*.



HELP US KEEP THE LINK FREE!

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

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

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

PROSECUTORS... and The LINK

District Attorney's Pet Calendars Spotlight The Link

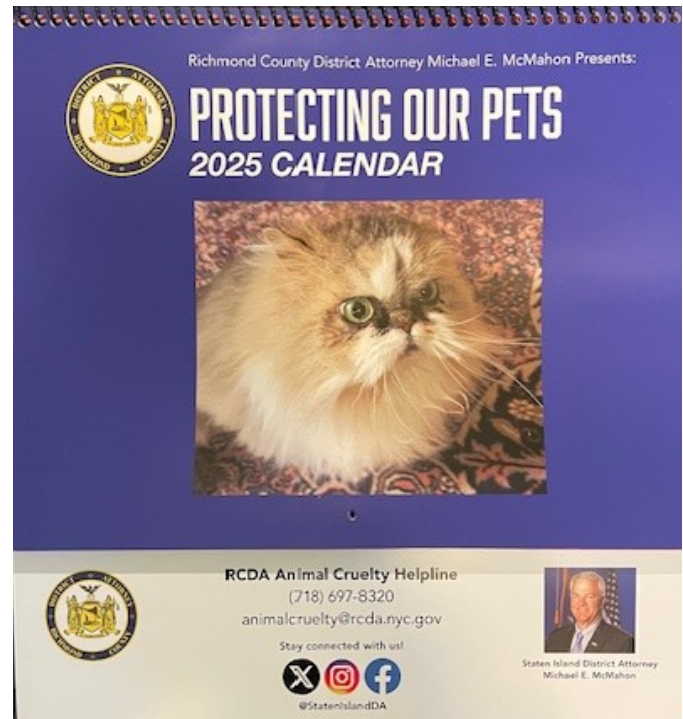
Many of the prosecutors' offices in and around New York City have created specialized Animal Cruelty Task Forces in recent years. But perhaps the most promotionally-oriented is the unit in [Richmond County](#) (Staten Island), where D.A. Michael E. McMahon has been producing "Protect Our Pets" calendars for eight years.

The 2025 calendar prominently features the National Link Coalition among other highly informative articles, including:

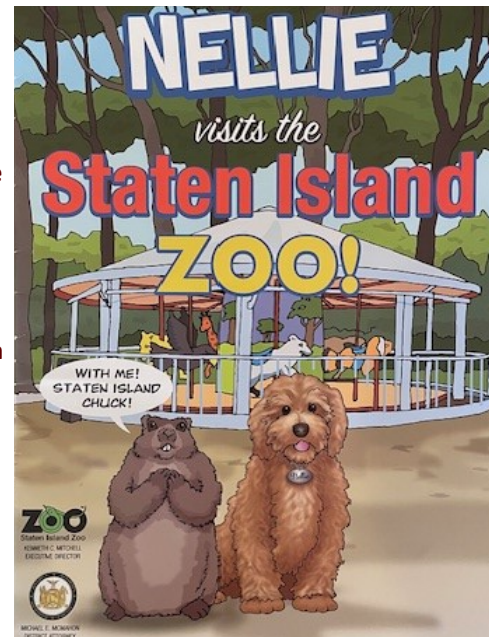
- A description of the Richmond County animal cruelty prosecution unit.
- How to recognize animal cruelty and neglect.
- How to reach the unit's animal cruelty helpline.
- A guide to some of New York State's animal cruelty statutes.
- Information about the ASPCA's Community Engagement Program, Animal Care Centers of NYC, and other partner agencies.
- Locations and rules for Staten Island's dog-friendly parks.
- Photos of residents' pets.
- Photos of the DA's office staff's pets.

Each month in the 2025 calendar also highlights animal-themed dates of note, such as "Squirrel Appreciation Day" (Jan.21), "K-9 Veterans Day" (March 13), "World Turtle Day" (May 23), and "Rainbow Bridge Remembrance Day" (August 28).

"Our efforts to protect animals not only provide justice for them but also enhance safety for our community as a whole," McMahon writes in a cover introduction. "Research clearly shows a strong Link between animal cruelty and other forms of violence, especially against vulnerable populations like children and seniors. By fighting animal abuse, we are also making Staten Island safer for everyone."



McMahon's office also partners with the Staten Island Zoo — said to be the first zoo in the U.S. to have education as part of its mission — to inform the community on the importance of animal welfare and humane education. This coloring book also features guidelines from the DA's office on how to recognize and report animal cruelty.



"We believe that young people play an important role in setting an example for the community by treating animals with kindness and respect, starting with their pets at home," says Zoo Executive Director Kenneth L Mitchell in an introductory letter.

LEGISLATION... and THE LINK — 2024

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES—2024 in Review

Thanks to legislators’ growing awareness that animal cruelty, abuse and neglect harm not only animals, but also people, 2024 saw **a record 144 bills** introduced in state, provincial and national legislators in the U.S., Canada and Australia addressing The Link between animal abuse and human violence. Equally significant, **28 of these bills (19%)** have already been signed into law.

We applaud the legislators and advocates who made these systemic changes possible. Here is a summary of the bills that were enacted in 2024:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Linked with Animal Abuse

MASSACHUSETTS 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.

VERMONT 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.

RHODE ISLAND became the 8th state to protect pets in divorce settlements. **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.

PENNSYLVANIA became the 41st state to allow courts to include pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. **HB 1210 and SB 1105** 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.

NEW MEXICO extended funding for pet-inclusive domestic violence shelters. **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 and **FLORIDA** now allow courts to issue “Hope Cards” to domestic violence survivors:

NEW YORK 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.

FLORIDA 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.

In Australia:

TASMANIA enacted the Family Violence Amendment (Protecting People and Their Pets) Bill 2024. Harm (or threats of harm) to an animal with the intent to coerce, intimidate or control a person’s spouse or partner is a form of family violence. Family violence involving pets or other animals can now be treated similarly to other conduct amounting to family violence.

NEW SOUTH WALES made harming or threatening animals a form of intimidation under family violence legislation.

CHILD MALTREATMENT Linked with Animal Abuse

PENNSYLVANIA 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.

PENNSYLVANIA 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.

MICHIGAN SB 248 defines 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, or a vulnerable adult.

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

COLORADO HB 24-1350 requires child custody dispositions to consider evidence of 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.

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE Linked with Human Abuse

ARIZONA 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.

IOWA 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.

OREGON 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.

OTHER CRIMES Linked with Animal Abuse

CALIFORNIA enacted Extreme Risk Protection Orders, prohibiting individuals who harmed or threatened domestic violence survivors' pets, or who are animal cruelty offenders, from owning firearms. **SB 902** prohibits persons convicted of animal cruelty after Jan. 1, 2025 from possessing a firearm for 10 years.

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

OREGON 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.

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

CROSS-REPORTING Animal and Human Abuse

TENNESSEE 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 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.

MASSACHUSETTS 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.

LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

As the 2025 legislative season gets under way, we're already following 50 bills that carried over from the 2024 sessions and new bills that have been pre-filed or introduced. 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

H.R. 712, 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 relating to child abuse and neglect.

ARIZONA

HB 2211 would allow petitioners to file for a "severe threat order of protection" to prevent a respondent who has threatened or committed an act of violence resulting in injury, death or cruel mistreatment of an animal from possessing a firearm. Violation of the order would be a Class 4 felony.

SB 1038 would define the crime of aggravated assault to include assault on an animal control officer conducting official duties.

HAWAI'I

SB 460 would recognize that children living in a home where domestic violence and threats of animal cruelty occur are victimized even if they have not been physically harmed, and would have standing to file for a protection order or a temporary restraining order.

ILLINOIS

HB 72 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to provide that a person with three or more pending charges for domestic battery, battery, violation of a protection order, criminal damage to household property, or felony animal cruelty that poses a real and present threat to the safety of any person or the community, may be classified as a habitual misdemeanor offender.

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.

KENTUCKY

HB 96 would define “coercive control” to include intimidating or controlling or compelling conduct by damaging, destroying, threatening to damage or destroy, or forcing the other person to relinquish domestic animals. It would also include communicating, either directly or indirectly, the intent to harm the other person’s domestic animals, including by use of physical violence; and causing isolation of the other person from domestic animals.

HB 194 (“Kyan’s Law”) would require animal control officers to receive training on recognizing child abuse and would add animal control officers to the list of people with a duty to report dependency, neglect or abuse of a child.

MASSACHUSETTS

SD. 133 and **HD.797** would allow courts handling divorce settlements to consider, in assigning ownership, care and custody of a pet, “the best interests of the animal, including the animal’s health, safety, comfort and well being and whether any party or family member residing with any party has a history of abuse, cruelty or neglect to animals or humans.”

HD.2347 would add humane officers to the list of professions mandated to report child sexual abuse. Currently, animal control officers are mandated to report, but not humane officers.

MISSOURI

SB 65 would mandate animal control officers and animal humane investigators to report cases of abuse and neglect of children, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons. They would be required to receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect in children, the elderly, and vulnerable persons. Certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel would be mandated to report cases of animal abuse or neglect, and would similarly have to receive training. A mandated reporter who fails to make a report would be subject to discipline by his or her professional licensing board, as well as a fine.

NEBRASKA

LB 80 would amend the state’s laws for issuing all-encompassing “protection orders” — which include provisions to award custody of pets to the petitioner and enjoin the respondent from harming the pets — to create new specific categories of “domestic abuse protection orders,” “harassment protection orders,” and “sexual assault protection orders.” Existing pet protection provisions would be retained only under a “domestic abuse protection order.”

NEW JERSEY

A291 would expand the statutory definitions of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. They also would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, domestic violence investigators, employees of the Department of Children & Families, employees of the Department of Human Services, Division of Aging, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities to report suspected animal cruelty to law enforcement with civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith.

A 296 (“Shyanne’s Law”) would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders.

A 310 would allow employees of the Division of Children Protection and Permanency who investigate child abuse and neglect and have reason to believe that an animal has been subjected to, or who witness an act of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect, to report the suspected or witnessed act of animal abuse, cruelty, or neglect. Nothing in the bill requires an employee to report such an act. Employees who make a report, provide records or information relating to the report, or who testify in any judicial proceeding arising from the report, would be immune from liability for any actions taken in good faith.

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

A 1516 would add “coercive control” to the definition of domestic violence in Section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19) to include acts of cruelty against animals owned or possessed by an adult or unemancipated minor.

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.

NEW YORK

A 599 would add acts of animal fighting, aggravated cruelty to animals, poisoning animals, injuring certain domestic animals, or harming a service animal to the definition of “serious offense” making it a crime to possess a firearm.

A 640 and **S 2296** would allow civil and criminal courts to order that a separate advocate be appointed to represent the animal’s interests and help ensure the well-being of any living animal victims.

A 664, S 1044, S 1562, and S 1563, “Buster’s Law,” would prohibit persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing a companion animal until they have undergone psychiatric or psychological counseling establishing their mental capacity and ability to humanely care for the animal.

A 690 would increase the potential prison term for acts of animal cruelty when committed in the presence of a child.

A 730 and **S 1205** would increase penalties for animal fighting and aggravated animal cruelty and requires defendants convicted of aggravated animal cruelty to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

A 740 would allow courts to take into consideration the well-being of a companion animal when determining custody of the animal during divorce and legal separation proceedings.

Purple = Domestic Violence
Dark Blue = Child Abuse
Grey = Elder/Disabled Abuse
Pink = Animal Sexual Abuse
Green = Cross-Reporting
Orange = Court Animal Advocates
Red = Animal Hoarding
Brown = Assessments/Interventions
Light Blue = Link & Other Crimes

A 850 would create new crimes of “cruelty to animals to threaten, intimidate or harass” for intentionally injuring or killing, with no justifiable purpose, a companion animal for the purpose of threatening, intimidating or harassing a family or household member. Felony penalties would be enhanced if the act occurred in the presence of a child.

A 897 would criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend an animal fight.

A 1391 would require persons charged with enforcing laws prohibiting cruelty to animals to file a report when, in the performance of their duties, they have reasonable cause to believe that abuse or maltreatment of a child has also occurred. The bill would further provide that persons charged with the responsibility of filing a report of child abuse or maltreatment would also have to file a report of suspected animal cruelty.

A 1432 and **A 1885** would relocate anti-cruelty statutes into the Penal Code from the Agriculture & Markets Law, where placement suggests that cruelty is not a “real” crime since it is not in the penal law and diminishes the seriousness of such crimes. The bill cites academic studies that “have found a clear link between animal cruelty during youth and violence against humans as an adult” and numerous documented studies that show that “there is a direct link between acts of cruelty to animals and violence toward others, including child abuse, spousal abuse, elder abuse and other violent behavior .”

A 1530 would establish “care and treatment of service animals, therapy dogs and companion animals in residential programs for victims of domestic violence.” These would include allowing residents’ service animals and therapy dogs full access to the shelters as long as they do not create an undue burden.

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A 1630 would amend provisions for the crimes of “sexual conduct with an animal,” a misdemeanor, and “sexual conduct with an animal resulting in injury or death,” a felony. Convicted offenders would be forced to relinquish all of their current animals and be permanently barred from keeping any animals, or residing, volunteering or working with animals.

A 1689 cites the prosecution of animal cruelty as a way to protect public safety to require all New York State counties to have an assistant district attorney to oversee animal crimes, as several counties in the state have already done.

A 1693 and **S 673** would establish the Housing People and Animals Together grant program to expand access for co-sheltering victims of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness with companion animals.

A 1816 would include animal fighting as a criminal act within the category of enterprise corruption crimes.

S 470 , “Kirby and Quigley’s Law,” expands the definition of aggravated animal cruelty to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony.

S 1159 would create a new category of “domestic violence crimes” to include interfering, harassing, intimidating, or harming a family or household member’s service animal.

S 1411 would require individuals convicted of animal cruelty to undergo a psychiatric analysis and evaluation.

S 1753, “Bella’s Law,” would require an investigation into possible domestic violence or abuse for persons who have been accused of animal abuse.

PENNSYLVANIA

HB 97 would recognize that “companion animals are living beings that are generally regarded as cherished family members that offer their owners companionship, security and assistance,” and as a “special category of personal property” need to be granted special consideration in the division of property during marriage dissolution. Parties could enter into an enforceable agreement regarding the care and/or possession of companion animals, and the court shall consider all relevant factors.

RHODE ISLAND

H 5125 would amend existing law, which allows courts to include household pets in domestic violence protection orders, to also allow courts to award custody of pets to plaintiffs and offer an enforcement remedy such as a restraining order or other injunctive relief.

SOUTH CAROLINA

H 3143 would allow individuals convicted of felony-level animal cruelty to apply for a limited pardon that would enable them to possess a firearm for hunting purposes only, because animal cruelty is not considered a “crime of violence.”

UTAH

HB 159 would allow Utah authorities to recognize domestic violence protection orders issued in Canada. Utah protection orders include provisions protecting household animals.

SB 24 would replace the definition of child abuse “serious physical injury” with any injury that seriously impairs a child’s health, mental well-being or development including threatening an animal known to the child or forcing or coercing a child to injure an animal.

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

Feb. 17 — London, U.K. (online): The Links Group UK will present a [webinar](#), “Animal Abuse as a Strategy of Coercive Control,” for the IAVSW.

Feb. 18 — Kansas City, Mo. (online): Zoë Agnew-Svoboda of BestyBnB will present a [webinar](#), “Safety Planning with Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Pets.”

Feb. 19 — Springfield, Ill. (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a training webinar on “Kids & Critters: Connecting the Dots between Child and Animal Abuse and Advocacy” for [Prevent Child Abuse Illinois](#).

Feb. 19 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will meet.

Feb. 20 (online): Marc Kissel & AnnMarie Gaudio will conduct an Association of Prosecuting Attorneys [webinar](#), “Animal Hoarding: The Challenges.”

February 20-21 — Orlando, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present “It's Either You or the Dog!” Addressing the Increased Risks of Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence in Civilian and Military Households” at the [Florida Animal Protection & Advocacy Association](#) Conference. Other speakers will present: “Blunt Force Trauma: Accident or Abuse?”; “Responding to Large Animal Cruelty Cases Without Veterinary Support”; and “Unchaining the Truth: Forensic Examination of Dogfighting Cases.”

February 25 (online): A Keystone Link Coalition/Crisis Center North [workshop](#) will explain “Pennsylvania's Pet Protection Orders: A New Tool to Protect Families and Pets.”

February 27 (online): RedRover and Greater Good Charities will discuss the impact of the human-animal bond and explore ways to create and sustain pet housing programs for people and pets in crisis in a [webinar](#) for Don't Forget the Pets.

March 6 (online): Oregon's Animal Cruelty Resource Prosecutor Jake Kamins will present “Oregon's Animal Cruelty Laws: Strengthening Charging Decisions and Prosecutions through Legislation” in a [webinar](#) for the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

March 7 — 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](#).

March 12 — Columbus, Ohio: RedRover and Greater Good Charities will discuss The Link between human and animal violence and explore ways to create and sustain pet housing programs in a [Housing People and Pets in Crisis](#) workshop.

March 17-18 — Boston, Mass.: “Equine-Assisted Services to Address Childhood Trauma and Enhance Family Well-Being” and “Creature Comforts: Including Animals to Reduce Stress, Fear and Anxiety in Children and Adolescents Involved in the Court System and Beyond” will be presented at the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges' [National Conference on Juvenile Justice](#).

March 19 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will meet.

March 19 — Brookfield, Wis.: Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Family Law: Protecting People by Focusing on Animal Abuse” at the Wisconsin Office of Judicial Education's [Family Law Seminar](#).

March 20 (online): Don't Forget the Pets will present a [webinar](#), “Keeping Families Together: The Impact of Co-Sheltering.”

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



March 25 — Hurst, Texas: Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Crime Prevention: Using The Link to Address the ‘PAWS Gap’” at One Safe Place’s 2025 [Stop Violence Conference](#).

March 25-27 (online): Pet-inclusive housing will be the underlying theme behind [My Dog Is My Home](#)’s 2025 conference exploring solutions for ending homelessness for people and their pets.

April 1 (online): Former Florida prosecutor Betsy Biffi will discuss addressing domestic violence and animal cruelty as emotional topics that require additional sensitivity to witnesses’ experiences in “Witness Preparation: It’s Not Just About the Facts,” a [webinar](#) for the Justice Clearinghouse.

April 7 — Wilmington, Del.: Andrew Campbell will be one of several speakers addressing Link issues at the Animal Welfare and Family Law [Symposium](#).

April 9 — Honolulu, Hawaii: Phil Arkow will present “‘It’s Either You or the Dog!’ Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence in Military Households” and “LINKing Communities into Action by Closing the ‘PAWS Gap,’” at the Institute on Violence, Abuse & Trauma’s [22nd Hawaii International Summit](#).

April 10 — Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Margaret Doyle will present a workshop on identifying animal cruelty red flags on behalf of the [Saskatchewan SPCA](#).

April 11-12 — Dakota Dunes, Sask., Canada: Several Link programs will be offered at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [Gathering for Animal and Human Welfare](#).

April 15-18 — 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”.

April 16 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

April 22 — Bryn Mawr, Pa. (online): Phil Arkow will present “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: A Species-Spanning Approach for Social Workers to Break the Cycle of Violence” to a Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work [class](#) on animal-assisted interventions.

April 27-29 — Montreal, Que., Canada: Humane Canada’s [Summit for Animals](#) will include presentations on: Atria and La Maison Benoit Labre, Vancouver and Montreal supportive housing providers with pet outreach programs to assist domestic violence survivors and homeless pet owners; and Sophie Gaillard presenting “Who Gets the Dog Matters to the Dog: Advocating for Pet Custody Legislation.”

April 29—May 1 — San Diego, Calif.: Katie Campbell of RedRover will present “Getting to ‘Yes!’ and Staying There: Building Support for Pet Housing Programs” at the 25th Annual [International Family Justice Center Conference](#).

April 30 (online): Phil Arkow will present a webinar on “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse and Its Link with Human Violence” for the [International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations](#).

May 5-6 — Washington, D.C.: The National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges’ [Judicial Institute](#) on the Human-Animal Bond and the LINK Between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence: Issues in Family Law Cases will be held at George Washington University.

May 7 — Alexandria, Va. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Preventing Domestic Violence: Animal Abuse’s LINK with Family Violence in Military and Civilian Families” in a [webinar](#) for the National Organization for Victim Advocacy’s Victim Assistance Academy.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

May 7-9 — 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 8 — Dallas, Texas: Shawn Ashley of the SPCA of Texas will discuss The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse and veterinary reporting of suspected abuse in a presentation, "When Animal Cruelty Walks Through the Door..." at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

May 13-14 — Las Vegas, Nev.: Phil Arkow will present at a convening of PAWS grantees organized by [Noah's Animal House](#).

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

May 21 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 3 — Bloomington, Ill.: Phil Arkow will present "Learn What the Monster Likes... and Feed it! Bridging the Animal Rights/Welfare Gap by Focusing on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence" at the [Prairie States Animal Welfare Conference](#).

June 18 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 24 (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](#).

June 26 — New Orleans, La.: Phil Arkow will present "Moms, Kids & Critters: Connecting the Dots between Child, Domestic and Animal Abuse" at the [32nd Annual Colloquium](#) of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC).

July 16 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

July 23 — San Francisco, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present "Closing the 'PAWS Gap' in Victim Advocacy through Pet-Inclusive Services" at the National Organization for Victim Advocacy's [51st Annual Training Event](#).

Aug. 20 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Aug. 22 — Statesville, N.C.: Phil Arkow will present "The 'Dark Side' of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse and its Link with Human Violence" to [Equuvation](#).

Sept. 16 — Redmond, Ore.: Phil Arkow will present "Connecting the Dots in Animal Care & Control and Human Violence: How to Better Protect People AND Animals" at the [Oregon Animal Control Council](#) Training Conference.

Sept. 17 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Sept. 17-18 — Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Multiple speakers will present at Positive Links' [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#).

Oct. 15 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Oct. 17-18 — Atlanta, Ga.: Phil Arkow will present at the 26th Annual [Animal Protection & Wellness Expo](#).

Nov. 19 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Dec. 17 — Pittsburgh, Pa. (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone LINK](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

THE LINK... in the NEWS

Couple Face 252 Charges in School Bus Bestiality Case

A Georgia couple traveling around the country in a school bus who said they wanted to start a petting zoo for children were facing 252 charges of bestiality, firearms offenses, conspiracy, and animal cruelty after their bus broke down in Adams County, Pa. and police reportedly found 36 animals living in “horrifying” conditions in the feces-filled bus.

Shawn Hirschbine, 51, and Deanna Huff, 64, both of Georgia, were both charged following a six-month investigation, the Adams County District Attorney’s Office told [WHTM-TV](#). Hirschbine was reported to be incarcerated in West Virginia, where he was wanted for allegedly distributing bestiality materials. Huff, who was still at large, was reportedly also being sought by authorities in New York.

Thirty ducks, chickens and turkeys, four dogs, a bull, and a pony were living in “horrifying” conditions on the bus, police said. Hirschbine would allegedly let people watch him have sex with some of the animals for money. Some of those animals had to be euthanized due to the abuse and neglect, according to



the charges. The criminal complaint says three dogs, a duck, a chicken and a pony died, while the pony and bull were sexually traumatized.

The Adams County SPCA, which rescued the animals, was forced to close its shelter until further notice while staff members recovered from cases of scabies resulting from handling the animals. The SPCA recommended that anyone who had had contact with the bus or the animals be vigilant for symptoms.



THE LINK... in the NEWS

Pet Welfare Check Leads to Child Abuse Charges

Authorities in Frankfort, Ky. checking on a report of dog abuse reportedly found two toddlers, a two-year-old and a seven-month-old, covered in human waste. The [Frankfort State Journal](#) reported that police said Megan Edgin had left the children strapped into a swing and a car seat for several days. Authorities had been dispatched to the home to pick up three dogs and a cat; two dogs appeared malnourished and had no food or water and one dog was in a cage covered in feces. Edgin was charged with child abuse, animal cruelty and failing to vaccinate the animals for rabies.

Rescuer Gets Prison for Defrauding Pet Adopters

An Oregon woman who defrauded hundreds of pet adopters from her “Woofin Palooza” rescue, whose “operation’s cruelty caused lasting harm not only to the animals they sold but also to the families who unknowingly welcomed them into their homes, only to face immediate heartbreak and financial strain,” was sentenced to 37 months in prison. Samantha Miller, alias Mandy Myers, 55, of Columbia County, misrepresented the extent of the pets’ health and behavior issues and illegally dispensed prescription medications without the lawful order of a veterinarian, the [Tacoma News Tribune](#) reported. She must also make restitution to victims who “unknowingly adopted unhealthy and aggressive animals and were forced to seek veterinary care and training, including euthanasia, often incurring significant expenses,” prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for Oregon said. Miller, who had gotten animals from California shelters at no cost and then adopted them out for a fee in the Portland area, had pled guilty last year to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and illegally dispensing veterinary drugs.

Welfare Check on Horse Leads to Multiple Criminal Charges

Pennsylvania State Troopers checking on the welfare of a horse wound up arresting Donna Giello-Turner, 62, of Upper Mt. Bethel Township, on charges of aggravated animal cruelty, aggravated assault, resisting arrest, reckless endangerment, and other charges. The [Lehigh Valley News](#) reported that troopers conducted several welfare checks on a horse that appeared to be in severe distress. The woman told troopers she thought the horse was dead. After a criminal background check revealed a prior history of animal cruelty, troopers executed a search warrant where they allegedly found a dead poodle in a freezer, and 22 dogs, a horse, a cat, and two birds in a “deplorable” house that was so covered in feces that Giello-Turner used a snow shovel to clear a path for walking. A court affidavit also said her car was not registered and her driver’s license had been suspended due to a DUI. When she was told she was under arrest, she reportedly kicked a trooper in the chest. The Pennsylvania SPCA is assisting in the investigation.



Child Welfare Workers Alert Police to Home Covered in Cat Feces

Caseworkers from the Bedford County, Pa. Department of Children & Family Services, conducting a home inspection prior to a newborn being allowed to live there, notified State Police when they reportedly found a “deplorable” home “carpeted with encrusted cat waste, with piles of excrement over a foot high, and three feet wide in some areas,” according to the [Bedford Gazette](#). Matthew Calhoun, 40, of Everett, is facing 111 charges regarding inadequate food, water and care for at least 67 cats that have already been recovered from the site. Police and a nearby cat rescue group were still searching for any additional cats and believed the owner did not know how many cats he had.

THE LINK... in the NEWS

Woman Charged with Strangling Daughter After Killing Four Pets to Show Her What Would Happen If She Lied

A Maryland woman is facing a first-degree murder charge after Baltimore County Police said she allegedly strangled her 11-year-old daughter after killing her children's four pets to show what would happen if the girl lied.

Keyona Dillon, 34, in the Baltimore suburb of Middle River, allegedly killed her daughter, London, a dog, two cats and a rabbit, [WBFF-TV](#) reported. A five-year-old daughter reportedly told police that her mother had killed the animals with a hammer.



When officers attempted to speak to Dillon, she allegedly displayed erratic behavior and ranted about exposing child sex rings, transsexuals, the Proud Boys, London having sexual relations with the father of her other three children, and groups trying to set her up, according to the charging documents. Detectives said they found no evidence that London was a victim of sexual abuse.

It was unclear what the status of the other three children is or whether animal cruelty charges were also filed.

[Subsequent investigations](#) reported that many warning signs may have been missed. Before she was charged with killing her child, Keyona Dillon had been convicted of attempted murder when she was just 15 years old. Following her release from prison, she was later convicted of second-degree assault and accused in 2021 of threatening to burn down her cousin's home.

Her cousin called Dillon "dangerous", "violent", and a "threat to society", at the time, according to court records. Dillon never appeared in court, triggering a warrant for her arrest. However, it was never served; police blamed a misspelling of her last name and having no listed address.

"Had that warrant been served, I have no doubt that she would have been out almost immediately, and so that would not have prevented any crime," National Police Association spokesperson Sgt. Betsy Smith told WBFF.

Warrants for low-level offenses are typically a low priority for short-staffed police departments, Smith said. "This is literally a case of getting lost in the system. This is why bureaucracy doesn't help children."

The daughter's aunt also reportedly called the Department of Human Services after Dil-

"This is literally a case of getting lost in the system. This is why bureaucracy doesn't help children."
— ***Sgt. Betsy Smith***

lon posted allegations that someone had given her daughter HIV in the days leading up to the alleged murder. By the time a welfare check was made, it was too late.

Meanwhile, the Baltimore County Public Schools reported that the child was not enrolled in school.

Woman with Elder Abuse History Charged in Deaths of Animals

San Joaquin County, Calif. sheriff's deputies arrested Jan Johnson, 63, of Clements, on charges of animal cruelty, threatening a public official, making criminal threats, and possession of a short-barrel shotgun after 55 dead horses, cows and dogs and many other malnourished animals were allegedly found on several of her properties. Ninety horses, five donkeys and three alpacas were rescued. Thirteen horses, one donkey and a bull had to be euthanized due to extreme neglect.

[KQVR-TV](#) reported that officers responded earlier this year to reports of a rooster fight at one of her properties. Officers found 30 dead roosters and 65 that were alive.

The [Lodi News-Sentinel](#) also reported that Johnson had been arrested in 2006 on 42 charges of financial elder abuse for allegedly taking about \$160,000 of an 83-year-old woman's funds.



THE LINK... in the NEWS

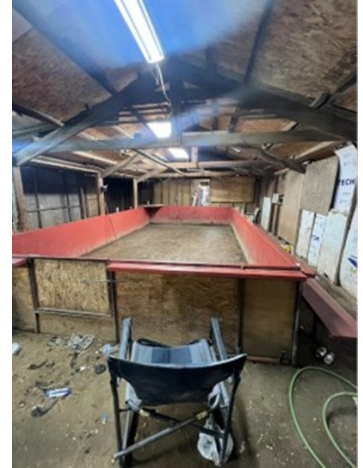
Two Arrested, Weapons and Roosters Seized, in California Cockfight Bust

Two men were arrested, and 33 spectators were detained, when San Bernardino County, Calif. sheriff's deputies raided an apparent illegal cockfight in Yucaipa where they reportedly found 250 roosters, a fighting ring, a scoreboard, cock-fighting paraphernalia, and illegal weapons. The [San Bernardino Sun](#) reported that 19 deputies descended on the site on Jan. 19; as drivers in some of the 50 vehicles on the property tried to flee, a pursuit ensued and Jose Adame, 33, of Riverside and his three passengers were taken into custody. Adame was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, failure to yield and animal cruelty. Deputies recovered six live roosters from the vehicle's cargo area.

Meanwhile, the Sheriff's Aviation Unit found suspect Carlos Romero, 35, hiding in his truck with seven live roosters inside boxes, a large sum of U.S. currency and

a Ruger semi-automatic weapon, according to authorities. He was charged with animal cruelty.

San Bernardino County Animal Control seized 17 dead roosters, eight live roosters and 61 boxes of roosters while the county's Rural Task Force seized 24 firearms, including an assault rifle, from a safe. Yucaipa City Code Enforcement red-tagged several buildings on the property.



Deputies found an apparent cock-fighting ring and scoreboard at the site.

Woman Kills Boyfriend After Failing to Drown and Burn His Cat

A jury in Adams County, Colo. found Ashley White, 29, of Derby, guilty of killing her boyfriend after she attempted to drown and burn his cat. A [news release](#) from the 17th Judicial District Attorney's office said that the relationship between White and Cody DeLisa had grown "volatile and strained" in the months preceding his murder, with DeLisa criticizing White for not finding a full-time job and White attempting to drown and burn his cat. After a three-week trial, White was convicted on charges of murder, conspiracy and robbery, and is scheduled to be sentenced on April 4.

Possible Death Penalty for Man Accused of Killing 3 People and Dog

A Kansas City man accused of fatally shooting his ex-girlfriend and two family members and the family's dog, and shooting at a fourth family member who escaped the home where they all lived, is facing a possible death penalty, Platte County, Mo. Prosecuting Attorney Eric Zahnd told the [Kansas City Star](#). The suspect, Armando Navarro Jr., was arrested near Abilene, Kansas, after he fled the scene of the shooting.



Eric Zahnd

Navarro was charged with three counts of first-degree murder, one count of first-degree assault, four counts of armed criminal action, and animal abuse. The victims were identified as Jodie Hopcus, 49, Sherri Duncan, 73, and Hailey Hopcus, 24, the mother, grandmother and sister of the surviving victim.

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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