



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



**Top Stories in This Issue:**



**PAWS Act grantees  
convene at inspira-  
tional gathering  
(Pages 1-6)**



**Belgian student  
develops Link train-  
ing module for vet-  
erinarians (Page 9)**



**Delaware Family  
Law Symposium  
addresses The Link  
(Page 10)**

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *As of this writing, funding for the PAWS Act grants appears to be eliminated from the proposed 2026 federal budget. We'll have more details in our July LINK-Letter; for now, see what PAWS Act grantees are learning:*

### PAWS Act Grantees Convene for Inspiration and Information



**F**ifty-eight representatives from shelters receiving the federal Pet and Women Safety (PETS) Act grants convened in May in Las Vegas for a historic two-day workshop of inspiration and information to learn from each other and bring new ideas back to their organizations.

The Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter Housing Assistance Grant Program Convening, organized by Las Vegas' [Noah's Animal House](#), was the first time the network of pet-friendly grant recipients had gotten together.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

#### Inside this issue

Domestic Violence & The LINK .....	1
Veterinary Medicine & The LINK ....	9
Criminal Justice & The LINK .....	10
Law Enforcement & The Link .....	11
Interventions & The LINK .....	12
Building Global LINK Awareness.....	14
The LINK in the Literature .....	16
Legislation & The LINK.....	20
LINK Training Calendar .....	26
The LINK in the News .....	29

Phil Arkow, Editor  
The National Link Coalition  
16 Grasshopper Drive  
Etowah, NC 28729  
<https://NationalLinkCoalition.org>  
[arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net)

**The National Link Coalition is a  
501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation.  
Federal Tax ID: 92-2607909.  
Donations are tax deductible as  
permitted under law.**

**Please [click here](#)  
to make a  
tax-deductible  
contribution to support our work**



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

## PAWS Act Grantees Convene for Inspiration and Information

*(Continued from Page 1)*

"A lot of you have incredible passion for what you do. It's Important to spread that passion to your community," said Maggie Harris, Peer Trainer for Noah's Animal House, encouraging the participants to continue to expand their pioneering work.



Maggie Harris

Since its inception in 2007, Noah's Animal House has sheltered nearly 2,500 pets from survivors in 37 states who have come to Nevada. A Technical Training & Assistance grant from the Office for Victims of Crime in 2023 has enabled Noah's Animal House to train recipients of funding from the PAWS Act. The purpose of the convening was to increase collaboration among the grant recipient service providers and to improve the quality and availability of services provided to victims and their animals.

On the pages that follow we'll summarize some of the informative and inspirational presentations

Staci Alonso, CEO & Founder of Noah's Animal House, encouraged the group to also inspire their clients. "The survivors that you and I serve every day are the strongest people in the world; they just don't know it. They deserve a life free of judgment, a place to heal."



Staci Alonso

### What Makes the Work Worthwhile?

A panel representing the five models of pet co-sheltering described how they got their programs started, the challenges they've encountered, and what they've learned. They concluded by describing what has made all the challenges worth it. Their answers included:

"Seeing the faces of the people that come through our doors and seeing that they're safe."

"We can't call our services equitable or fair if we can't help somebody because they have a pet. The win is seeing that the solution has been found and that it's working."

"We serve both ends of the leash. Getting to see people come through our doors years later and seeing that they're doing great – those are our wins."

"Every now and then I get to pet a dog at work."

## Recognizing Shelter People as Heroes

Michael Arms, President of the [Helen Woodward Animal Center](#), related his personal, emotional story of how he came to dedicate his life to animal welfare more than 50 years ago. He compared the intense emotions experienced by staff in both animal shelters and domestic violence shelters.

"My heart breaks for the sorrow you have to see every day, he said. "You're very special people. You never take credit for the work that you do. You just go about your day helping people. And you're helping their pets. They give us everything they can and they're being protected by people who are being given abuse, and you're helping those people."

Arms encouraged them to focus on the benefits of what they do, not the tragedies. "We have to get past the ugliness – we have to see the beauty of what transpires."



Michael Arms

He inspired participants to collaborate and to recognize that they may not see immediate successes, but their work pays off in the long-term. "The work that you're doing today will have strong effects tomorrow."

"You get up every day of your lives and do everything you can to help other people and their animals. When will you realize that you are heroes?"

## Growing from Pet-Friendly to Pet-Inclusive



**R**oss Barker and Sara Maria Muriello, with Michelson Found Animals' [Pet-Inclusive Housing Initiative](#), reminded attendees to "Mind the Housing Gap!" The

**Ross Barker** valuable experiences learned over the years in bringing residents' pets into shelters can be adapted relatively easily into homeless shelters, transitional housing, and especially more broadly into multi-family rental housing.

Although 76% of rental housing providers say they are pet-friendly, 72% of renters say pet-friendly housing is hard to find. Meanwhile, the term "pet-friendly" is hard to define; rental housing providers may say they are while they impose bans against certain breeds or prohibitive pet damage fees.



**Sara Maria Muriello**

The Initiative has uncovered significant gaps in many major-market areas: between 64% and 92% of housing providers say they are pet-friendly, but only 10% are pet-inclusive with no breed restrictions.

There are widespread challenges for renters in an era of low housing availability and high costs. "But layering on the pet piece adds another dimension," said Barker. "When the folks you people deal with need housing, this is the world they enter into," added Muriello.

The Initiative is working to transform rental housing from "pet-friendly" to "pet-inclusive" -- housing that allows residents to have at least one pet with no breed restrictions, no weight or size restrictions, no non-benefit fees, and allow basic pet amenities.

The key is to get rental providers to automatically think of pets as "family" and to break down their arguments by showing that their concerns about animals can be overcome creatively and easily, said Muriello.

These concerns include:

- Mistaken beliefs about animals causing property damage or bites;
- Not being able to get insurance coverage;
- Problems with pet waste; and
- Objections from other tenants.

Children cause more damage than pets, but rentals don't charge extra fees for children, she explained. Concerns about dog waste can be mitigated by installing more pet waste stations on the property. The average cost of pet-caused damages is only a few hundred dollars – well within the range of what landlords normally charge as a regular damage deposit.

The Initiative has a [Pet Personality Profile](#) and a [sample pet agreement](#) to help housing providers better evaluate if there's a risk with a particular renter with pets.

### Safe Housing for Deportees' Pets

**A question was raised at the Noah's Animal House**

**Convening: a significant number of undocumented immigrants are being deported. Have any of them had to leave pets behind? Is anyone taking care of them? Are animal shelters, veterinarians, rescue groups, or women's shelters providing safe housing for any of these animals?**

**If any of our LINK-Letter subscribers have insights into this issue, we'd love to hear about it. Please email us at [arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net) and share your insights, experiences and stories with us. Many thanks!**

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

## Sustaining Co-sheltering Programs

After a career that involved extensive experience building facilities for companion and wild animals, Bryna Donnelly, Executive Vice President of Programs for [Greater Good Charities](#) had an opportunity while renovating an animal shelter in Kentucky. The local domestic violence shelter asked her if she could help them build kennels for survivors' pets.

"We realized domestic violence shelters were going to need a lot more support," she recalled.

In response, Greater Good Charities and RedRover created [Don't Forget the Pets](#) in 2019 and began offering grants in a joint initiative. Today, Don't Forget the Pets can also conduct training in a shelter's city, "getting everybody in the community together to figure out how to solve problems together. It's all about building successful pet housing programs through collaboration."

Today, they have worked with 207 shelters.

Co-sheltering preserves the human animal bond by promoting healing with your pet. It heals both adults and children mentally and physically. It helps people talk through tough conversations, provides a sense of security, teaches empathy and trust, and encourages a sense of responsibility and hope. When you think about all the losses that

children in these situations go through, and then having to lose a pet, she said, "It becomes a



Bryna Donnelly

tailspin of things going out of control."

Donnelly reviewed the barriers that many shelters think they will face in adding pet facilities, such as space, allergies, cost, liability, fear of pets, animal bites, and animal care, and showed how they can be mitigated. She offered a list of simple things shelters can do to show insurance companies that they have already thought through the potential risks. She suggested domestic violence shelters contact animal shelters to find out where they get their insurance coverage.

Any animal sheltering program needs three collaborative entities: animal services organizations, veterinary medicine, and human services organizations. An example is when an oncoming dog has behavior problems, it may not be the dog's natural behavior but rather a way of expressing the stress that it has absorbed from the chaos its people are experiencing.

To solve those behavioral issues, she recommended, "Reach out to your collaborative partners: what you're seeing is that dog's cry for help."

Donnelly reviewed five design plans that shelters can pick from to provide housing for survivors' pets:

- Co-sheltering in the individual room;
- Communal housing;
- Converting existing space in the shelter;
- Building a new space; and
- Off-site temporary care with an animal shelter.

She reminded participants of the need for co-sheltering. She guaranteed that the facilities will be used by recalling the line from *Field of Dreams*: "If you build it, they will come." And she also warned them to not fear making a mistake. "Don't be afraid to mess up and do something wrong," she concluded. "Sometimes that's where your best answers come from."



## Creating Policy and Programs to Protect People and Pets

**N**ancy Blaney and Claire Coughlin of the Animal Welfare Institute reviewed programmatic and public policy progress that recognizes that animal abuse and interpersonal violence are “under one roof”. “Having pet abuse present escalates the level of domestic violence,” said Coughlin, in offering examples of how animal services, humane law enforcement agencies and veterinarians can be included in Coordinated Community Response Teams.



Claire Coughlin



Nancy Blaney

Blaney reviewed some of the new Link-related laws: the PAWS Act; allowing courts to include animals in protection orders; defining acts of animal abuse as domestic violence; enhanced criminal penalties for acts of animal abuse committed in the presence of a child; awarding custody of pets in the animals’ best interest; and mandated cross-reporting.

“Cross reporting is getting to be one of our priority issues,” Blaney explained. “Cross-reporting widens the tent – we can have more people looking out for animals and peoples’ best interests.” But many people are naturally reluctant to cross-report a form of abuse that is outside their immediate field of interest. “Nobody has to be an expert in everything – they just have to be aware,” she reminded participants.

Even in the few states that still lack pet protection orders, pets can be included along with other items of property covered in a protection or restraining order. Many states also give courts wide discretion in what they can order, such as including pets in a TRO similar to ordering temporary care of children. A traditional protection order can also authorize law enforcement officers to assist with the petitioner’s need to remove items from the home – including the pets.

The Animal Welfare Institute’s Safe Havens for Pets program offers numerous resources, including: a [national database](#) of co-sheltering opportunities for domestic violence survivors and the homeless; and how to include pets in [safety planning](#) materials.

## It’s Not Just Dogs and Cats!

**“W**hen your life and spirit are being destroyed by abuse, often the only joy and hope you can have comes from the pet that comforts you while you cry, knows all your secrets, accepts and loves you exactly as you are, and quietly sits with you in your darkest hours. When a woman leaves an abusive and dangerous situation, she’s faced with the possibility of giving up almost everything. The home, money, vehicles, and possessions are all used to control her and must be left behind to escape. She shouldn’t have to give up her best friend, too.”



In most animal/domestic abuse scenarios, we’d be talking about dogs and cats. But at [Amber’s Refuge](#) outside Memphis, Tenn., the animal survivors are — pigs. Thanks to a [RedRover Safe Housing grant](#), Pigtopia was able to build housing facilities for pigs, in memory of Amber Dawn Slankard, who was murdered by her abuser in 2020 leaving eight pigs behind.

Pigtopia partners with women’s shelters and advocacy groups to house survivors’ pigs until a happy reunion is possible.

“A pig is an unconventional pet. They’re emotional beings, often misunderstood and not suitable for apartments or the temporary living situations that can come with escaping danger and starting over,” Pigtopia cautions. “They’re also the 4th smartest mammal on the planet, and are capable of deep empathy, often experiencing trauma alongside their owner that lingers on for years.”

## Saluting the Heroes... and Getting Excited About the Future

**T**he National Link Coalition's Phil Arkow delivered an inspirational closing keynote that saluted "the pioneers protecting 'woman's best friend.'" He reviewed the history of The Link to give shelter leaders a perspective of the depth of the movement they are now engaged in, and shared with them directions that they – the new heroes of the animal abuse/domestic violence Link – will get engaged in.



Phil Arkow

"In the beginning, The Link was simple," he began, describing the Victorian-era meme that boys who abuse animals are "on a course that leads to robbery and murder." Henry Bergh's intervention to rescue an abused girl, and the humane movement's subsequent focus on both animal and child welfare, made The Link two intersecting circles.

But early work by such pioneers as Arkow, Randall Lockwood and Frank Ascione began to explore a third circle: animals abused as coercive control in domestic violence. In the 1990s, domestic violence shelters, confronted with clients who would not leave home without their pets, quickly transformed what had been a theoretical concern into something very real.

---

*"We all need a shelter to cry on.."*

— Phil Arkow

---

He described the history of the National Link Coalition, how survivors' stories are more compelling than statistics, and the many legislative and program successes that animal welfare and domestic violence advocates have achieved over the past 30 years. These achievements occurred "by demonstrating that animal welfare is human welfare. And they also represent the power of individual women to make a difference." He gave participants in the eight states still lacking Pet Protection Orders strategies to overcome expected opposition to the concept.

Calling members of the audience the "new pioneers," he outlined some of the "new frontiers" that will direct Link work in coming years. These include:

- Integrating animal shelters into Coordinated Community Response Teams and Multi-Disciplinary Teams.
- Integrating Veterinary Social Workers into animal shelters, building on their successes in veterinary clinics.
- Closing "the PAWS Gap" in social work training and practice to get more social workers to recognize that their work involves People *and* Animals' Welfare and Safety.
- Integrating veterinarians into domestic violence recognition, referrals and responses, a program he called "DV and the DVM".
- Enabling survivors to obtain Extreme Risk Protection Orders, prohibiting their abusers from having firearms, based on a history of animal cruelty.
- Having more domestic violence shelters revise their safety planning materials to include provisions for pets.
- Expanding the domestic violence shelter co-housing programs for pets and people to homeless shelters.
- Developing a toolkit and best practices for Family Justice Centers to accommodate clients with pets.

He listed new federal laws that are needed to: add data on child/animal abuse in the National Child Abuse and Neglect (NCANDS) clearinghouse; establish an animal cruelty crimes section within the Department of Justice; pass the Animal Violence Exposes Real Threat of Future Violence (AVERT Act); and pass the Providing for Unhoused People with Pets (PUPP) Act.

Meetings like the convening, he concluded, are vitally important, as they give participants the great benefit of in-person networking. "Thanks to COVID, we've all become quite accustomed to Zoom meetings, which are great but there's no substitute for getting together and learning you're not alone. We all need a shelter to cry on."

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

### Study Explores Use of Therapy Dogs with Domestic Violence Victims

Animal-assisted therapy has been implemented for many decades for a wide range of individuals, but a new study sheds light on an innovative intervention working with adult and adolescent victims of domestic violence.

The researchers, based at Pittsburgh's Crisis Center North and Pennsylvania State University, conducted three surveys involving: 1,648 children and adolescents in Crisis Center North's school-based prevention education program; 12 child and 41 adult clients in the program's domestic violence counseling division; and 69 domestic violence victims in court.

The study had three purposes:

- (1) to explore the impact of pet ownership on children and adolescents within the context of bullying and school violence;
- (2) to document the impact of therapy animals on domestic violence victims; and
- (3) to document the impact of working canines in courts on domestic violence victims.

Findings from the three surveys documented the psychological benefits of interacting with pets and animals that provide therapeutic services. Children and adolescents with pets at home were reported to have greater coping skills than their peers without pets. Both adult

victims of domestic violence and their chil-

dren and adolescents saw therapeutic benefits from working with therapy animals, including increased comfort during therapy and increased likelihood of attendance.

Within the context of legal advocacy within the courts, clients noted that the presence of canine court advocates made them more comfortable appearing at hearings and more likely to attend court when an animal is present.

The authors emphasized that one of the largest obstacles domestic violence programs face is building a level of trust with survivors. "The utilization of therapy dogs could be a powerful tool in providing a welcoming environment for victims initially seeking services. This study indicates that working animals can play a critical role in establishing and maintaining client connection with their local domestic violence center," they concluded.

—Chapin, J.R., Coleman, G.A., & Brayack, M. (2025). *It's all about the ruff: Utilizing therapy dogs to address trauma in domestic violence settings. People and Animals: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 8(1). <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/paij/vol8/iss1/3>



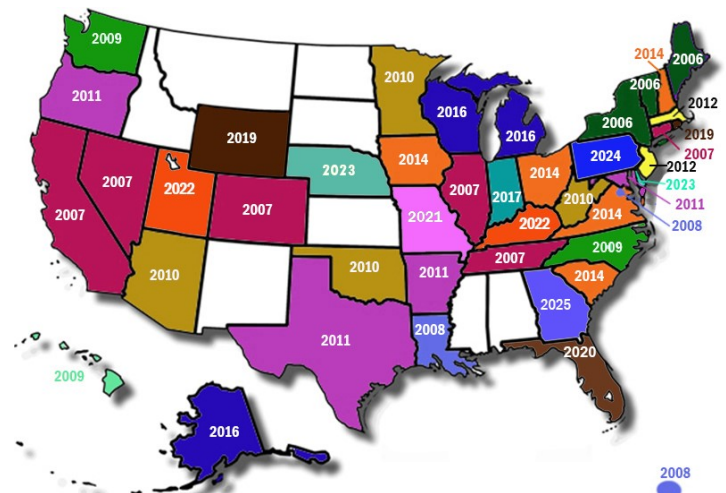
**Crisis Center North**

Providing direction to victims of domestic violence

### Georgia Becomes the 42<sup>nd</sup> State to Include Pets in Protection Orders

Georgia became the 42<sup>nd</sup> state since 2006 to recognize how animals become objects of coercive control for domestic violence survivors by specifically allowing courts to include companion animals in protection orders. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp on May 13 signed into law [HB 177](#).

The new law allows courts to issue protection orders that include "the care, custody and control of any animal owned, possessed, kept, or held as a household pet by either party or by a minor child living in the household or residence of either party." Court orders can also prevent the respondent from harassing, harming, taking, transferring, encumbering, or concealing pets and committing animal cruelty.



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

### Delaware Goldendoodle Case Tests Limits of Pet Custody Disputes

**W**ith eight states now having laws that allow courts to award custody of a divorcing couple's pets based on the animals' best interests, the curious case of "Tucker" the goldendoodle showed how problematic such decisions can be – even in a state like Delaware that has such a law.

Tucker's owners, who were not married, had been fighting over him since their breakup in 2022, [Bloomberg Law](#) reported. Three separate state courts had issued split decisions over where Tucker belonged.

The case wound up in Chancery Court before Vice Chancellor Bonnie W. David. Karen Callahan said Tucker had been her support animal during her cancer treatments and her ex, Joseph Nelson, took the dog out of state to avoid sharing him. Nelson argued that Tucker had been a gift from his daughter and that Callahan had abandoned him when they called off their engagement.

David decided to "partition" the dog, but assured everyone that this did not mean a Solomon-like decision to split Tucker in half with a sword. Under the terms of the partition, one party will own Tucker and the other will receive a monetary award. It will be up to the couple to determine the details.

David suggested a few options: Callahan and Nelson could agree to a "blind bidding auction," where the highest bidder buys out the other's interest. Or the court could award ownership based on Tucker's "best interests" and grant a monetary award based on an appraisal to the other party. "Or the parties could propose a better alternative," she said.

David's opinion acknowledges that the law considers dogs as property even if most people do not, and that Tucker doesn't easily fall under Delaware's real property partition statute, which defaults to a physical "division" of property, or a public auction if the parties can't agree.



If Callahan and Nelson had married, Delaware's Family Court could have determined Tucker's ownership under a 2023 law that enhanced protections for "companion animals." Since they didn't marry, a partition by the equity court is the option for "co-owners wishing to sever their interests in jointly owned property."

### *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.**



# VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

## Belgian Veterinary Student Develops Link Training Module



**Leen Van Brantegem**

A first-year veterinary student at Ghent University in Belgium has developed an online learning module for second-year bachelor's students that presents a case study on animal abuse to familiarize future practitioners with how to recognize signs of abuse and respond appropriately, ethically, and empathetically – what a faculty mentor called “crucial competencies for veterinary professionals.”

Lisa Kesteleyn, in the university's Honors supplementary program within the Veterinary Medicine curriculum, developed the module which is integrated into the Clinical and Communication Skills I course, explained Leen Van Brantegem, veterinary pathologist at Ghent University and an expert in The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse.

The video-based learning module uses volunteer actors to create a case study. The initiative provides students with the opportunity to refine their communication skills through exercises and multiple-choice questions embedded in the learning module, specifically focusing on veterinarian-client interactions, while also encountering, for the first time, a structured case addressing animal abuse.

Students are introduced to key indicators for identifying animal abuse, as well as the principles of empathetic and professional communication with pet owners in a veterinary context. This initial exposure aims to enhance awareness and sensitivity among future veterinarians, fostering a more informed and ethical approach to animal welfare, Van Brantegem said.

---

***“Veterinary education must not only inform students about the existence of animal abuse but also foster awareness and provide structured training on how to effectively address such cases in practice.”***

***— Leen Van Brantegem***

---

“Veterinarians acquire a diverse and clinically comprehensive body of knowledge throughout their education. This academic foundation is essential for accurately diagnosing, treating, and critically evaluating a wide range of diseases. However, animal abuse remains a persistent issue -- one that veterinarians will inevitably encounter in their professional practice, both now and in the future,” Van Brantegem added. “Accordingly, veterinary education must not only inform students about the existence of animal abuse but also foster awareness and provide structured training on how to effectively address such cases in practice.”



### **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](http://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.

## Delaware Family Law Symposium Addresses The Link



The Animal Welfare and Family Law Symposium, convened in Delaware on April 7, attracted a robust turnout that featured national and state speakers and information tables from participating groups. Judge Jennifer Ranji tells *The LINK-Letter* that their courthouse dog “Vinn” was present, and that the Executive Director of the Delaware Lawyers’ Assistance Program brought their therapy dog as well. Speakers included Andrew Campbell, Pamela Frasch, Nancy Gee, and Katie Campbell.

At left: The Delaware Lawyers’ Assistance Program’s therapy dog was one the many attendees at the Symposium.

## Judicial Institute on The Link Draws Enthusiastic Participants



On May 5-6, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, held the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Judicial Institute on the Human-Animal Bond and the Link Between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence at George Washington University Law School in Washington.



Twelve judges from nine different jurisdictions learned about the human-animal bond, highlights and national trends in animal law, and the Link in family law and juvenile justice cases. They participated in an extremely impactful exercise of putting themselves in the shoes of a domestic violence survivor who strug-



gles with the safety of themselves, their companion animals, and their children, all while dealing with limited financial and other resources.

The Institute also helped participants to develop action plans for their communities, including creating a Link coalition, training stakeholders, encouraging statutory changes, and developing a “bench card” to consult in their cases.



## LAW ENFORCEMENT... and The LINK

### Cincinnati Man, 10 Others, Indicted in Monkey “Crush Video” Case

**F**ederal authorities in Cincinnati indicted 11 defendants from across the U.S. who are alleged to have participated in online groups dedicated to creating and distributing videos depicting acts of extreme violence and sexual abuse against monkeys.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Ohio issued a [news release](#) detailing 79 overt acts in the conspiracy in which the defendants allegedly paid Nicholas T. Dryden, of Cincinnati, to create and distribute the videos; Dryden is said to have paid a minor in Indonesia to commit the acts on camera. The FBI and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated the case. If convicted, the defendants face up to five years in prison.



Also indicted were:

- Ernest D. Chavez, a/k/a/ “Lax,” of Arizona
- Hugh T. Campbell, a/k/a/ “Tim Templeton,” of Pennsylvania
- Carter G. Fawcett, a/k/a/ “Captain,” of Colorado
- Brady O. Shellhammer, a/k/a/ “Beglu,” of Louisiana
- Jimmy Wong, a/k/a/ “Yasser Lopez,” of New York
- Kimberly A. Anglin, a/k/a/ “Kim Anglin,” of Connecticut
- Mark M. Sampieri, a/k/a “The Chef,” “SainT”, of Connecticut
- Victoria S. Haskins, a/k/a/ “Cat Face,” “Sparkles Fancy Pants,” of Louisiana
- Vance H. Beadles, a/k/a/ “Mr. Green,” of Kentucky
- Mary L. Longoria, a/k/a/ “R6,” “R6ex”, of North Carolina
- Patrick C. Naylor, a/k/a/ “YANTF,” of North Carolina

“The acts of torture and abuse of young monkeys alleged in this case are beyond disturbing,” stated FBI Cincinnati Special Agent in Charge Elena Iatarola.

Dryden and Giancarlo Morelli, of New Jersey, had also been [charged in June 2024](#) with conspiracy to create and distribute “crush videos” depicting acts of sadistic violence against baby, adolescent and adult monkeys, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Dryden was also charged with production, distribution and receipt of a visual depiction of the sexual abuse of children because a minor was paid to abuse the monkeys.

### A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM OUR *LINK-LETTER* READERS

**E**ver since the federal Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act was passed in 2010 and updated with the PACT (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) Act in 2019, these laws have focused on The Link between animal cruelty, sexual abuse and, occasionally, sexual exploitation of minors. Since the first successful prosecution in 2015, several cases have come to our attention detailing “crush video” crimes. At least two such cases (Florida in 2024 and Oregon in 2023) have involved the torture of monkeys.

As the article to the left shows, many of these “dark web” videos are shot overseas — often in Asia — where youths are paid to commit these atrocities, and where enforcement is minimal or nonexistent.

**One aspect of online crush videos has not received much attention. What is the impact on children and youths who watch these videos?**

We have research describing how a child can be desensitized to violence by not only committing animal cruelty but also by witnessing it. But no research — to the best of our knowledge — has addressed the issue of children who see these acts online.

**That’s where you — our *LINK-Letter* readers — can help.**

Much has been written about the deleterious impact on children who spend too many hours glued to their devices. And in the early days of video games, there was much outcry against what cartoons such as “Frogger” and “Whack-a-Mole” might do to a child’s development. As videos have become far more graphic, we’ve gone way beyond whether a frog can cross a highway without getting run over.

The [Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition](#) of Asia for Animals has asked us if there are any studies about childhood watching of online violence against animals. If you know of any such studies or individual cases, please email us at [arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net).

# THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS... and The LINK

## IAHAIO Webinar Focuses on the “Dark Side” of the Human-Animal Bond

**T**he International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO), a global association of over 100 member organizations that engage in practice, research and education about the “bright side” of the human-animal bond — animal-assisted therapy and activities — conducted a [90-minute webinar on April 30](#) about the “dark side” of the human-animal bond — The Link between animal abuse and human violence.



**Jo-Ann Fowler** introduced IAHAIO to 136 participants in 13 countries by emphasizing that human-animal bonds benefit when the well-being of both people and animals are addressed. She noted the strength inherent in global memberships and how assistance animal organizations, especially those in newly-developing regions, are “better together” through collaboration and networking.

The National Link Coalition’s Phil Arkow introduced The Link as the “dark side” of the human-animal bond. He said that because legislators worldwide consider animal issues less important than human welfare concerns, framing the discussion in a three-pronged approach on how animals’ well-being affects humans — the health benefits of animals, pets’ impact on social capital, and The Link — can achieve stronger results.



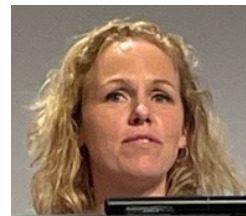
**Phil Arkow**

He offered multiple suggestions as to how animal-assisted therapists can assist organizations working with domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse victims. He commended IAHAIO for its pioneering 2018 Position Statement on Domestic Violence and Related Animal Abuse (*See the [July-2018 LINK-Letter](#)*).



**Janine Janssen**

Dutch criminologist and police officer Janine Janssen traced the philosophical history of animal abuse as a potential marker for human violence and elaborated on several critiques of Link research that have methodological flaws, are overly simplified, or fail to take into account cultural variations and the lack of consistent definitions of “violence” and “animal abuse”. She called for more research to describe different types of interspecies abuse and how different forms of violence are “intertwined.” Recognizing animal abuse as a marker for human violence isn’t enough, she emphasized: we also need to focus on the suffering of the animal.



**Rianne Haaijema**

Rianne Haaijema described how early Dutch research into The Link in 2012 prompted her to found [MENDOO](#) — Mens En Dier Samen Naar Herstel, translated as “humans and animals — a shared path to recovery.” Mendoo started by facilitating foster homes for pet victims of domestic violence. Today, 13 of the Netherlands’ 35 women’s shelters are pet-friendly and 16 municipalities are providing funding for pet programs in shelters.

Such progress, she said, is “a snowball effect. It’s a step-by-step process.” In order for animal welfare organizations to build “a care system that includes pets, it is essential to have social partners around you.” Programs bridging humane and human services can happen, she said, if animal welfare agencies:

- Have “unstoppable motivation and the belief that you can change the system”;
- Collaborate with women’s shelters, police, mental healthcare agencies, and others; and
- Develop a system of foster care for pet victims of domestic abuse.

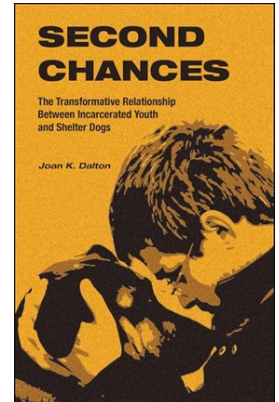
“Show that caring for pets can be a matter of life and death,” Haaijema concluded. “They cannot speak for themselves so we will continue to speak for them.”



# THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS... and The LINK

## Animal-assisted Interventions for Youth Offenders Documented

One of the earliest animal-assisted intervention programs for incarcerated youth offenders has been documented in a new book by the program's founder, Joan Dalton. [Project POOCH](#) (Positive Opportunities—Obvious Change with Hounds) began to unite incarcerated boys with unwanted dogs from Oregon animal shelters in 1993. Both the boys and the dogs were considered undesirable, and few had found love in their lives. As a result of the project, the lives of many youths and dogs changed forever. The program's success is demonstrated by a lack of recidivism: over 95% of the youths have not returned to corrections once their sentence was served. Meanwhile, the POOCH dogs learned basic obedience and went on to become beloved family pets; some even became companion dogs to autistic children, people with physical impairments, and war veterans diagnosed with PTSD. The book is available for pre-orders on [Amazon](#).



- Dalton, J.K. (2025). *Second Chances: The Transformative Relationship Between Incarcerated Youth and Shelter Dogs*. Purdue University Press.

## Prison Dog Programs Said to Build Offenders' Sense of Empathy



Jennifer Wesely

experiences of moral disengagement from harming animals among incarcerated men and how their relationships with dogs in a prison-dog program facilitated empathy.

Jennifer Wesely, in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of North Florida, con-

Criminologists have long known that when our actions conflict with our morals, moral disengagement is a strategy to avoid emotional distress. The ability to empathize with a victim is one quality that can inhibit moral disengagement. A recent study explores

ducted focus groups with 28 men in a prison-dog program. She traced their early lives, the trajectories by which they began to disengage morally, the ways they morally grappled with harming animals, and the impact of the prison-dog program.

"Ultimately, these characteristics moved many participants into a more empathetic position," she concludes. "In doing so, caused shifts in ways of thinking about the wellbeing of some others, particularly animals, with positive implications for their future human and animal relationships."

— Wesely, J. (2025). *Moral disengagement from animal harms among incarcerated men, and change through human-animal relationships in a prison-dog program*. *Anthrozoös*, 38(1), 171-186.

## Building GLOBAL LINK AWARENESS

### National Link Coalition Helps IAHAIO Update its Link Position Statement

**T**he National Link Coalition has helped the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations update their pioneering [Position Statement](#) Regarding Domestic Violence and Related Animal Abuse.

IAHAIO first published its position statement in 2018. It was early recognition by a major international human-animal bond organization in acknowledging “the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse.” It stated that “IAHAIO supports the provision of public education, training for professionals, academic research and the promotion of effective and compassionate interdisciplinary partnerships that collaborate with a view to minimizing the incidence of domestic violence and animal abuse in all its forms.”

Following a recent webinar on The Link, IAHAIO accepted the National Link Coalition’s recommendations to update and expand the Position Statement to now also include child and elder abuse in multiple references. The 2025 update encourages interdisciplinary partnerships that minimize the incidence of “family violence in all its forms – including animal abuse.”

The revised statement emphasizes not only how “responsible care of animals is a source of well-being



and enrichment for people and animals alike,” but also that “the irresponsible care of animals can have deleterious effects on human as well as non-human animals.”

The statement supports the continued development of practical initiatives to reduce legal, ethical, safety, training, and economic barriers that inhibit professionals in child, elder, domestic, and animal abuse from effectively detecting, reporting and reducing human and animal abuse.

It repeats the original position statement’s four objectives aimed at creating integrated solutions and collaborative initiatives among multiple stakeholders, working at the local, national and international levels.

IAHAIO is the global association of over 100 multidisciplinary organizations in more than 34 countries that engage in practice, research and/or education in animal assisted activity, animal assisted therapy, and service animal training. These activities serve to promote pet ownership, the human-animal bond, and respectful approaches to engaging with animals.

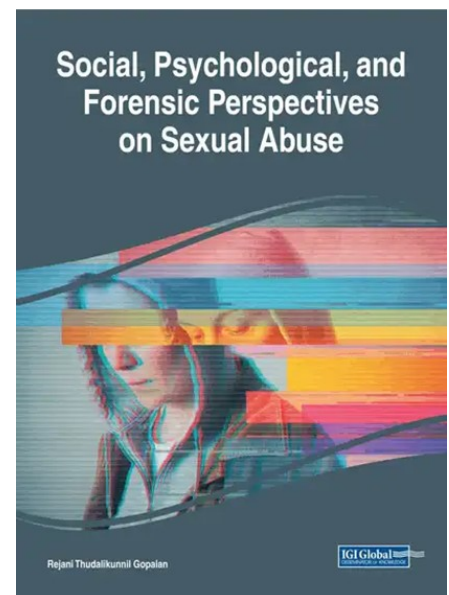
### Earlier Serbian Study Examined Criminology of The Link

A third and earlier Link report has been located from Serbia ([See the March 2025 and May 2025 LINK-Letters](#)) where researchers at the University of Belgrade cite violence against animals as possible indicators of other violent behavior as being “undoubtedly recognized by contemporary criminological theories and research findings.”

In citing numerous U.S. Link researchers and evidence and court cases provided by the Serbian

Ministry of the Interior, the authors create theoretical and bibliographic foundations for further studies

— Boskovic, M., Putnik, N., & Jankovic, B. (2018). Exploring the Link between cruelty to animals and violence against people: Violence against people and animals – Evidence. In R. Gopalan (Ed.), *Social, Psychological, and Forensic Perspectives on Sexual Abuse* (pp. 26-41). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-3958-2.ch003>



## Turkish Criminologist Calls for Greater Link Awareness

A recent incident involving violence toward animals and children in Turkey, where animal remains were discovered in the home of a single man without children who had toys in his home, was called a clear warning sign for possible pedophilic behavior and animal cruelty by a leading Turkish criminologist.

Sevil Atasoy, Vice Rector of Üsküdar University and director of the Violence and Crime Prevention and Research Center, said such warning signs should be taken very seriously. In a news release issued by the university, Atasoy said, “From domestic violence to child abuse, physical assault, and even murder, it has been proven that perpetrators of all types of violent crimes have previously committed acts of violence against animals.”

“There is a strong link between cruelty to animals and violence



Sevil Atasoy

directed at human beings. All publications in the fields of psychology, sociology, and criminology over the past forty years show that individuals who commit crimes such as domestic abuse, child molestation, physical assault, or murder have previously shown aggression toward animals. There is a very serious correlation between these behaviors.”

While it is not true that “all” such perpetrators have prior histories of animal cruelty, nor that “all” publications have documented a Link, Atasoy’s warning nevertheless carries weight in Turkey, where Link research and awareness is only just beginning to take hold. “We do not yet know the scientific basis for this connection in Türkiye, but we do know it exists in the Western world. There is absolutely a connection,” she said.

Emphasizing the seriousness of animal cruelty, Atasoy added, “If a child pulls the wings off a fly out of curiosity, tortures animals to see what happens, holds a live cat under water, buries it alive, gouges out its eyes, cuts off its head, or slits its stomach, the only solution is professional help. This cannot be resolved by punishing the child, grounding them, or taking away their mobile phone. This is a psychiatric disorder and must be treated. Cruelty toward animals in the home will inevitably affect other family members over time.”

Atasoy, head of the university’s Department of Forensic Sciences, explained that during investigations involving violent crimes, including domestic violence, it is necessary to ask individuals the following questions: “Did you have a pet? Have you ever cared for an animal? Do you have a history of treating animals badly?”

## Link Research Beginning to Emerge in Hungary

We are slowly beginning to see Link research emerge from Hungary. One recent study (See the [June 2023 LINK-Letter](#)) described a disconnect between public perception of animal cruelty and professional response among law enforcement officers in a country where animal abuse was only criminalized in 2004. More recently, a second study reviews “the deadly link” and the types of aggression that lead to animal cruelty and other violent crimes. The author, a law student in the Faculty of Political and Legal Sciences at the University of Miskolc, highlights the legal concept of animal cruelty in Hungary, including the provisions of the Criminal Code and

the Animal Protection Act. “As the deadly link is likely to develop from an early age, I also discussed its causes and its link with domestic violence,” writes Fanni Fazekas.

-- Fazekas, F. (2024). Az állatkínzás és a személyek elleni erőszakos bűncselekmények kapcsolata [The link between animal cruelty and violent crimes against people]. Miskolci Jogtudó HU ISSN 2630-9505 2024/1. szám 69–81.



### What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

# The LINK in THE LITERATURE

## Book Editors Call for Chapters About Keeping Pets and People Together

**T**he editors of a forthcoming book on how to keep people and pets together during times of crisis have put out a call for contributors to submit proposals for chapters. The experience-based book will be authored by individuals who have an understanding of and/or research working with humans and animals in the community.

The editors of *Keeping People and Pets Together: Community-based Services* are seeking practitioners, activists, early career researchers from veterinary and human medicine, public health and social work to share their experiences and knowledge. They are particularly interested in hearing from those working in under-resourced communities and from a diverse range of contributors. The target audience is broad: veterinary students and professionals, human-focused medical and social staff, and community nonprofit staff and volunteers.

The first part of the book will include chapters about the concepts and frameworks, covering such topics as:

- Making the case for keeping people and animals together.
- The intersection of human social health determinants and animal wellbeing.
- One Health framework in action.
- Scoping reviews of community retention strategies
- Implementation of science and scaling up or down interventions.
- Community based and participatory methods for working in communities.

The second half of the book will include chapters focusing on implementation of programs and strategies for pet retention and shelter intake diversion, addressing such issues as:

- Short term and emergency shelter.
- Foster care.
- One Health clinics.
- Food pantries.
- Human and animal wellness.
- Interdisciplinary programs (e.g., police and shelter, housing shelters and animal shelters).



**Mary Rauktis (left), Janet Hoy-Gerlach, & Sandra Smith**

Chapters on working with under-resourced communities in keeping pets in the home are particularly encouraged. While the chapters on interventions do not require outcome findings, it is important that some process findings and reflections are included.

### Critical Dates:

- Chapter proposal submission deadline September 30, 2025
- Final chapter submission deadline May 31, 2026

### Editors for the book are:

- Mary Elizabeth Rauktis, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- Janet Hoy-Gerlach, Open Door Veterinary Collaborative
- Sandra Smith, Humane Animal Rescue of Pittsburgh

### Submission procedure

Researchers and practitioners are invited to submit on or before Sept. 30, 2025, a chapter abstract/proposal of 500-800 words to [mar104@pitt.edu](mailto:mar104@pitt.edu), explaining the topic of the chapter; if research, the questions and findings and importance to the field; if practice, the program/intervention, lessons learned and importance to the field.

Authors will be notified by the end of October 2025 about the status of their proposals and sent chapter guidelines. Full chapters of a minimum of 8,000 words (including abstracts, tables and references) are expected to be submitted for review by Feb. 1, with the final chapter due May 31. There are no submission or acceptance fees for chapters.

*Keeping People and Pets Together: Community-based Services* is scheduled to be published by [CABI](https://www.cabi.org/), a not-for-profit academic publisher in life sciences.



## The LINK in THE LITERATURE

### Fellowships Address The Link

Dr. [Brittany Watson](#) and [Dr. Lauren Powell](#) are recruiting two postdoctoral research fellows for the Behavior, Welfare, and Human-Animal Interaction Research Division at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. The team integrates research with community outreach through partnerships with local shelters, animal welfare organizations, and public secondary schools.



**Brittany Watson**

One fellow will be part of a three-year project focusing on developing assessment tools for humane education programs and measuring the impact of humane education on attitudes towards animals, knowledge of animal welfare and behavior. Additional topics of focus could include human-animal interactions, animal cruelty/neglect, human and animal health inequities, and family and interpersonal violence. [Click here for details.](#)



**Lauren Powell**

The second fellow will lead a five-year longitudinal study about companion animal adoption and mental health among economically diverse populations. For more information, please [click here](#).

### Link Cited in Turkish Review of Forensic Biology

Citing a post-pandemic increase in cases of negligence, non-accidental injury, abuse, and other crimes against animals, researchers in Turkey are observing increased importance in veterinary forensics due to increasing awareness of the connection between acts of violence against animals and violence against humans. In a new textbook about Forensic Biology, several chapters cite Link literature and address branches of veterinary forensic science and laws to protect animals in Turkey, which are called inadequately implemented.



— **Kaymaz, A.A. (2024). Adli Bilimlerde Evcil ve Yaban Hayvanlar. [Domestic and Wild Animals in Forensic Sciences], (pp. 1-12). In G. Filoğlu & O. Bülbül (Eds.). Adli Biyoloji: Doğanın İzleriyle Adaletin Peşinde I [Forensic Biology: Pursuing Justice with Nature's Traces I] [Turkish]. Istanbul University Press.**

## Papers Sought on Developmental Science and Adolescent-Animal Interactions



**From left: Megan Mueller, Jo Williams, & Christine Tardif-Williams**

The editors of a special issue of the *Journal of Adolescence* have issued a Call for Papers focusing on research assessing human-animal interaction from a developmental science perspective, exploring the integrated systems that shape how animal relationships impact adolescent development. The special issue will feature 6-14 articles, including a conceptual manuscript that will provide a framework for understanding human-animal relationships in the context of youth development through the lens of developmental science.

“Human-animal relationships play a vital role in the developmental system, with at least two thirds of families in the United States, UK, and Canada living with pets, and a growing interest in therapeutic interventions involving animals,” the editors write. “Many youth form strong, emotionally supportive bonds with animals, often viewing them as a key source of social support. Contrastingly, there is also evidence that animal maltreatment increases in adolescence and is linked with other forms of interpersonal violence and risk behaviors.”

Articles on adolescent-animal interactions may include companion animals, animal-assisted interventions or services, or other meaningful contexts where youth interact with animals. Articles must focus on adolescent developmental outcomes and/or processes and should be grounded in developmental science theory.

Serving as guest editors for the special issue are Megan K. Mueller, of Tufts University; Jo Williams, of the University of Edinburgh; and Christine Tardif-Williams, of Canada's Brock University.

The deadline for submissions is Sept. 1. Submissions will be reviewed and published on a rolling basis. An [Authors Guideline](#) page is available.

### Purina Grants to Support Research into Human-Animal Bond among People in Vulnerable Situations



Purina has announced the availability of up to \$40,000 in grant funding to support scientific research that explores the potential benefits of the human-animal bond in:

- People in vulnerable situations, such as those in abusive relationships and/or experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder;
- The impact of human-animal interactions on the wellbeing of pets; and
- The bond between people and cats

The grants, available to universities, foundations and nonprofits, are part of the 2026 Purina Sponsorship for Human-Animal Bond Studies (HAB) program, which supports innovative scientific research to deepen the understanding of the unique connections between humans and their pets. Proposals can be submitted through August 15.

More information on the program is available at [www.purina.com/HumanAnimalBond](http://www.purina.com/HumanAnimalBond).

Completed applications must be sent to [well-being@purina.nestle.com](mailto:well-being@purina.nestle.com).



**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!**

#### Rules for 2026 Sponsorship Applications

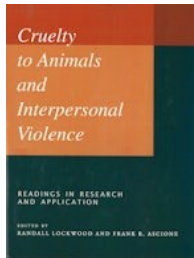
1. Only proposals about cats and/or dogs will be evaluated.
2. Only one proposal per researcher will be evaluated.
3. Research must not be double-funded.
4. Applicants with other corporate affiliations may pose a conflict of interest with Nestlé Purina Pet-Care's business. Potential conflicts of interest will be evaluated by Purina. Purina reserves the right to disqualify an applicant/researcher on the grounds of conflict of interest.
5. All research studies will require approval by Purina and the local ethical/animal use committee and must be fully compliant with local and national animal welfare regulations.
6. Purina will only fund non-invasive research studies and procedures consistent with routine veterinary care. We do not participate in any invasive research that causes injury, illness or disease or that results in euthanasia of dogs or cats.
7. All applications must provide a timeline with specific deliverables.
8. All applications must present a detailed budget.
9. Payments to the selected applicants will be divided by Nestlé Purina into pre-determined installments.
10. University overhead cost will be limited to \$1,000 maximum per application.
11. If the application is accepted, Purina will be acknowledged as a sponsor in all communications about the project.
12. Projects must be completed within a maximum of two years after receiving first installment.
13. A final report must be submitted to Purina in order to receive the final installment.
14. All communications regarding the sponsored projects (e.g., scientific abstracts, peer-reviewed publications) must be submitted to Purina for review before submission.
15. If any intellectual property is generated by the Sponsorship, Purina shall have exclusive rights to negotiate a license for Intellectual Property first.

### Two Pioneering Link Publications Will Be Open-Access

**T**wo of the earliest and most pioneering books which heralded world-wide interest in The Link between animal abuse and human violence are becoming freely available to researchers and readers through open-access.

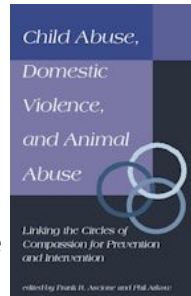
*Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Readings in Research and Application* was published in 1998

by the Purdue University Press. Editors Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione compiled 46 articles that, at the time, were considered classics in the field and others that represented specific Link-related disciplines.



The articles cover such topics as: the philosophical and historical background of The Link; integrative reviews; case studies; psychiatric studies; criminology; developmental psychopathology; the human-animal bond; implications for veterinary medicine; and Links with child, elder and domestic abuse.

Frank R. Ascione and Phil Arkow edited the Purdue University Press' 1999 book, *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*, sponsored by the Latham Foundation. The authors invited Link authorities and survi-



vors to contribute 46 original articles describing: the evolution of Link awareness; issues surrounding child, domestic and animal abuse; legislative and legal contexts; programs that were implementing The Link in their work; and their personal experiences living through Link violence.

The ebooks will be free online, getting this information in front of as many eyes as possible, and maximizing the impact of scholarship, especially for less affluent readers throughout the world.

Hard-copies of the books will remain in print and are on sale at [www.press.purdue.edu/](http://www.press.purdue.edu/)

### ASPCA Offering Research Grant Opportunities

**T**he ASPCA has announced two Calls for Proposals to support original data and research into animal welfare issues. The deadline for both programs is July 31.

The ASPCA is soliciting proposals for 2025 Research Grants in six topic areas: access to veterinary care; applied animal behavior; cruelty; farm animal welfare; psychological trauma; and sheltering. Details, guidelines and an informational session are available [online](#).

The Cruelty Research grants will be for proposals that address ani-



mal cruelty from any angle or relevant discipline (e.g., public policy, law, criminal justice, criminology, veterinary forensics, community engagement, or prevention/intervention). Of particular interest is research that: increases understanding of the perspectives of key stakeholder groups; investigates the effectiveness of cruelty prevention or response at the community or system level; or heightens awareness and builds knowledge about

preventing and responding to animal welfare issues among key community stakeholders.

The ASPCA has also launched a Call for Proposals for presentations of original data and research at this year's ASPCA Research Forum, a unique, free online event that brings animal welfare professionals and researchers into a shared space to discuss cutting-edge learnings that can improve animals' lives. Details are also available [online](#).

# LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

As the 2025 legislative season continues, we're following 126 bills that are working their way through state legislatures, the U.S. Congress, and Canada's Parliament. 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.

**H.R. 1477, the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act**, would establish an Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

## ALASKA

**HB 101 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have allowed judges to consider a history of cruelty to animals as an aggravating factor in imposing a sentence outside the sentencing guidelines for domestic violence in the presence of a minor under age 18, or distributing material depicting bestiality to a minor under age 18.

## ARIZONA

**HB 2211 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have allowed 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.

## HB 2530 died when the Legislature adjourned.

It would have clarified that persons who are experiencing homelessness, such as domestic violence victims, are permitted to bring service animals into homeless shelters.

## SB 1038 died when the Legislature adjourned.

It would have defined aggravated assault to include assault on an animal control officer.

## SB 1412 died when the Legislature adjourned.

It would have expanded the definition of "domestic violence", which includes cruelty, neglect or abandonment, to also include illegally killing a domestic animal.

## CALIFORNIA

**AB 561** would allow domestic violence survivors to file for protection orders — which can include protection of animals — electronically and to appear remotely at hearings.

**SB 221** would expand the definition of stalking to include willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly following or harassing another person and who makes a credible threat to place that person in reasonable fear for the safety of that person's pet, service animal, emotional support animal, or horse.

## FLORIDA

### CS/HB 255, and CS/SB 494

**"Dexter's Law", was tabled when the Senate adjourned.** It would have provided harsher penalties for aggravated animal cruelty cases because the bill's sponsor wrote, "Individuals who commit these heinous acts typically don't stop at animals; they are better indicators of future violence, harassment, assault, rape, murder, and arson cases as found by the FBI. Animal abuse is a strong predictor of potential aggravated violence towards humans and animal abuse can serve as an early warning sign for family violence."

## GEORGIA

### **SUCCESS!!!** HB 177 was signed

### **into law on May 13 and takes**

**effect July 1.** It allows courts to issue protection orders that include "the care, custody and control of any animal owned, possessed, kept, or held as a household pet by either party or by a minor child living in the household or residence of either party." Court orders can also prevent the respondent from harassing, harming, taking, transferring, encumbering, or concealing pets and committing animal cruelty.



**SB 102 died when the General Assembly adjourned.** It would have made it a crime to bring a minor under age 18 to a dog- or cock-fight; first offenses would be “high and aggravated misdemeanors” and subsequent offenses would be felonies.

## HAWAII

**HB 698 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have increased the criminal penalties for animal cruelty resulting in an animal’s death, dog fighting, causing the death of a service or law enforcement animal, sexual assault of an animal, and subjecting a minor to sexual contact with an animal. The bill was based on the recognition that: “animal cruelty offenders are a threat to the health and safety of all members of our communities, especially vulnerable populations”; that “animal cruelty is a predictive and co-occurring crime with violence against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly”; and that “children who witness animal abuse are also more likely to abuse animals as teenagers and adults.”

**SB 460 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have recognized 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 given them standing to file for a protection order or a temporary restraining order.

## IDAHO

**SUCCESS!!! HB 380 was signed into law on March 26.** It creates two new crimes of Aggravated Lewd Conduct with a Minor Child, including bestiality. Penalties for offenders are mandatory 25 years-to-life if the victim is aged 13-16, and life imprisonment or the death penalty if the child is aged 12 or younger.

## 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.

**HB 1903** would create the Human Trafficking Order of Protection Act that would include allowing courts to order respondents to stay away from, taking, harming, or disposing of any animal harmed by the petitioner.

**HB 3367** would allow courts to appoint attorneys or law students to serve as special advocates in the interests of justice in any criminal case involving a dog or cat.

## IOWA

**HF 227 and HF 869 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have amended amend the Iowa Veterinary Practice Act to grant veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil, or criminal liability or disciplinary action, and not subject to confidentiality requirements, for acting in good faith and reporting to or cooperating with any peace officer investigating animal mistreatment, animal fighting or bestiality. Veterinarians would also have been immune when providing testimony in any case or assisting in the rescue of a threatened animal. Veterinarians who knowingly made a false report about a client’s alleged conduct would have been subject to disciplinary action, civilly liable for damages, and guilty of a misdemeanor.

## KENTUCKY

**HB 96 died when the General Assembly adjourned.** It would have defined “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 have included 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 330 died when the General Assembly adjourned.** It would have required individuals who are subjects of a domestic violence protection order — which may include courts granting possession of the couple’s animals — to surrender any firearms. Protection orders would have been required to include language notifying the respondent about the firearms prohibition.

## HB 194 (“Kyan’s Law”) died when the General Assembly adjourned.

It would have required animal control officers to receive training on recognizing child abuse and would have added animal control officers to the list of people with a duty to report dependency, neglect or abuse of a child.

## MAINE

**H.P. 621 died in committee.** It would have created a new Class C criminal offense of Aggravated Operating a Motor Vehicle Under the Influence if the incident resulted in the death of a pet. Offenders would have faced a mandatory fine, incarceration, suspension of the driver’s license, mandatory community service related to animal welfare, and financial restitution to the pet’s owner.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**H.1817 and S.1206** 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.”

**H.1832** 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.

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

**S.1234** would make any parent who allows their child to subject an animal to cruelty or abuse without taking steps to prevent, discourage or correct the action: liable for a fine of up to \$500; and required to undergo psychiatric evaluation. The child would be required to participate in psychiatric rehabilitation under a psychologist who specializes in bullying. The family could be prohibited from having any unsupervised contact with animals and all current animals would be relocated to foster care.

## MICHIGAN

**HB 4300** would create a Courtroom Animal Advocate Program allowing judges to appoint a volunteer pro bono attorney or law student to represent the interest of the animal or of justice in prosecutions involving welfare or custody of animals.

**SB 111** would allow elders and vulnerable adults to petition for personal protection orders that could include restraining or enjoining individuals from harming, removing or threatening the petitioner's animal with the intent to cause the petitioner mental distress or to exert control over the petitioner.

**SB 111** would allow elders and disabled and vulnerable adults to petition for a personal protection order that would include restraining an individual from harming, killing, torturing, neglecting, or removing an animal

## MINNESOTA

**HF 1816** and **SF 1163** died in committees. They would have created a statewide Link-based Office of Animal Protection office in the Department Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to be more effective in enforcing animal cruelty laws that protect animals and people.

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

## MISSOURI

**HB 1298, HB 1513, SB 65** and **SB 655** would add animal control officers and humane investigators to the professionals mandated to report suspected elder abuse and child abuse. APS and CPS workers, foster care advocates and volunteers, and psychologists, mental health professionals, social workers, school counselors, teachers, other school professionals, juvenile officers, law enforcement officers, probation or parole officers, and home health aides would be required to report suspected animal abuse to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association, with immunity from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reporting. APS and CPS workers would be required to complete one hour of training on how to identify and report animal abuse or neglect and The Link between elder and animal abuse. Animal control officers and humane investigators would be required to complete one hour of training on how to identify and report child and elder abuse and their Links with animal abuse.

## NEBRASKA

**SUCCESS!!! LB 80** amends 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 HAMPSHIRE

**HB 62** would expand the state's current provisions that include animal cruelty within the definition of domestic violence abuse to include this definition within military protective orders for active U.S. military and National Guard members

**HB 593 was declared inexpedient to legislate.** It would have allowed a spouse to recover damages for the "loss of consortium" from a spouse who intentionally or recklessly causes the death of that person's pet.

## NEW JERSEY

**A291** would expand the definitions of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against their animals. 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 would be required 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 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 2250** would require humane law enforcement officers who have reasonable cause to believe that a person is a victim of domestic violence to report the situation to a local law enforcement agency, with immunity from civil and criminal liability for making a report in good faith. Currently, they are permitted — but not mandated — to report.

**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.

**A 3236** would expand the definition of domestic violence to include psychological abuse. While intimidating threats against a person's animals are not specifically included in the state's definition of domestic violence, courts are allowed to consider such acts as coercive control in determining whether to issue a protective order.

**SB 26** would rename the Family Violence Protection Act as the Protection Against Abuse and Violence Act and replace the term "domestic abuse" with "abuse" that would now include "harm or threatened harm to an animal" within the definition of "abuse." Courts would be allowed to issue orders of protection that would enjoin the restrained party from committing or threatening to commit acts of "abuse" against the protected party or designated household members. Courts could also grant to any party the exclusive or shared possession and control of any animal kept, owned or leased by either party or any minor child in the household. The court could order any party to stay away from the animal and forbid the party from taking, transferring, concealing, mistreating, harming, or disposing of the animal.

## NEW MEXICO

**SB 26 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have defined coercive-control animal abuse as domestic violence and allowed pets to be included in protection orders. The bill would have renamed the Family Violence Protection Act as the Protection Against Abuse and Violence Act and replace "domestic abuse" with "abuse" that would include "harm or threatened harm to an animal" within the definition of "abuse." Courts could also grant to any party the exclusive or shared possession and control of any animal kept, owned or leased by either party or any minor child in the household. The court could order any party to stay away from the animal and forbid the party from taking, transferring, concealing, mistreating, harming, or disposing of the animal.

**SUCCESS!!! SB 50** adds dogfighting and cockfighting to the list of crimes defined as "racketeering".

## 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** and **S 3491** would increase prison terms 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.

**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** and **S 5544** 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.

**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.

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 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, S 3158** and **S 4633** would include animal fighting as a criminal act within the category of enterprise corruption crimes.

**A 1945** would enable veterinarians to earn continuing education credits for providing free veterinary care for individuals residing in domestic violence shelters.

**A 2387** and **S 6812** would establish a 24-hour toll-free animal abuse reporting hotline.

**A 3158** would require courts to require a mental health evaluation for offenders convicted of aggravated animal cruelty or animal fighting.

**A 3206** and **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.

**A 3528** would make the commission of an act of aggravated cruelty to animals in the presence of a child a Class D felony.

**A 4753** and **S 1753**, “Bella’s Law,” would require an investigation into possible domestic violence or abuse for persons who have been accused of animal abuse.

**A 5815** and **S 4613** would expand provisions of the Family Court Act, the Criminal Procedure Law, and the Domestic Relations Law, which currently allow courts to order respondents to refrain from harming the companion animals of the petitioner or a minor child, to also grant petitioners exclusive care, control or custody of any animal.

**A 6194** and **S 5998**, “Kyra’s Law,” would require courts determining child custody and visitation rights to consider credible evidence that includes any party’s history of domestic violence, child abuse, and threats to harm or kill companion animals.

**A 6397** and **S 7350** would expand the definition of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing serious physical injuries or the use of a weapon.

**A 6556** and **S 5514** would require courts to consider recent acts of aggravated cruelty to animals in determining whether grounds exist for issuing a temporary extreme risk protection order.

**A 7831, S 6986** and **S 7010** would make it a crime to assault a child protective services worker by releasing or failing to control an animal with the intent to obstruct the completion of their duties.

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

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

**S 6880** would authorize a lengthier prison sentence for committing aggravated animal cruelty during an incident of domestic violence.

**A 8375** and **S 7612** would establish a co-shelter toolkit of best practices, resources, case studies, and information to inform and encourage implementing and sustaining co-sheltering models for victims of domestic violence and persons experiencing homelessness with companion animals.

**S 8030** would require certain animal cruelty offenders undergo a presentencing forensic psychological evaluation and, based on such evaluation, to attend counseling, humane education, a rehabilitation program, or other such treatment.

**S 8035** would expand protection orders which allow courts to enjoin an individual from harming an animal to also allow courts to grant the petitioner exclusive care, custody or control of the animal.

## Permission to Reprint

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

## For Additional Information

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

## NORTH CAROLINA

**SB 274** would repeal the archaic “crime against nature, with mankind or beast,” and replace it with the crime of “bestiality” as a Class I felony.

**SB 573** would require judges to order convicted companion animal hoarders to undergo psychological evaluation and treatment.

**SB 591** would make it a Class H felony to bring a minor under the age of 18 to a dog- or cock-fight.

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

## OREGON

**SB 626** would expand the definition of child sexual abuse to include exposing children to acts of bestiality created by artificial intelligence.

## 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.

**H 5669** would add animal cruelty offenses of “unnecessary cruelty,” malicious injury, killing, and abandonment to the definition of domestic violence crimes committed by family or household members against one another.

## 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.”

**H 3641** and **H 4123** would expand the definition of child sexual abuse and obscenity to include exposing children to acts of bestiality created by computer generated images.

## TENNESSEE

**SUCCESS!!!** **HB 540** and **S 916** were signed into law on April 24. They expand the definition of “racketeering activity” to include engaging others in the criminal activity of animal fighting.

## TEXAS

**HB 3049** would designate animal control officers as “first responders” whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency.

**HB 4563** would allow children or persons with a disability to be accompanied by a therapy or facility dog in various criminal proceedings.

**SB 1658** would allow courts to issue Extreme Risk Protective Orders, prohibiting respondents from possessing firearms; Texas protection orders already prohibit respondents from harming, threatening or interfering with the custody of the plaintiff’s pet, companion animal or therapy animal.

**SB 1673** would require courts to order individuals convicted of cruelty to non-livestock animals to undergo psychological counseling.

## UTAH

**SUCCESS!!!** **HB 159 was signed into law on March 25.** It allows Utah authorities to recognize domestic violence protection orders issued in Canada. Utah protection orders already include provisions protecting household animals.

**HB 461 failed to pass.** It would have allowed courts to order individuals convicted of animal cruelty to participate in animal cruelty prevention programs, education programs, or psychological counseling for treatment of mental health disorders that the court considers contributed to the commission of the crime.

**SB 24 failed to pass.** It would have replaced 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.

## VERMONT

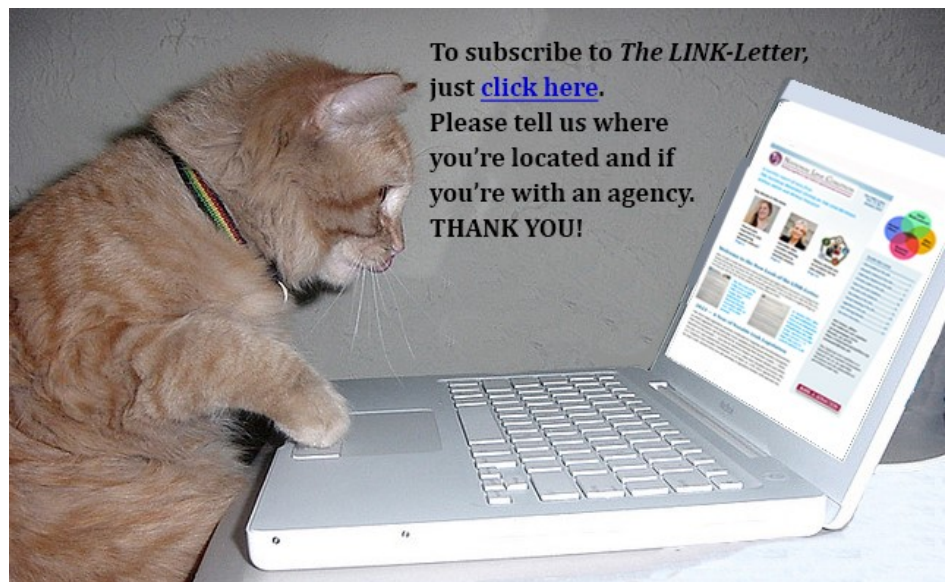
**H.492** introduces the concept of “coercive control” within the animal cruelty context. It proposes that persons who commit or threaten to commit animal cruelty upon an animal to influence a victim of domestic abuse may face additional criminal penalties.

## WEST VIRGINIA

**HB 2068 died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have prohibited activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal, establish criminal penalties, provide for forfeiture of animals, and restrict ownership of animals upon conviction.

## 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

**June 12 — Dallas, Texas:** RedRover and Greater Good Charities will present a [Housing People and Pets in Crisis](#) workshop.

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

**June 24 — Colorado Springs, Colo. (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 24 — Perrysburg, Ohio:** Law enforcement officers are invited to attend an [Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy](#) training on The Link, presented by Det. Todd Curtis and Vicki Deisner, at Owens Community College.

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

**June 29 (online):** Janet Hoy-Gerlach will present "Ask About Pets! An Ethical Call to Action for Social Workers and Other Human Services Professionals" in a [webinar](#) for the International Association of Veterinary Social Workers.

**July 2 — United Kingdom (online):** Phil Arkow will present "The 'Dark Side' of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse, Human Violence, and its Significance for Human-Animal Interactions" in a webinar for the [Society for Companion Animal Studies](#).

**July 9 — United Kingdom (online):** The Links Group UK will conduct its virtual [Annual Meeting](#).

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

**July 21 — Washington, D.C.:** Phil Arkow will speak to the [American Veterinary One Health Society](#).

**July 21 — Washington, D.C.:** Rachel Touroo will present "Overcoming Barriers to Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Animal Cruelty" at the [American Veterinary Medical Association's](#) Convention.

**July 22 — Kansas City, Mo. (online):** Zoë Agnew-Svoboda of BestyBnB will present a [webinar](#), "Pet Advocacy 101" to help social services agencies become more pet-accessible.

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

**Aug. 19 — West Des Moines, Iowa:** [Mark Kumpf](#) will present a half-day Link training for the City of West Des Moines.



# LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



**Aug. 19-21 — Lakewood, Colo.:** The Animal Welfare Association of Colorado's 2025 [Animal Welfare Conference](#) will feature: Det. Jeremy Hoffman of the Fairfax County, Va. Police Dept. presenting "Chasing Monsters: Intersections of Animal Sex Offenders and Other Sex Offenses" and "Paraphilia: A Case Study in Animal Crushing"; Jennifer Rainey of the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region presenting "Non-accidental vs. Accidental Injury in Animal Cruelty Cases"; and Jace Huggins presenting "Unmasking Animal Hoarding".

**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. 9 (online):** Rebecca Stephens will present "Who Keeps the Dog?", a guide to navigating the legal and ethical complexities of pet custody during divorces, in a [webinar](#) for the International Association of Veterinary Social Work.

**Sept. 11 — United Kingdom (online):** Maya Badham of Safeguarding Animal & Human Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Abuse (SAHSDA) will present the "Safeguarding for Pet Professionals" [training](#) on how to recognize and respond to domestic and animal abuse.

**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. 16 — Newtown, Pa.:** Jessica Bibbo will present on the relationship between elder abuse and animal abuse at the Bucks County Area Agency on Aging's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual [William J. Neff Sr. Symposium](#) on the Prevention of Crimes Against Older Adults

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

**Sept. 17-18 — Albuquerque, N. Mex.:** Phil Arkow will present on "Protecting 'Women's Best Friend'; Assessing the Impact of Animal-Inclusive Protection Orders" among multiple speakers speaking at Positive Links' [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#).

**Sept. 18 (online):** Det. Jeremy Hoffman of the Fairfax County, Va. Police Dept. will present "Chasing Monsters: Deviant Intersections of Animal Sex Abusers," in a [webinar](#) for the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

**Sept. 24 — Belleville, Ill.:** Phil Arkow will present at the Downstate Illinois Conference for Children's Advocacy Centers.

**Sept. 25 (online):** Claire Coughlin and Val Peña from the Animal Welfare Institute will present "Safe Havens for Pets: Sheltering Resources for the Unhoused" in a Don't Forget the Pets [webinar](#).

**Sept. 25 — Wetherby, England:** The Links Group UK and the BSAVA will present a [Links Veterinary Training Initiative](#) for large, small and equine veterinary teams on a multi-agency approach to recognize and act on non-accidental injury and domestic abuse.

**September 26-28: Toronto, Ont., Canada:** Kathleen Wood, Cathy Hessler and Rosa Figarola will be among the speakers addressing The Link at the [Canadian Animal Law & Advocacy Conference](#).

**Sept. 30 — Sacramento, Calif. (online):** Claire Ponder Selib from the National Organization for Victim Advocacy, and Ashley Rum-schlag of DomesticShelters.org, will join Katie Campbell of RedRover in a [panel discussion](#) on The Link between animal abuse and human violence and RedRover's efforts to have 25% of domestic violence shelters pet-friendly by 2025.

# LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**Oct. 9 – Colorado Springs, Colo. (online):** Elkie Wills of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys’ Human Animal Support Services, and Lauren Rogers from the San Diego Humane Society, will present “Building a Safety Net of Connections and Resources for Your Community” in a [Justice Clearinghouse webinar](#).

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

**Oct. 15 — Cincinnati, Ohio:** Law enforcement officers are invited to attend an [Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy](#) training on The Link, presented by Det. Todd Curtis and Vicki Deisner, at Great Oaks Career Campuses.

**Oct. 15 — Austin, Texas:** Phil Arkow will present “Partnering with Unseen Allies: How Animal Care & Control Can Protect Vulnerable Adults” at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual [Texas Adult Protective Services Conference](#).

**Oct. 16-19 — Bali, Indonesia:** Phil Arkow will present a workshop on the impact of online animal cruelty on children for Asia for Animal’s [Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition](#).

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

**Oct. 23 — United Kingdom (online):** Maya Badham of Safeguarding Animal & Human Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Abuse (SAHSDA) will [present](#) “Recognizing and Responding to Companion Animal Abuse as a Tactic of Coercive Control.”

**Oct. 24 — Rockford, Ill.:** Phil Arkow will present “The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence: Creating Healthier Communities through Species-Spanning Recognition & Response at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Symposium at the [University of Illinois—Rockford](#) College of Medicine.

**Oct. 29 — Twinsburg, Ohio:** Law enforcement officers are invited to attend an [Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy](#) training on The Link, presented by Det. Todd Curtis and Vicki Deisner, at Kent State University—Twinsburg Campus.

**Nov. 5-7 — Pittsburgh, Pa.:** The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will host the 14th [National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

**Nov. 11 — Glastonbury, Conn. (online):** Phil Arkow will present a webinar for the [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#).

**Nov. 12 — Sketchley Grange, England:** The Links Group UK and the BSAVA will present a [Links Veterinary Training Initiative](#) for large, small and equine veterinary teams on a multi-agency approach to recognize and act on non-accidental injury and domestic abuse.

**Nov. 18 — Morristown, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will present on “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond” to the Soothing Paws Program at the [Morristown Medical Center](#).

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

**Dec. 4 – Colorado Springs, Colo. (online):** Andrew Campbell will present “No Safe Place: How Domestic Violence Harms Children” in a [Justice Clearinghouse webinar](#).

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

**Jan. 21, 2026 — Springfield, Ohio:** Law enforcement officers are invited to attend an [Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy](#) training on The Link, presented by Det. Todd Curtis and Vicki Deisner, at Clark State College.

**Feb. 4, 2026 — Warren, Ohio:** Law enforcement officers are invited to attend an [Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy](#) training on The Link, presented by Det. Todd Curtis and Vicki Deisner, at Kent State University — Trumbull County Campus.

## THE LINK... in the NEWS

### Alleged Pigeon Poacher Charged with Assault

A man with a criminal history in New York dating back to 1982 – including assaulting a police officer who tried to stop him from capturing pigeons to be used for target shoots in Pennsylvania – was arrested again for allegedly netting pigeons in a New York City park. [News media](#) reported that Dwayne Daley, 67, of Bushkill, Pa., was allegedly using a black net to catch pigeons in the East Village. Police reportedly found a truck nearby with Pennsylvania license plates, 25 more pigeons in small cages, and additional nets. After bonding out shortly after being charged with animal cruelty, Daley was immediately re-arrested in conjunction with a felony assault in Brooklyn back in 2021. In that incident, a man who was trying to stop Daley from netting pigeons was repeatedly punched and lost two teeth. Daley had also been arrested on charges of poaching pigeons in 2007, but that case was dismissed.

### Parents Charged with Child & Animal Abuse in “Horrific” Home

Two parents in Honea Path, S.C., were charged with child and animal abuse after the Anderson County DSS found an 8-month-old child living in a home with over 40 living and dead animals, including a decomposing goat in the bathtub. [Fox Carolina](#) reported that Kayla Renard and Nicholas Foley were charged in a scene that police called “horrific.”

### Man Charged with Child and Animal Sex Abuse

Hunter Roy, 26, of Maple Shade, N.J., was charged with multiple counts involving child sexual abuse and animal cruelty after Burlington County law enforcement officers allegedly found more than 9,000 digital files depicting child sexual exploitation and recordings of himself performing sex acts with a Rottweiler and another smaller dog. The [Shore News Network](#) reported that authorities believe Roy was exchanging the videos with others, including an underage boy. Additional charges included possession of narcotics and debauching the morals of a child. The investigation was triggered after the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children flagged Roy’s online activity. The case will be prosecuted by the Burlington County Prosecutor’s Office’s Special Victims Unit.



### 5 Children and Dog Rescued from Filthy Home

A Long Island, N.Y. man has been accused of keeping five children and a dog in filthy conditions for months. Steven Bartolomey, 37, of Central Islip, was charged with animal cruelty, animal neglect and five counts of endangering the welfare of a child under the age of 17, [News 12 Long Island](#) reported. The dog, a 1-year-old pit bull, was reportedly kept in a filthy cage with debris, feces, urine, and no access to food or water. The children, who ranged in age from 3 to 11, were said to be living in a home filled with garbage, debris, flies, feces, and urine. Authorities said the air quality was so poor that officers became nauseous and gagged while inside. The children have since been relocated and the dog was surrendered to an animal rescue group where it was scheduled to be made available for adoption.



### Woman Charged with Burning Family’s Dogs and Child Endangerment

After an 11-year-old boy called 911 and told a dispatcher that his mother was burning the family’s two small dogs because she “believed he was the devil,” Rusk County, Texas Sheriff’s deputies arrested Veronica Loreda, 32, of Henderson on six counts of animal cruelty and child endangerment.



Deputies found Loreda inside a car with four children, ranging in age from 2 to 11, and canine remains in a fire burning at the residence, according to a Sheriff’s office [press release](#). The boy reportedly told officers that Loreda locked the kids inside the vehicle before grabbing the family pets and burning them in the fire.



## THE LINK... in the NEWS

*Several unrelated cases from Ohio have come to our attention recently....*

### Couple Charged with Child and Animal Abuse in “Uninhabitable” Home Where Screaming Children Allegedly Saw Mom’s Boyfriend Kill Puppy

**T**wo children in what authorities said was an “uninhabitable” home in Milan, Ohio were said to have been screaming when they saw their mother’s boyfriend allegedly beat a puppy to death with a hammer while their mother spoke “predominantly unintelligibly” to officers who reportedly found extensive drug paraphernalia in the house.

[WOIO](#) reported that Erie County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Jimmy R. Wiggins, 46, who had run from the house and was found hiding in the woods. He was charged with felony animal cruelty, felony endangering children, tampering with evidence, and obstructing official business.

The children’s mother, Gretchen L. Howard, 42, had been put on probation just hours earlier because a glass pipe with a large quantity of a crystalized substance was found in her purse during a traffic stop for

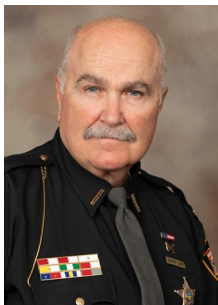
trespassing with her boyfriend behind the wheel driving without a license. She was charged with felony child endangerment and obstructing official business.



The Sheriff’s dispatcher said a caller had overheard a man kill at least one puppy and an onslaught of screaming from family members as a result. Deputies arrived to find a child outside the home “extremely distraught.” Deputies saw the home was “in complete disarray, smelled strongly of animal feces/urine and was basically uninhabitable due to the deplorable conditions,” ECSO described. Inside the house they allegedly found “an influx of narcotics, most notably methamphetamine and/or paraphernalia/instruments in plain view.”

Erie County Job and Family Services took custody of the children.

### Ohio Woman Charged with Punching Boyfriend, Choking Dog



**A** disturbing video on social media, reportedly showing a woman hitting her boyfriend and choking a dog before throwing the dog to the ground, resulted in Butler County Sheriff’s Officers arresting Katelin Conklin, 28, of Lemon Township, on charges of domestic violence and animal cruelty. The

**Sheriff Richard Jones** boyfriend sustained a minor injury and the dog was unharmed. “This type of behavior is unacceptable,” Sheriff Richard Jones told [WLWT-TV](#). “We take both domestic violence and animal cruelty very seriously, and we will always pursue charges when the evidence supports it.”

### Sandusky Man Charged Again with Animal Cruelty in Dog Stabbing

**A** Sandusky, Ohio man with a criminal history of domestic violence and assault convictions, and unresolved charges of animal cruelty and abandonment, was again arrested on a charge of felony animal cruelty for allegedly brutally stabbing an 8-month-old dog named “Ivy.” [CBS19 News](#) in Cleveland reported that Terry Thomas, 41, was accused of slashing the dog several times in the face and slicing off her ear after she went to the bathroom in the house. Humane officers took Ivy to a veterinary clinic for life-saving surgery before she went to a foster home. Thomas and his fiancé had been charged with animal abandonment and animal cruelty in 2022 in a case that is still open. Sandusky municipal court records indicate Thomas has multiple domestic violence convictions (and more charges not resulting in a conviction), and multiple assault convictions.



## You Can Help Us Create Safer Communities!

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

I.R.S. 501c3 tax ID  
#92-2607909.

Join us!



NationalLinkCoalition.org



arkowpets@snip.net

Please [click here](#)  
to make a  
tax-deductible  
contribution to support our work



## National Link Coalition Leadership Team Board of Directors

### [Phil Arkow, President/Secretary](#)

Instructor, Animal Abuse & Family Violence, University of Florida  
Adjunct Faculty, Animal-Assisted Therapy & Activities, Harcum College  
Etowah, N. Car.

### [Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., Vice President/Board Chair](#)

Consultant, ASPCA  
Falls Church, Va.

### [Ann Laatsch, J.D., Treasurer](#)

Justice System Coordinator, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life  
Milwaukee, Wis.

### [Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.,](#)

Associate Professor emerita, University of Cincinnati Academic Health Center  
Past Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center  
Cincinnati, Ohio

### [Kendra Coulter, Ph.D.](#)

Professor, Management & Organizational Studies  
Coordinator, Animal Ethics and Sustainability Leadership  
Huron University College at Western University, London, Ont., Canada

### [Mark Kumpf, CAWA](#)

Principal Director, Animal Control & Care Academy  
Dayton, Ohio

### [Paul Needham, MBA](#)

Chair, Education Committee, National Adult Protective Services Association  
Shawnee, Okla.

## Professional Advisory Committee

### [Lesley Ashworth,](#)

Former Domestic Violence Program  
Director, Columbus OH City Attorney's  
Office, Boone, N. Car.

### [Diane Balkin, J.D.](#)

Retired Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Denver, Colo.

### [Nancy Blaney \(2024\)](#)

Director, Government Affairs  
Animal Welfare Institute, Washington, D.C.

### [Claire Coughlin \(2025\)](#)

Director, Companion Animal Programs  
Animal Welfare Institute, St. Louis, Mo.

### [Steve Dale](#)

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author  
Chicago, Ill.

### [The Hon. Rosa C. Figarola](#)

Retired Circuit Probate Judge,  
11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
Miami, Fla.

### [Maya Gupta, Ph.D. \(Alternate\)](#)

Vice President, Research,  
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research  
Woodstock, Ga.

### [Joey Orduna Hastings](#)

CEO, National Council of Juvenile & Family  
Court Judges  
Reno, Nev.

### [Kendall Houlihan, DVM](#)

Assistant Director, Animal Welfare Division  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Schaumburg, Ill.

### [Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.](#)

Director, Research  
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research  
Chicago, Ill.

### [Allie Phillips, J.D.](#)

Director, Sheltering Animals and Families  
Together (SAF-T)  
Lansing, Mich.

### [Gale Rasin, J.D.](#)

Retired Associate Judge,  
Baltimore City Circuit Court,  
Chestertown, Md.

### [The Hon. John J. Romero, Jr.](#)

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

### [Sue Skinner, MD](#)

Child Abuse Pediatrician, CARES Northwest  
Portland, Ore.

### [Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM](#)

President, Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC  
Boston, Mass.

### [John Thompson](#)

Executive V.P., Small & Rural Law Enforcement  
Executives Association  
Alexandria, Va.

### [Kathleen Wood, J.D.](#)

Staff Attorney, Criminal Justice Program  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Portland, Ore.