



NATIONAL LINK COALITION
Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month!

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HUMAN MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Please Respond to Our Survey About Link Awareness

In the [May 2025 LINK-Letter](#), we announced that we are conducting a survey to explore health care professionals' comfort level with recognizing and reporting incidents of child, elder and animal abuse. We are seeking responses from anyone who works in the human healthcare professions (e.g., MDs, DOs, nurse practitioners, nurses, physician assistants, etc.) as well as those who work in social service (e.g., therapists, psychologists, counselors, and social workers).



The survey is brief, taking approximately 5 minutes to complete and is entirely anonymous. This survey has been determined as IRB exempt status.

Please click on [this hyperlink](#) to complete the survey or, if it's more convenient, simply take a picture of this QR code with your phone. Thanks for participating!

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Link Often Overlooked on Tribal Lands

As difficult as it may be to connect the dots between animal cruelty and other crimes, these connections are challenged even further on tribal lands, where jurisdictional issues, a lack of training and resources, and a disconnect with tribes' cultural heritage conspire to create greater risks for Native Americans and their animals.

That is the situation described by Melissa Riley, Sexual Violence Coordinator for the [Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women](#) and a social worker with the 23 federally recognized tribes, 19 pueblos, and Navajo Nation in New Mexico. Speaking at the [New Mexico Positive Links Conference](#), Riley explained that because tribal law enforcement officers' training never addresses animal welfare issues, "There's not a lot of time left to learn how to get into a home or a car and diffuse situations where there are animals. Tribal courts don't understand, and tribal leadership doesn't fully understand as well that they need to invest money in animal shelters and codes that address the animal needs in a community -- including the livestock."

While noting the diversity of cultures and beliefs among the many tribes, they share a common cultural heritage: "We believe that whatever we take from the earth we need to be very thankful for, and that all animals have a living spirit. Generations ago, animals were held in high regard in our communities. Today that has changed."

Riley traces the change to colonization by the Conquistadors, who weaponized mastiffs to hunt down and kill Indigenous populations. Religious and legal systems forced upon Native populations undermined the Indigenous animal-human relationships, resulting in a shift toward domination and control -- which is also mirrored today in family and domestic violence.

The reverence for animals' spirits may be recognized when hunting antelope, for example, but not with household dogs and cats. "When animals have been abused on the reservation, it leaves me with more

questions than answers as to how we practice our customs and traditions," she said.

Meanwhile, family violence is widespread. Native women

face the highest **Melissa Riley** rates of sexual and domestic violence in the U.S., and 30% - 50% of Native women in New Mexico report having experienced intimate partner violence. As disturbing as these statistics are, Riley explained, many cases go underreported due to jurisdictional complexity, stigma, and a lack of resources. Rates of child removal and incarceration are disproportionately higher in tribal areas. Some tribes have anti-cruelty laws but these codes fail to make an intersect with domestic violence. Calls to tribal crisis lines do not involve assessments of the pets: "We overlook them and believe that the pets can take care of themselves," she explained.

"As a community we don't see the protection of animals as a high priority so we don't have access to veterinarians. We need to establish connections to get a whole health approach to help domestic violence survivors to better recover. A lot of community outreach and education needs to take place to provide victim services for those who have animals," she added.

"If tribal leadership is going to change anything, they have to look back on our history with animals pre-colonization. Violence on the land is violence on the body. This makes another intersect between domestic violence and animal abuse," she concluded.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Link Often Overlooked on Tribal Lands

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Riley cited seven specific tribal trends and barriers:

1. **Overpopulation of animals, abandonment, and a lack of services.**
2. **Tribal codes do not explicitly protect animals of domestic violence victims.**
3. **The ability to make changes is hindered by a lack of funding, information, and legal provisions tailored to the tribe's culture.**
4. **Few reservations have an established animal control program.**
5. **Most tribes have to rely on partnerships with outside providers or on ad hoc solutions.**
6. **There are limited data on tribes' access to spay/neuter programs and shelters that can accommodate domestic violence survivors with pets.**
7. **Abandoned and relinquished pets and a lack of spay/neuter options contribute to a problem of feral dog packs and resulting public health concerns.**

Brazilian Research Correlates Animal Abuse with Domestic Violence

The latest Link research to emanate from Brazil continues to highlight areas of overlap between violence against animals and domestic violence against women, underscoring the utility of what the authors call “the Link Theory” and emphasizing the relevance of intersectoral approaches. As with earlier research, the current study encourages more active participation of veterinary medicine to strengthen public policies and prevention strategies.

The current research, an observational, descriptive, and retrospective study, analyzed 135,624 reports of violence against women and 1,697 reports of animal abuse in Manaus, in the State of Amazonas, for the years 2019–2023. The findings confirmed the relationship between violence against animals and domestic violence against women.

Intriguingly, the highest number of reports of violence against women (9.3%) occurred in August, while February had the highest concentration of reports of animal abuse (9.5%). The study area was divided into several geographic sectors; results indicated the greatest simultaneous concentration of domestic violence (33%) and animal abuse (28%) occurred in the North-

ern Zone, followed by the Eastern (24% and 13%) and Southern Zones (14% and 18%). The Cidade Nova neighborhood presented the highest incidence in both contexts. Males, particularly in the 35-64 age group, predominated among identified aggressors.



Brazilian State of Amazonas

The findings supported Link Theory postulates regarding the co-occurrence of animal abuse and interpersonal violence, with animal abuse potentially functioning as a mechanism of control in abusive relationships.



- Souza dos Santos, M., do Nascimento Alves, M., dos Santos, P.Z.L., Fernandes, L.R., Schmitt, F.L., & de Aguiar Silva, S.C. (2025). Teoria do elo: Relação entre a violência animal e violência doméstica contra mulheres na cidade de Manaus-Am (Link theory: relationship between animal violence and domestic violence against women in the city of Manaus-Am.) [Portuguese]. *Revista Contemporânea*, 5(8), 1-18.

Japanese Study Examines Domestic Violence “Pesticides”

Because pets are often regarded by perpetrators of domestic violence as members of the family, they may become victims of murder-suicide alongside human household members.

That’s the conclusion of a Japanese forensic study investigating the co-occurrence of homicides/suicides with the death of companion animals, a phenomenon we’ve called “peticide” and which we’re beginning to see with some frequency (*See the August 2025, December 2024, June-July 2024, December 2022, November 2022, October 2022, and September 2022 LINK-Letters*). The study examined three cases in Japan in which pets were found dead alongside human victims in sus-

pected domestic murder-suicide incidents. In all three cases, both the human and animal victims died from the same cause, suggesting a tendency for perpetrators to kill pets using the same methods as those used on human victims.

The authors called the study – the first of its kind in Japan -- a component of One Health/One Welfare research exploring the interconnectedness of human well-being and animal welfare. They emphasized that murder-suicide is the most extreme form of domestic violence and abuse.

They pinpointed the fact that none of the media articles covering these three cases mentioned the killing of the dogs. “Given that

murder-suicide cases involving humans often attract considerable media attention and are frequently reported in Japan, the lack of public awareness regarding murder-suicide-peticide incidents may reflect a broader social invisibility of such events,” they wrote. They called for ongoing interdisciplinary research to develop effective intervention strategies to protect vulnerable human and non-human individuals within the household.



-- Kihara, Y., Makino, Y., Torimitsu, S., & Chiba, F., et al. (2025).

Characteristics of three forensic veterinary cases involving pet deaths in domestic murder-suicide incidents.

Animals, 15(17), 2504. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani15172504>

Spain Invokes Gender-Based Violence Law in Animal Cruelty Case

In what appears to be the first case of gender-related violence applied to an animal cruelty case in Spain, a court on the island of Gran Canaria sentenced an 18-year-old man to a year and a day in prison for throwing his partner’s puppy off a cliff. [CBS News](#) reported the unnamed man simultaneously was threatening to take his own life.

“The animal’s death was intentionally employed as a means to inflict psychological damage” and called the incident “vicarious violence against a companion animal” requiring stronger punitive measures. The court also barred him from approaching or contacting the woman for two years and one day. Throwing the dog off the cliff while the woman watched had a specific purpose, the judge said in the ruling: “to kill the animal to psychologically break the woman.”

Researchers in Gran Canaria recently reported that the island has Europe’s highest rates of animal abuse and that male adolescents are least responsive to animal abuse concerns (*See the April 2024 LINK-Letter*).



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Program Explores Link Between Domestic Violence and Dog Bites

An intriguing new exploration on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence -- the potential connection between domestic violence and dog bites -- will be the feature of a presentation at the Texas Animal Control Association's [2025 Annual Conference](#), Nov. 9-12, in Abilene.

Daniel Ettinger, a Denver Animal Protection animal control field services manager and podcaster, will present "Exploring Domestic Violence and Bites" on Nov. 10.

"Research has firmly established a compelling link between DV and animal abuse, shining a light on the intricate dynamics within abusive households. However, recent



Daniel Ettinger

"Dogs, being sensitive creatures, can display behavioral responses to abuse in their surroundings. Residing in abusive environments or experiencing mistreatment themselves, dogs may show increased aggression, heightening the risk of biting.

"Moreover, dogs often perceive threats to their human companions and may instinctively defend

studies have revealed another crucial aspect: the correlation between DV and dog bites," Ettinger says.

victims of DV, potentially resulting in bites directed at the abuser."

Another aspect of this Link, he notes, is that perpetrators of DV may exploit their canine companions as tools of intimidation or direct aggression towards their victims. "By using their dogs as weapons, abusers not only maintain control over their victims but also pose a significant risk of physical harm through bites."

The program will analyze the intricate relationship between domestic violence and dog bites, examine case studies, offer psychological insights, and preventive strategies.

Missouri Homeless Shelter Expansion Will Include Pet Kennels

In the midst of its \$18.6 million campaign for a new homeless shelter in Columbia, Mo., the Voluntary Action Center has received a \$60,000 Safe Housing Grant for a 547-square-foot kennel when their new [Opportunity Campus](#) opens in 2026.

[KRCG-TV](#) reported that the Companion Kennel will serve an estimated 75 pets annually. The full campus will provide 150 emergency beds and is expected to serve over 7,000 individuals annually.

Many unhoused individuals live on the streets as a result of domestic violence. The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates as many as 3.5 million people experience homelessness per year, and as many as 25% of them have pets. Few homeless support programs are pet-friendly shelters. Homeless individuals seeking assistance often must make the tough call to either seek help or leave their furry friends behind.

"For many of our unsheltered neighbors, their pets may be their most trusted friend, if not their only friend," Ed Stansberry, Executive Director of The Voluntary Action Center, told the TV station.



Artist's rendering of the new Opportunity Campus

"We knew going into this project that one of the barriers to services for unsheltered neighbors is pets, and their ability to bring their pets to a sheltered environment," Stansberry said.

The Center has partnered with the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine to provide veterinary care to animals staying at the kennel.

"We are really grateful to have them on board," Stansberry explained.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Words of Inspiration from *Down Under*

In recent LINK-Letters, we've spotlighted the work of [Lucy's Project](#), an NGO based in New South Wales, Australia, that works to ensure that all people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence can access the help and support that they need ([See the April 2025 and March 2018 LINK-Letters](#)).

Its founder, Anna Ludvik, recently shared with us some inspiring advice as to how people working in this emotionally challenging environment can keep going. We thought we'd share this with you, as her ideas are just as relevant on this side of the planet -- without any kookaburras! -- as they are Down Under:

***"I will not let them win.
I will not let the darkness steal my light."***

— Anna Ludvik

Spring has sprung, the flowers are blooming, animals are coming out of hibernation and the sun is shining. There is nothing I love more than relishing the good moments of life. Life can get us down, so we might as well boogie given the chance.

"I will always be incredibly serious and passionate about this cause. How could I not be? I know that until protections for animal victims of violence are in place, human life is also at risk.

"I know that so many of the protections animals need are not

'rocket science'. I know they are utterly achievable with good advocacy. A tweak here, a provision there. I mean, look at the difference increasing the number of animal-friendly rentals has had in NSW?

"So many more people can now find safe accommodation with their animals after leaving an animal-friendly crisis facility. That means more people and animals are safe -- permanently.

"Look at the difference having coercive control amendments built into legislation has had on legitimizing and recognizing animal abuse as a form of coercive control? Look at the increase of animal-inclusive domestic and family violence crisis shelters across the country, listen to the conversations around the country about The Link.

"All of these advocacy milestones have had serious beneficial impact on Australia in a permanent way -- but none of them have had a massive cost or required huge overhaul of systems. The work Lucy's Project does in our CARE (Collaboration, Advocacy, Research and Education) space just makes good sense. We apply reason and logic to systems to improve efficiency and safety outcomes for Australian humans and animals experiencing violence and abuse. With relatively little, we make big changes - that will last a lifetime.

Finding Joy in the Everyday

"That said, if you know me on a personal level, you'll know there's nothing I like to do more than laugh and be silly. How on earth else are we meant to survive?



Anna Ludvik

"I have faced some pretty gnarly moments in life, I've dedicated my life to a pretty heavy cause. If I think about it all too much I think I'd drown in sorrow. Let's be honest, sometimes I do.

"The way I cope is by seeking fun whenever I can, seeing joy, taking a moment out of an ordinary moment to find the extraordinary. Watching bubbles blown out of my children's hands and seeing the whole park reflected like a mini oil painting rendered in technicolor above my head. I laugh at myself; I revel in the joy of an imperfect world. A dirty dog covered in dark smelly fun (mud), a cheeky kookaburra stealing worms from off my garden fork... that's my strength to keep going every day. To make a world of increased peace, less suffering.

"To effect change- but starting with me. I will not let them win. I will not let the darkness steal my light."

THE COURTS... and THE LINK

Journal Addresses Link Issues in Military and Civilian Family Courts

A new article in the National Council of [Juvenile & Family Court Judges' journal](#) is familiarizing judicial officials with the general aspects of animal abuse as it can affect their cases, with a particular emphasis on unique dynamics impacting The Link in military connected families.

The National Link Coalition's Phil Arkow wrote "Connecting the Dots in Military and Civilian Family Courts: Animal Abuse's Links to Other family Violence" for the latest issue of the *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*. In the article, Arkow writes that while the animal abuse/family violence dynamic is now well-researched among civilian populations, it has not as yet been widely addressed in active and retired military communities where unique factors affecting service members, veterans and their families may exacerbate the risks of interpersonal and interspecies violence.



The article describes both the beneficial as-

pects of human-animal bonds and the adverse impacts of animal abuse among civilian, active and veteran military service members and their families. It notes the U.S. military's limited responses to acts of animal cruelty. It encourages military court judges, Family Advocacy Program centers, military veterinarians, and other stakeholders to gain more insights into both the beneficial aspects of human-animal bonds and the adverse impacts of animal abuse as a potential indicator and predictor of violence against humans.

Many factors within the military environment, plus breakdowns in communication with counterpart civilian agencies, can create an eco-culture that leads to elevated risks of child maltreatment, domestic violence and sexual assault as compared to civilian populations, he writes. These include:

CHILD MALTREATMENT

- Deployments, disruption of routines, physical and/or mental wounds to the service member, and new demands on the non-military caretaker can impair parenting practices and disrupt family functioning.

- Additional stressors elevate the risk of child maltreatment and neglect.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Frequent relocations make long-term social connections difficult.
- Spouses fear to report abuse due to its impact on the service member's career, rank and pay.
- Language and cultural barriers discourage spouses for whom English is not a primary language.
- Service members have military-trained capacity for violence and access to firearms.
- Service members may experience difficulty returning to normal family life after the intense camaraderie and tension of combat environments.
- High rates of PTSD and traumatic brain injury affect returning combat veterans.

ANIMAL CRUELTY, ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Prohibitive costs of transporting companion animals when service members are transferred to other military installations.
- Limited experience among Veterinary Corps officers and military police regarding animal cruelty investigations and responses.

The article notes steps that the Department of Defense has taken to address many of these concerns:

- Removing investigation of domestic and child abuse and sexual assault away from unit commanders to independent military prosecutors.
- Establishing Family Advocacy Program offices on military installations.
- Creating a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office to centralize training and data collection in the armed forces.
- Publishing DoD Human-Animal Bond Principles and Guidelines, with multi-disciplinary planning, implementation and evaluation of animal-assisted therapy programs within the military and Veterans Administration facilities.
- Funding to ease the financial burden of transporting a limited number of pets during transfers.
- Including animal abuse, neglect, abandonment, and bestiality as court martial offenses within the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

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THE COURTS... and THE LINK

Journal Addresses Link Issues in Military and Civilian Family Courts

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The article lists 16 of the NCJFCJ's recommended Link-related judicial responses to intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect, juvenile offenders, and elder abuse, all of which would appear to be equally applicable in military tribunals as well as civilian courts. Six appendices provide states' statutory references for laws addressing: including pets in protection orders and divorce settlements; veterinary reporting of suspected family violence; animal abuse also defined as domestic or elder abuse; and enhanced penalties for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child.

"Transdisciplinary collaborations among stakeholders are needed to better protect both animals and humans trapped in violence, and juvenile and family court judges are expertly positioned to assume leadership roles in their community to help effect these coalitions," he concludes.

-- Arkow, P. (2025). *Connecting the dots in military and civilian family courts: Animal abuse's links to other family violence. Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 00, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jfcj.70018>

Link Cited in Enacting Florida's "Dexter's Law"

On May 29, Florida enacted **HB 255** and **SB 494** "**Dexter's Law**" in which, as has been the case in laws enacted in several other states, the Link between animal abuse and human violence was cited in the premise for a need for tougher penalties for animal cruelty offenders.

The new law, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2026, requires the Department of Law Enforcement to post on its website, in a searchable format prescribed by the department, the names of individuals who have been convicted of, or who have entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a violation of Aggravated Animal Cruelty (Section 828.12(2)).

Florida uses a system of points to assist judges in determining sentencing options for offenders. The new law adds a multiplier of 1.25 to sentence points for individuals who knowingly and intentionally tortured or tormented an animal that results in injury, mutilation or death. Animals used for agricultural purposes or permitted as captive wildlife are exempted.

In introducing the bill (*See the [May 2025 LINK-Letter](#)*), State Rep. Linda Chaney (R — Hillsborough/Pinellas) wrote that the law is needed because "Animal cruelty is a public safety concern. 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."

The bill was named in memory of **Rep. Linda Chaney** "Dexter," a shelter dog who had been beheaded in a park in Fort DeSoto.

The potential for animal cruelty to escalate into violence against humans has been the rationale for similar bills in other states. Pennsylvania enacted "Libre's Law" — a sweeping and comprehensive overhaul of the Commonwealth's antiquated anti-cruelty statutes — after Rep. Todd Stephens introduced HB 1238 stating, "It's become abundantly clear that our current animal abuse statute and penalties are inadequate and must be updated. This is especially concerning because of the links between animal abuse and other forms of abuse." At the same time, Texas legislative analysts cited "research [that] has shown that animal cruelty is a precursor to human violence" with "a direct correlation between the two," and an "alarming rate" of violent animal cruelty crimes in enacting SB 762 that increased penalties for the most egregious violent animal cruelty offenses, such as torturing, cruelly killing or causing serious bodily injury to an animal (*See the [July 2017 LINK-Letter](#)*).

ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE... and THE LINK

One Health/One Welfare Comes to New Mexico

Healthy Pets Mean Healthy People -- If Professionals Can Get Out of Their "Silos"

"We know that where we have healthier pets we have healthier people," says forensic veterinarian Jennifer Woolf. "If someone in the household is having a problem with their health, with their finances, or with violence, it can affect everyone in the household including the animals."

That was the advice Woolf offered participants at the [New Mexico Positive Links Conference](#) on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence in explaining the value of inter-professional One Health/One Welfare collaborations to protect the health of people and animals. But in order for those collaborations to succeed, professionals such as veterinarians, law enforcement and prosecutors need to get more training and get out of their "silos".

Woolf explained the difference between One Health, which addresses the connections between people, animals and the environment and how changes to one can affect the health of the other; and One Welfare, which broadens the One



Jennifer Woolf

Health scope by acknowledging other non-health connections between people, animals and the environment -- including The Link.

One Welfare recognizes the implications upon the environment and climate change; with global warming, insects and other species are moving into new territories where they can expose people and animals to new

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Mother-Daughter Team Describe Human-Veterinary Medical Collaborations



Catherine and Sue Skinner

Link programs, by definition, attract multidisciplinary groups serving different populations. There are numerous examples of interprofessional collaborations that work: law enforcement and child welfare, physicians and social workers, and veterinarians and animal shelters, for example. "But how well do those of us who work in human medicine collaborate with those who work in veterinary medicine?"

That was the question posed by the unique mother-and-daughter team of Portland child abuse physician Sue Skinner and San Diego veterinarian Catherine Skinner at the [New Mexico Positive Links Conference](#) on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence. "Despite our differences, we have much in common: we care for all sentient beings, whether people or animals, and have a desire to do the right thing and to work together."

Describing "From Pets to Patients: How Veterinarians and Physicians Can Work Together to Better Identify Abuse," the Skinners noted that in both human and veterinary medicine neglect is the most common form of abuse. Training, screening and reporting systems in

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ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE... and THE LINK

Healthy Pets Mean Healthy People -- If Professionals Can Get Out of Their "Silos"

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diseases, such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever or avian flu spreading from birds to dairy cattle, cats, and people. "Animals can be the canary in the coal mine, if you will, as sentinels for the effects of climate change," she said.

Humans and animals share the same environments she emphasized, so they are both exposed to similar hazards -- which can also include the consequences of domestic violence.

"Animals can be the canary in the coal mine as sentinels for the effects of climate change."

— Jennifer Woolf

She encouraged veterinarians to be proactive and ask clients about possible abuse and be willing to report serious injuries for a full investigation. But she recognized that practitioners have yet to receive widespread training on recognizing animal abuse and frequently have the misconception that they, rather than the legal system, have to determine whether abuse has occurred. "In four years of veterinary school it's entirely possible to come out without ever having heard about animal abuse or veterinary forensics," she said. Veterinarians also need a simpler reporting system and know who to call, especially if it's an agricultural animal or it's after hours and the animal shelter is closed.

When Woolf trains veterinarians she emphasizes that they may not be seeing the entire picture of what's going on with the animal's family. "There can be other abuse cases going on that they don't know about," she said, encouraging veterinarians to work with law enforcement and prosecutors. "Animal cruelty doesn't often take place in a vacuum. We need to end the silos. We need to work together to make sure we are protecting all the victims."

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Mother-Daughter Team Describe Human-Veterinary Medical Collaborations

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both fields vary widely and "in some states it's hard to be a kid," said Sue. Neither field has a national mandate addressing The Link. Both fields cite a lack of follow-up callbacks when they report suspected abuse to the investigative agency as a problematic deterrent to future reporting.

Veterinarians are often conflicted about their state's voluntary or mandated requirements for reporting suspected animal or human abuse, explained Catherine. Even veterinary school training on animal law and ethics rarely prepares students adequately to address the Link or abuse issues they will face in practice. "I've never had any formalized training or communication with law enforcement. Everything I've learned about reporting has been by word-of-mouth. And I have not been trained at all in screening for other types of abuse. 95% of my day is spent talking with people dealing with difficult decisions. It's difficult when your medical and ethical obligations aren't connected."

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PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER COLLABORATION

Sue and Catherine Skinner offered the following recommendations for human and veterinary medical professionals:

- 1. Identify a gap in services in your community and the agency that can help fill it.**
- 2. Make contact, build a relationship, and be better at networking outside your field.**
- 3. Attend and speak at multidisciplinary conferences and trainings.**
- 4. Does the animal cruelty task force include a physician? Does the child abuse MDT include animal law enforcement?**
- 5. Educate elected officials and support legislation at the local and federal levels.**
- 6. Offer to teach in veterinary and medical schools and continuing education training.**

ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE... and THE LINK

Healthy Pets Mean Healthy People -- If Professions Can Get Out of Their "Silos"

(Continued from Page 10)

"Animal cruelty doesn't take place in a vacuum. We need to end the silos. We need to work together to make sure we are protecting all the victims."

— Jennifer Woolf

Law enforcement needs to take animal cruelty cases seriously. "These cases aren't below you," she said. "They're not just an animal control problem." Prosecutors need to realize that animal cruelty cases can involve other charges.

"You may be able to get some people off the streets before they commit other heinous acts."

Social workers need to build rapport with their clients by sharing stories about their own pets and ask about their animals. "If their pets look neglected, what's happening with grandma?" she asked.

Woolf is seeing some signs of fields making connections between their silos. The American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a joint statement on zoonotic diseases, for example. The American Bar Association Resolution 504 ([See the February 2025 LINK-Letter](#)) said that pets need to be considered in domestic violence relation proceedings and protection orders and attorneys can help remove barriers for victims to seek safety with their pets.

"People, animals and the environment all come together," she concluded. "By helping one we can help them all. We can protect people by protecting pets."

Mother-Daughter Team Describe Human-Veterinary Medical Collaborations

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The lack of training, compounded by the fear of client retaliation for reporting and a lack of formalized workplace policies about reporting, creates challenges and disconnects. "Workplace policies are associated with a greater propensity to report," she advised.

So how can these two disciplines better collaborate? Sue encourages physicians to always ask patients about their animals. Asking about current or past pets, their role in the patient's life, where they sleep, where did they go or what happened to them, or if there are concerns about abuse can screen for problems on multiple levels and identify concerning behaviors or issues for the patient. Physicians should establish clear reporting protocols and train their staffs on recognizing and reporting human and animal abuse or cruelty. Building relationships with child welfare and local shelters can be significant. Adult patients should be screened for potential elder abuse or intimate partner violence.

Catherine encourages veterinary clinics to have workplace policies that clarify staff's roles and mandates to

"Workplace policies are associated with a greater propensity to report."
— Catherine Skinner

report suspected animal and human abuse. The clinic should keep a list of phone numbers of child and adult protective services agencies and pet-friendly domestic violence shelters readily available and accessible.

One Health collaborations between human and veterinary medicine can save lives. "Sometimes we see things differently but we share combined strengths," Sue concluded. "Sometimes it's the animal welfare problem that eases the way for human services because people are more willing to accept help for their pets."

CHILD MALTREATMENT... and THE LINK

Link Awareness Prompts a “Deeper Dive” into Child Abuse Cases

When an Oregon animal control officer investigating a neighbor’s complaint about an extremely skinny dog referred a case of a non-communicative, developmentally delayed 14-year-old girl with bruising on her face and a history of severe weight loss to child welfare workers, the case was transferred to the Children’s Advocacy Center. Child abuse physician Sue Skinner was about to investigate it much like the many other cases that come to her attention until she realized that the ACO had also sent a photo of a severely emaciated dog named “Piper”.



Sue Skinner

The photo prompted Skinner, one of only 200 board-certified child abuse pediatricians in the U.S., to take what she called a “deeper dive” into the case. The result changed her practice, Skinner told participants at the [New Mexico Positive Links Conference](#) on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence.

The initial diagnosis for the bruising and nutritional neglect was indeterminate, but the apparent starvation of the dog triggered a red flag for Skinner to more closely examine the home environment for other risk factors. She learned that the girl had been hospitalized for the weight loss, the father was disabled with diabe-

tes, there was no primary care provider, there were other children under age 3, and physical punishment was used. Child welfare services had documented a history of concerns about unsanitary living conditions, the girl’s medical needs not being met, physical abuse and neglect, and instances of drug use and contact with a sex offender, but these were considered unfounded.

Skinner’s deep dive discovered that the girl’s weight and body mass index deterioration had started five years earlier coinciding with the girl’s father beginning a relationship with her stepmother. Meanwhile, another dog had died of starvation.

The parents were eventually charged with child abuse and pled guilty to animal cruelty. The girl was placed in protective custody and lived in two foster homes where she began to thrive and gain weight. The dog was released to the Oregon Humane Society where it began to gain weight and was subsequently given the society’s Diamond Collar Award for because the investigation into Piper’s condition saved the girl’s life. A [YouTube video](#) describes the case and the award.

Skinner said the case shows a clear Link between animal abuse and child neglect, emphasizing that children with disabilities are at higher risk of abuse and neglect and that 50% of children subjected to starvation die. She praised the ACO for “getting out of his silo. He didn’t have all of the answers but he was worried.”



Raising GLOBAL LINK AWARENESS

“Link Deserts” Parallel Other Fields of Human-Animal Interests

In recent months, the National Link Coalition has been focusing on our global outreach and the dramatic growth of research and programs in other countries addressing how animal abuse also harms humans (*See the August 2024 LINK-Letter*). We’re currently reaching out to “Link Deserts” – developing nations where a few lone pioneers are just starting to develop Link awareness, research and programs, or where nothing has yet been done.

This pattern parallels similar trends in a transformative change in human-animal relationships occurring worldwide. Beginning in the early 1990s, several new specialties began to emerge that expanded the paradigms of animal studies to address both the positive and negative aspects of human-animal bonds and trans-species well-being. Today, these new areas of interest are flourishing. They include:

- **The Link**
- **One Health/One Welfare**
- **Veterinary Social Work**
- **Animal-assisted Interventions**
- **Veterinary Forensics**
- **Anthrozoology**

The Link

Over the past 30 years, recognition that animal cruelty also has great potential to impact human welfare has resulted in dramatic legislative, program, policy and academic accomplishments, an increasing number of which are taking place in other countries. For example:

- Pet-friendly domestic violence shelters are now available in Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, Australia, and the Netherlands.
- 28% of the 2,400+ references in our [Link Bibliography](#) originate in foreign countries.
- 27% of recent *LINK-Letter* articles described work in foreign countries.
- Link Coalitions are spreading the word and conducting programs and research in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.



One Health/One Welfare

The One Health movement took off in 2009 with the creation of the [One Health Commission](#), a program linking the commonalities of human and veterinary medicine in addressing human, animal and environmental well-being. A spin-off is the [One Welfare](#) movement which similarly encourages transdisciplinary collaborations that cross traditional boundaries which had separated animal welfare, child protection and domestic violence prevention agencies. For example:

- Codes of conduct in national veterinary associations in the U.S., U.K., Canada, and New Zealand now alert practitioners to respond to suspected animal abuse, domestic violence and child maltreatment.



Veterinary Social Work

While fledgling social work and pet loss counseling programs were developed at veterinary hospitals between 1978-1982, it was the creation of a new discipline called “[Veterinary Social Work](#)” at the University of Tennessee in 2002 that propelled interest in the human side of veterinary medicine and the animal side of social work. Members of the [International Association of Veterinary Social Work](#) today are still largely based in the U.S., but a small and growing number are finding opportunities in Canada, the U.K., Australia, Japan, and Africa.



(Continued on Page 14)



Raising GLOBAL LINK AWARENESS

“Link Deserts” Parallel Other Fields of Human-Animal Interests

(Continued from Page 13)

Animal-assisted Interventions

Animal-assisted therapy and activities began exploring the potential positive effects of human-animal interactions in the 1970s. Initial work led by the Delta Society (now [Pet Partners](#)) prompted burgeoning interest in other countries and the [International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations](#) was formed in 1992. Early work in the U.S. and U.K. quickly spread to Austria, Monaco, Australia, France, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Japan, and beyond. Today IAHAIO has over 90 member organizations across the globe providing a global platform for researchers and practitioners in HAI to network and promote the benefits and best practices of human-animal interactions.



Veterinary Forensics

Faced with the challenges of getting successful investigations and prosecutions of crimes of animal cruelty amid the additional burden of law enforcement and court officials not considering animal crimes a serious offense, a new specialized, transdisciplinary field was called for. Building on decades of expertise in forensic evaluations of crime scenes involving humans, the [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#) today provides a forum for collaboration between veterinary, forensic, animal, law enforcement, and legal professionals to advance crime scene processing in cases involving animals. Growing worldwide interest and training is expanding beyond the U.S. to Brazil, Australia, Italy, Canada, and elsewhere.



Anthrozoology

Underpinning all this is academic research which prior to the 1990s not only had no specialized journals in which the emerging cadre of scholars could publish, but also which existed in a field that lacked a name. “Anthrozoology” was coined in 1990 for this new hybrid discipline of human-animal studies. At least 19 academic journals in the U.S., Australia, Sweden, Italy, Finland, and the Netherlands now publish interdisciplinary research, led by the [International Society for Anthrozoology](#)’s flagship *Anthrozoös*, now in its 38th year. ISAZ (founded in 1990) and foreign counterparts, plus a growing number of interdisciplinary courses in human-animal studies on university campuses around the world, continue to raise awareness.



“Anthrozoological Deserts”

A recent *Anthrozoös* article analyzed 4,023 research papers published over the past four decades. It identified anthrozoological “deserts”: primary authors in the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada and New Zealand represented 71% of all articles. While almost all European countries were represented, only 1.2% came from Africa, 2% from South America, and 2.9% from Asian nations. Fewer than 1% came from the Middle East.

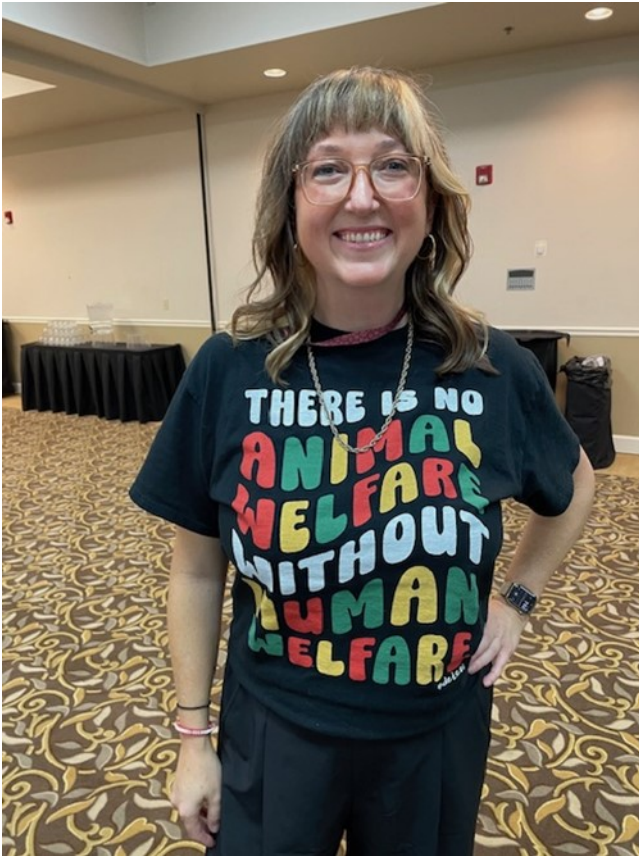
The study reported that companion animal species, charismatic megafauna and anthropocentric relationships remain the common focus of anthrozoological scholarship.

“Increasing diversity amongst anthrozoology/HAS scholars, particularly those from the Global South and historically underrepresented or marginalized groups would help redress the balance and ensure a fuller range of more-than-human encounters receive attention,” the authors concluded, noting that the domination of research by the Global North and English-language publications is pervasive across all fields of academic endeavor.

— Hill, K., Heaney, S.O., Hooper, J., Szydlowski, M., & Aiello, T. (2025). From dogs to frogs: A summative content analysis spanning four decades of scholarly contributions to anthrozoology. *Anthrozoös*, 38(4), 587-613.

Raising GLOBAL LINK AWARENESS

The T-Shirts That Say It All!



Sarah Hock, Director of Joint Animal Services in Thurston County, Wash., was at the Oregon Animal Control Council conference modeling a T-shirt that expresses The Link as good as anything we've seen: "There is No Animal Welfare Without Human Welfare." The T-shirts are available from detezi.com, which explains the need for the design which is also featured on other articles of clothing: "Human issues like housing instability and inequitable access to resources have a huge impact on animal welfare. Until all people in our communities are taken care of, pets in our communities will continue to struggle, too."



Tammy Fiebelkorn, who founded the New Mexico Positive Links Coalition was wearing a T-shirt at the 2025 Positive Links conference that the group has used at the last few conferences on The Link. "Mean People Suck" gets the message across pretty effectively!

Link Cited in Need for Anti-Cruelty Training in India



The India chapter of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals conducted its first-ever educational and capacity-building workshop in Mumbai to empower participants to take action to protect both animals and humans against violence. Attendees were encouraged to collaborate with law enforcement authorities. PETA India cited Link literature that those who engage in animal cruelty were more likely to commit other crimes, including murder, rape, robbery, assault, harassment, threats, and substance abuse.



VETERINARY MEDICINE ... and THE LINK

Link Cited in Brazilian Cockfighting Forensics Study

While the practice of cockfighting has existed since Paleolithic times and ancient Greece, and was fully disseminated in Brazil through colonization, recent studies of combat between animals as a form of human entertainment are focusing on the forensic evaluation of fighting birds and the potential of crimes involving animal fighting to be Linked with domestic violence and child abuse.

These are the findings of a new Brazilian case study that performed forensic veterinary medical examinations on 50 roosters apprehended during a cockfighting practice in Itapetininga, Sao Paulo. The results were used as evidence to prove animal mistreatment and abuse occurring in cockfighting practice, which is considered a crime in Brazil due to animal mistreatment. The study also cited One Health issues in which constant stress, poor handling conditions and lack of medical veterinary assistance may cause diseases in the birds which can then be transmitted to human participants and poultry exposed to these birds during transit.

The authors noted that while cockfighting is frequently taken as part of a cultural activity, it is illegal under Brazilian law. Consequently, they urged veterinarians to be prepared to identify cases of animal mistreatment and to develop and standardize veterinary forensic protocols involving roosters.



-- Sousa, M.D., Steidler, D.J., Machado, J.N., Maiorka, P., & Tremori, T.M. (2025). Case report: Medical veterinary expertise on a case of cockfighting in Brazil. *Forensic Science International: Reports*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsir.2025.100426>



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

Permission to Reprint

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

For Additional Information

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

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.

The LINK in THE LITERATURE

Call for Papers to Explore Human-Companion Animal Well-Being

A call for papers has been issued for a special One Health/One Welfare issue on the intersection of companion animal and human welfare. The CABI journal, guest-edited by Shelly Volsche and Sky Sobol at Boise State University, aims to include articles on both the positive mental and physiological



Shelly Volsche

The deadline for submission is Dec. 31. Detailed information and instructions are [available online](#).

“There is a need for research to better understand the inextricably tied well-being of companion animals and the humans who care for, live with, and protect them,” the editors emphasize. Although The Link between animal abuse and human violence is not specifically noted among potential challenges to trans-species well-being, it could be included among “both sides of this deeply impactful bond” suggested for inclusion:

health aspects of human-animal interactions as well as the challenges to the well-being of both humans and companion animals. The issue welcomes original research articles (qualitative and quantitative), review papers, case studies, rapid communications, and commentaries.

Topics to be considered:

- Impacts of companion animal behavior concerns on guardian wellbeing and the overall bond.
 - Outcomes of animal relinquishment on guardian wellbeing.
 - Social impacts and relationship constraints of childfree pet parenting.
 - Welfare considerations for housing insecurity on bonded humans and animals.
 - Costs and benefits of the Adopters Welcome model in animal sheltering.
 - Long-term costs of behavioral euthanasia on animal shelter and veterinary professionals.
 - Bereavement and loss from both or either side of the relationship.
 - Bidirectional impacts of anxiety and stress between pets and owners.
 - The effects of owner mental health conditions on companion animal welfare and behavior.
 - Cross-species emotional contagion: How human and animal emotional states influence each other.
 - The psychological impacts of relinquishment.
 - “Pet parenting”: Implications for animal welfare and human attachment.
 - Cross-cultural perspectives on human-animal relationships.
 - Interspecies communication and implications for mutual wellbeing.
- Technological innovations in monitoring and supporting mutual mental health in human-animal relationships.

Link Featured in Domestic Violence Encyclopedia

One of 362 entries in the recently published *Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence* details the impact of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect on children in homes marked by domestic violence. Kathryn R. Wilson, from the Oklahoma City University School of Law, and Alicia McLean, a psychology professor at the University of Central



Alicia McLean

Oklahoma, describe how in the context of intimate partner violence and/or child abuse, pet violence often functions as a tactic of coercive control and intimidation, contributing to the emotional trauma experienced by both direct victims and child

witnesses. This violence is rarely isolated and is part of a broader pattern of coercive control, they write.

-- Wilson, K.R., & McLean, A. (2025). Child/children exposure to violence against pets. In: T.K. Shackelford (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85493-5_228-1

LAW ENFORCEMENT... and THE LINK

Ft. Wayne Animal Control Posts Cruelty Cases to Help Stop Link Crimes

In an effort to get more people to report animal cruelty because of its potential Link to crimes against people, and to get the general public and government officials to more widely recognize animal control agencies as criminal investigators, Animal Care & Control in Fort Wayne, Ind. has taken the step of publicizing on its website recent cases that have been [charged and/or sentenced](#).

"We're hoping with us publicly sharing the cases online, we'll be able to intervene before things escalate and be the voice for the animals," says Amy-Jo Sites, Director of Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control.

Sites, who also serves as President of the [Indiana Coalition of Animal Welfare Professionals](#), notes that the effort to make the public more aware and to unite social services agencies in a coordinated effort to address animal abuse and other family violence received its impetus back in 2015 when Phil Arkow from the National Link Coalition conducted several trainings for the department.

"When there is animal abuse happening in a home, it's typically an indicator of other abuses happening."

"Intervention as early as possible is an important step to protecting both animals and people."

— Amy-Jo Sites

CRIMINAL CASES

report tips to:
427-1244
436-STOP



"We continue to work closely with various agencies on our cases but have always struggled with how to 'share' this publicly. Animal Control agencies in general, aren't typically seen as an investigative agency," she adds, echoing a situation widespread in the field.

The website tells the public why they should report animal abuse: "There is a known link between animal abuse and other forms of abuse like elder abuse, domestic abuse, and child abuse. When there is animal abuse happening in a home, it's typically an indicator of other abuses happening. Intervention as early as possible is an important step to protecting both animals and people."

The website also provides the service of providing the public with the phone numbers to call to file a report, both during and after regular business hours.

The site also features a tab of [Cold Cases](#) in which the public is asked to help solve unresolved crimes.

The department also plans to share on its social media pages one case each month and then direct the public to the website to see more cases.

"We know it's important to inform the public what they should be looking for and to contact us if they see something that isn't right," Sites adds.

Because relatively few animal care and control agencies publicize on their websites what number to call to report animal abuse, the National Link Coalition has published the [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#) with phone numbers covering over 6,500 cities and counties. The Directory also features numbers to call to report suspected child, domestic and elder abuse.

LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

Most state legislatures have adjourned or recently returned from summer recess. We're still following 137 bills that were introduced this session in state legislatures and Congress. 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.

H.R. 3683, the FBI Animal Cruelty Taskforce Act, would establish an animal cruelty crimes taskforce within the FBI to investigate and enforce federal laws, including cases of dogfighting, cockfighting, and crush videos.

H.R. 3946, the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act would make it illegal to engage a minor under age 16 in animal fighting ventures, including cockfighting.

H.R. 4921, the Providing for Unhoused People and Pets (PUPP) Act, would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to modify and upgrade structures to serve as interim and permanent housing to accommodate unhoused individuals with pets

ALASKA

HB 101 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed judges to consider a history of animal cruelty as an aggravating factor in imposing a sentence outside the sentencing guidelines for domestic violence 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

SUCCESS!!! CS/HB 255, and CS/SB 494 "Dexter's Law", were enacted on May 29. They provide 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." It takes effect Jan. 1, 2026.

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.

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 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.

LOUISIANA

SUCCESS!!! **S.B. 21** expands the definitions of “healthcare professional” and “healthcare facility” to include veterinarians, veterinary staff, and veterinary clinics for the purpose of including them in existing law penalizing assault and battery of human health care personnel and unlawful disruption of the operation of a human health care facility.

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.

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

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.

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.

HB 4993 would require landlords to release tenants from their rental agreement obligation upon presenting evidence of a reasonable apprehension of present danger to the tenant or the tenant's child from domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. Acceptable documentation could include a protection order; Michigan has allowed pets to be included in protection orders since 2016.

SB 111 (Sub. S-1) 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** would create 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. The bills will carry over to the 2026 session.

MISSOURI

HB 1298, HB 1513, SB 65 and **SB 655 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have added 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

SUCCESS!!! HB 62 was signed into law. It expands 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.

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

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.

A 3836 and **S 3362** would establish a \$1,000,000 Domestic Violence Shelter Pet Grant Program to provide funds to house pets in shelters with their owners. Qualifying shelters could apply for up to \$50,000 in grants.

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 have granted to any party the exclusive or shared possession and control of any 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.”

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 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.

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 to 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.

NORTH CAROLINA

S 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.

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

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

OHIO

HB 417 would require 2 hours of peace officers’ required 24-hour annual continuing education to be dedicated to education about laws governing animal welfare and cruelty.

OREGON

SB 626 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have expanded 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.

HB 1611 would amend the Older Adults Protective Services Act to prohibit adult care homes, assisted living, home health care agencies, long-term nursing care, older adult daily living centers, and hospitals from employing someone within 20 years of having been convicted of sexual abuse of animals or children, among other crimes.

HB 1859 would allow courts to issue Extreme Risk Protection Orders, prohibiting persons with histories of domestic abuse or cruelty to animals from possessing firearms due to a substantial risk of suicide or causing the death of or serious bodily injury to another person.

SB 823 would allow state grants to law enforcement agencies to be used to investigate and enforce animal fighting.

RHODE ISLAND

H 5125 died in committee. It would have amended 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 died in committee. It would have added animal cruelty offenses of “unnecessary cruelty,” malicious injury, killing, and abandonment to the definition of domestic violence crimes.

SOUTH CAROLINA

H 3143 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed individuals convicted of felony animal cruelty to apply for a limited pardon that would enable them to possess a firearm for hunting purposes because animal cruelty is not considered a “crime of violence.”

H 3641 and H 4123 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have expanded the definition of child sexual abuse and obscenity to include exposing children to acts of bestiality created by computer generated images.

SUCCESS!!! S 28 was signed into law. It creates a sex offender registry in which “buggery” (South Carolina’s archaic term for bestiality) is defined as a Tier 1 offense.

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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have designated animal control officers as “first responders” whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency.

HB 4563 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed children or persons with a disability to be accompanied by a therapy or facility dog in various criminal proceedings.

SB 1658 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed 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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have required 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 animal cruelty offenders to participate in animal cruelty prevention or education programs, or psychological counseling for treatment of mental health disorders that the contributed to the commission of the crime.

SB 24 failed to pass. It would have included threatening an animal or forcing or coercing a child to injure an animal to the definition of child abuse.

VERMONT

H.492 died when the General Assembly adjourned. It introduced the concept of “coercive control” within the animal cruelty context. It proposed 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-225 would extend the Uttering Threats offense of the Criminal Code from five to 10 years for intimate partner violence offenders who threaten to kill, injure or poison an animal or bird that is the property of that person. The new bill would recognize that animals are also at risk of harm in relationships where there is intimate partner violence.

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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

Sept. 30—Oct. 30 — Alexandria, Va. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Preventing Domestic Violence: Animal Abuse’s LINK with Family Violence — and the Use of Pet Protection Orders” as part of the National Organization for Victim Advocacy’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

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

Oct. 15 — Sacramento, Calif. (online): RedRover and staff from Safe Voices, a pet-inclusive domestic violence resource center based in Maine, will hold a [virtual presentation](#), “Open Concept: How Pet Friendly Sheltering Expands Beyond Your Walls.”

Oct. 15 -- Cincinnati, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on “The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement.”

Oct. 19 — Greensboro, N. Car.: Phil Arkow will present on “Another One Health Role for Veterinarians: Response to Animal cruelty and Other Family Violence” for the [North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association](#).

Oct. 19 — United Kingdom (online): Rebecca Stephens will present on “Veterinary Social Work: A New Approach to Honoring the Human-Animal Bond” as part of the [2025 Society for Companion Animal Studies Virtual Conference](#).

Oct. 21 — Kansas City, Mo. (online): Andria Gibbon of Protecting Paws for Life will present “Healing Together: Understanding and Supporting Pets Impacted by Domestic Violence,” in a [webinar](#) for BestyBnB.

Oct. 22 — Reston, Va. (online): The Office of Victims of Crimes’ Training and Technical Assistance Center will present a [webinar](#), “Vital Subjects: The Intersections of Animal Abuse, Interpersonal Violence, and Child Abuse,” led by Maggie Harris and Marlene Richter from Noah’s Animal House in Las Vegas.

Oct. 22 (online): The American Bar Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association will host a [webinar](#), “Protecting People and Pets from Domestic Violence,” in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

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 Protecting Innovence Symposium at the [University of Illinois—Rockford](#) College of Medicine.

Oct. 24 — Sacramento, Calif. (online): RedRover will conduct a [virtual presentation](#), “From Classroom to Community: How Students Can Support Pets and People in Crisis,” where students will explore the interconnections between domestic violence, pets, and healthcare, with a focus on social work and veterinary medicine.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Oct. 29 — Kansas City, Mo.: Claire Coughlin will present “Protecting People and Pets: Animals and Interpersonal Violence” at the [2025 National Conference on Domestic Violence](#).

Oct. 29 — Sacramento, Calif. (online): Survivor and advocate Candice Amundson will share her experience of facing the impossible choice between safety and staying with her dog in a [virtual presentation](#) for RedRover, “Breaking the Silence: The Survivor’s Story that Sparked Linus’ Pet Haven.”

Oct. 30 — New York City, N.Y. (hybrid): Kathleen Wood and Nicoletta Caferri will be among the speakers on a [webinar](#), “The Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: Why It Matters” presented by the New York State Unified Court System’s Permanent Commission on Women in the Courts.

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. 6 — Salt Lake City, Utah: Phil Arkow will present “Closing the ‘ACES Gap’ Between Moms, Kids & Critters: Animal Abuse as a Marker for Other Family Violence” at the Academy on Violence and Abuse’s [Global Health Summit](#).

Nov. 10 -- Abilene, Texas: Daniel Ettinger will present “Exploring Domestic Violence and Bites” at the Texas Animal Control Association’s [2025 Annual Conference](#).

Nov. 11 — Glastonbury, Conn. (online): Phil Arkow will present a webinar on “Kids, Critters and Vulnerable Women: Connecting the Dots Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence” 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. 14 -- Twinsburg, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on “The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement.”

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.

Nov. 25-26 — Ottawa, Ont., Canada: Sue O’Neill of Humane Canada’s ACT program will be among the speakers addressing Link issues at the inaugural [One Health, One Welfare Conference](#) hosted by Humane Canada and World Animal Protection.

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

Dec. 5 — Hartford, Conn.: Phil Arkow and Diane Rosell will present on “The Link Between Animal Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence” at the [University of Connecticut Law School](#).

Dec. 12 — Raleigh, N. C. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Practical Guidance for the Effective Response by Veterinarians to Suspected Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect” to the [North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

Dec. 21 — Tokyo, Japan (online): The Animal Literacy Research Institute will conduct a [webinar](#), “The Impact of Witnessing Animal Abuse: The Possible Risks of Being Exposed to Animal Abuse.”

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Jan. 14-15, 2026 — Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): Forensic veterinarian Margaret Doyle, police investigator Sgt. Dennis Smithson, and criminologist Amy Fitzgerald will be among the speakers at the National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty's [Student Symposium](#) on the Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Jan. 21, 2026 -- Springfield, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on "The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement."

Feb. 4, 2026 — Warren, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on "The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement."

March 4, 2026 -- Lorain County, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on "The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement."

March 19, 2026 — Albuquerque, N. Mex. (online): Phil Arkow will present on The Link and domestic violence in a webinar for [Animal Protection New Mexico](#).

March 25, 2026 -- Nelsonville, Ohio: Ohio Advocates for Animals, the Animal Welfare Institute, the Ohio Police Officer Training Academy, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network will present a [workshop](#) on "The Link Between Animal and Human Violence: Fundamentals for Law Enforcement."

March 25, 2026 — Alexandria, Va. (online): Phil Arkow will present "Connecting the Dots in Preventing Domestic Violence: Animal Abuse's LINK with Family Violence in Military and Civilian Families" in a [webinar](#) for the National Organization for Victim Advocacy's DoD Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate Training Program.

March 26, 2026 — Colorado Springs, Colo.; (online): Phil Arkow will present "Learn What the Monster Likes... and Feed It! Bridging the Animal Rights/Welfare/Control Gap by Focusing on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence" in a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar.

May 18-19, 2026 — Washington, D.C.: The National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges will conduct the 3rd [Judicial Institute](#) on the Human Animal Bond and the Link between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence: Issues in Family Law Cases at the George Washington University Law School.

June 8-9, 2026 — Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at a [conference](#) of central Texas Children's Advocacy Centers.

Sept. 1, 2026 — Colorado Springs, Colo. (online): Phil Arkow will present "Closing the 'PAWS Gap' in Victim Advocacy through Pet-Inclusive Services" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).



HELP US KEEP THE LINK FREE!

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

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

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

THE LINK... in the NEWS

Alleged Cat Torturer Also Charged with Lewd Conduct



An Atlantic City, N.J. man who allegedly beat and killed multiple cats he lured to his home with food and threatened his teenage neighbor with a knife before exposing his genitals while making lewd comments was being held in jail until his trial. The [Press of Atlantic City](#) said Edwin Sanabia, 26, was charged with 13 counts of animal cruelty, aggravated assault, lewdness, and weapons offenses. An Atlantic City police officer who is also a humane law enforcement officer received reports that Sanabia was torturing stray cats in his neighborhood, according to authorities. Investigators said Sanabia threw the cats into a dumpster once he was done abusing them.

Pharmacist Convicted of Illegally Euthanizing His Unwanted Dog



A Maryland pharmacist who did not like his dog and was unsuccessful in paying others to take the dog off his hands pled guilty to aggravated animal cruelty and obtaining a prescription by fraud in order to kill the dog. The [Harford County State's Attorney's Office](#) said Ryan Kenneth Ball, 38, of Bel Air, had killed "Louie," a six-year-old Plott hound, with an injection of succinylcholine and rocuronium, neuromuscular blocking agents which can cause respiratory arrest. Ball tried to have Louie cremated, but animal control was able to intervene first and had the dog's body sent to veterinary forensics laboratories at Penn State and Michigan State universities. Ball was sentenced to five years in jail, with four years suspended, and prohibited from possessing any animals while on probation. Vall was also referred to the Board of Pharmacy for a review of his license.

"Medical professionals in this county are placed in a position of extreme trust," said State's Attorney Alison M. Healey. "Utilizing your license and position in a local hospital to illegally obtain medications and improperly administer them to kill your family dog is a gross violation of the trust placed in this defendant in his position as a medical professional. Holding the defendant accountable in this case is important in deterring him and others from future misuse of medications available in the capacity of their employment."

Colo. Animal Cruelty Offender Charged in Arizona Homicide

Police in Scottsdale, Ariz. arrested an accused murderer who has a criminal history of dismembering dogs in Colorado. Police accused Matthew Dieringer, 35, of beating Frank Quaranta, 67, to death in his home in a targeted attack. Maricopa County prosecutors called the incident "a very violent and horrific murder" and called Dieringer "an extremely dangerous individual" on probation at the time who had prior felony convictions including animal cruelty.



According to [Denver7](#), Dieringer was arrested in Centennial, Colo., in 2020 for killing two of his roommate's dogs, dismembering one of them. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison in 2023.

At the time of the homicide, Dieringer was on probation in Arizona after pleading guilty to theft and assault for stealing a man's sunglasses in 2024. That same day, he allegedly asked a woman walking her dog in Phoenix if he could pet her dog. "Dieringer then bent down and rather than petting the 14-year-old dog, picked it up and then forcefully threw the dog to the ground," the probable cause statement noted. Shortly afterwards, he allegedly kicked another woman's dog, "causing the dog to fly out of its leash and into the roadway."

Man With Violent Past Accused of Killing Two Dogs

Justin Leverette, 31, of Albuquerque, N.M., whose criminal history dates back at least a decade, was arrested on charges that he killed two dogs after getting into an argument with his girlfriend's two brothers over how he treats her.

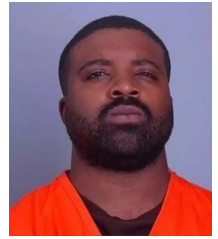


[KRQE-TV](#) reported that police said Leverette was in his car when he shot "Cinderella," a dog belonging to one of the brothers, and took off, running over his own dog in the process. He then fired eight shots at neighbors. No people were injured but both dogs died.

Leverette was charged with extreme animal cruelty, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. He was convicted in 2021 for shooting at someone from his car and spent five years of prison and two years on parole, which he violated last year. He has been accused of multiple violent and firearms offenses dating back 10 years.

Minnesotan Indicted on 16 Counts of Animal Crushing

The U.S. Attorney's Office in St. Paul, Minn. has indicted a 32-year-old Carver, Minn. man on 16 counts of animal crushing for allegedly creating hundreds of videos depicting animals being tortured. [KFGO-TV](#) reported that authorities said Bryan Edison allegedly posted nearly 350 animal crush videos on his YouTube channels in violation of the federal PACT Act (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) which was enacted under the premise that people who intentionally torture and kill animals pose a unique danger to others and to society as a whole. FBI investigators said Edison crushed and killed birds, hamsters, mice, guinea pigs, rabbits, lizards, dogs, and turtles in a variety of gruesome ways. YouTube has removed Carver's two channels for multiple and severe violations of YouTube's policy on violence.



Bryan Edison

Man Gets 11 Years for Killing Fiancée's Puppy

A Georgia man who brutally and deliberately killed his fiancée's puppy in an incident that he knew would be captured on her residential surveillance camera was sentenced to 11 years in prison in a case that drew statewide attention to The Link. [WSB-TV](#) reported that Joshua Allen, of Sandy Springs, was found guilty of killing "Pretty" and then tried to clean the scene with bleach. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Jane Barwick handed down the sentence. The crime was discovered when Allen's fiancée witnessed the attack on her cellphone. The case was called a pivotal moment for animal abuse laws in Georgia.

Canadian Gets 14 Years for Manslaughter and Killing Police K-9

A shooting incident in Toronto killed both a police K-9 dog and the boyfriend who had been threatening the shooter's daughter has resulted in a 14-year prison sentence for Kenneth Grant, 44, of Toronto. Grant, who ran from an attempted arrest, fired a handgun in the officer's direction and later shot and killed "Bingo," a police German shepherd involved in the search to find Grant, who himself was shot twice with serious injuries. Grant pled guilty to manslaughter, killing a service animal, and firearms offenses. Justice Maureen Forestall described Grant's conduct as "a cowardly, callous act towards an innocent animal" and an attack on the rule of law. Toronto police organized a motorized procession to mourn the death of Bingo, who had recently joined the police force and who was the first service dog that police lost in the line of duty, [Global News](#) reported.



"Bingo"

Fugitive from Cruelty and Narcotics Charges Extradited Back to U.S.

A woman whose 73 pounds of marijuana and 124 abandoned farm animals were seized in what the Bucks County, Pa., called the largest animal cruelty investigation in recent history ([See the September 2024 LINK-Letter](#)) was extradited back to the U.S., from Belize by the U.S. Marshals' Eastern Pennsylvania Violent Crimes Fugitive

Task Force. Abigail Tuttle O'Keeffe had been charged in January with more than 100 counts of animal cruelty and then in April 25 was arrested for possession of a firearm in Benque Viejo, Belize. The U.S. Marshals' Office turned her over to the Newtown Township Police Department.

Teacher Charged with Child and Animal Porn

An elementary school teacher in the Manatee County, Fla. School District was arrested and charged with possession of child pornography and images of sexual activity with an animal. The school district told [WTSP-TV](#) that Daniel Munive Viruet, 41, of Wimauma, a resource teacher at Manatee Elementary School, was taken into custody by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. He was being held without bond, placed on administrative leave, and barred from being on the school's campus. The district said there was no indication that any students were involved.



Police Officer Pleads Guilty to Child and Animal Porn

Christopher J. Cordes, 30, of Nazareth, Pa., pled guilty in U.S. District Court to five sex crime charges, including possession and production of child pornography and creation of animal crush videos. Cordes was a police patrolman in Tamaqua, Pa. when he was indicted by a federal grand jury, the [Pottsville Republican-Herald](#) reported. Tamaqua officials said that Cortes, who was subsequently terminated from the department, did not commit any illegal activity while on duty as a police officer. Sentencing was scheduled for a future date.

Carjacker Pleads Guilty; Animal Cruelty Charges Pending

A man who let a cat fly around the back of his car while he led police on a chase through several cities in Ohio before striking a police cruiser, ditching the vehicle and carjacking a woman was sentenced to 11-to-16.5 years in prison. [Cleveland19](#) reported that Jacob D. Montgomery, 32, of Ashtabula pled guilty to motor vehicle grand theft, aggravated robbery, possession of cocaine and other charges although animal cruelty charges were still pending. After police were unsuccessful in stopping his car with tire-deflating sticks, Montgomery forced a woman out of her car with a tire iron before losing control and crashing that car into an embankment and a gas pump. He attempted to carjack another vehicle before being apprehended.

Child's Gunshot Wound Leads to Animal Cruelty Charges

Police in Warren, Ohio investigating a child arriving at a hospital with a gunshot wound to his finger reportedly found five neglected dogs and 20 Xanax pills. Nirell Devon Frank, 23, was charged with felony child endangerment, five misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty, and possession of drugs. The [Warren Tribune Chronicle](#) reported that Frank is barred from contacting any children or animals while the case is adjudicated.



You Can Help Us Create Safer Communities!

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

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