



*A monthly report of news from
The Global Resource Center on The Link Between
Animal Abuse and Human Violence*

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grant helps Illinois "Link
Desert" bloom (Page 6)**



**Veterinarians urged to
create forensics toolkits
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Special Announcement: Position Available

As the scale and scope of the National Link Coalition's work has expanded, we are excited to announce the creation of a new leadership position of an Assistant Director. The position is being funded and implemented as part of our succession plan to ensure continuous coverage of the executive duties critical to our growing operations and sustainability and to ensure continuity in external relationships and organizational effectiveness.

The Assistant Director will support the Executive Director in the production of the LINK-Letter, presentations at conferences and webinars, and organizational operations. S/he will be expected to be available to step in should the Executive Director no longer be able to fulfill his duties. The position is intended to grow into the chief executive position at an indeterminate point in the future upon gaining adequate experience and knowledge, proving qualified and being willing to accept the Executive Directorship.

The position is part-time, working approximately 40 hours per month as an independent contractor, with an annual compensation of \$30,000 plus travel expenses. The Assistant Director will work remotely with occasional travel as necessary for training and speaking engagements.

The ideal candidate is someone looking to work hands-on to make a tangible impact and take ownership of the National Link Coalition's direction over time.

The position will remain open until it is filled. Interested candidates should submit a resume or CV to Phil Arkow, Executive Director, at arkowpets@snip.net.

Please see Pages 2-4 for a full job description.

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



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Assistant Director Position Available

Title: Assistant Director

Name of Organization: The National Link Coalition

Location: Remote

Job Details

Job Type: Part time; Independent Contractor; Remote

Average number of hours per week: Approximately 10, up to approximately 40 hours per month

Compensation: \$30,000 per year plus travel expenses

This position is intended to grow into the senior leadership position at an indeterminate point in the future should the successful candidate gain adequate experience and knowledge, prove qualified and be willing to accept the senior position.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The position will remain open until it is filled. Interested candidates should submit a resume or CV to Phil Arkow, Executive Director, at arkowpets@snip.net.

Required Skills:

- Experience in nonprofit leadership, organizational management and operations.
- Experience in nonprofit fundraising, development and grant writing to nurture existing funding sources and cultivate new ones from philanthropic, corporate, organizational, and individual relationships.
- Confident and effective public speaking and communication skills, particularly in reaching out to multiple disciplines and organizations.
- Extensive connections with individuals and organizations and the ability to maintain and grow existing relationships with current and new partners.
- Technological expertise in social media outreach, podcasts, blogs, website development, and use of new technologies.
- Strong familiarity with multiple aspects of The Link.
- Willingness to work part-time for an indefinite period of time in a supportive role before moving into what is expected to be a senior leadership position pending adequate experience, knowledge and qualifications.

Preferred skills:

- Conducting interactive training presentations in-person and virtually to multi-disciplinary audiences.
- Creative problem-solving skills.
- Strategic and analytical thinking that focuses on the larger picture.
- Time and budget management, with the ability to manage concurrent high-priority projects.
- Copywriting, editorial and marketing skills.
- Familiarity with legislative processes and collaborating with organizations in support of appropriate legislation.

Basic Requirements:

- Applicant must have access to reliable internet service, a computer with internet access, and familiarity with operating Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook), editorial design software, and a smartphone with reliable cell services.
- Applicant must be able to work remotely and independently, under the supervision of the Executive Director and, ultimately, the Board of Directors.
- Applicant must be able to travel periodically as required, and to make his or her own travel arrangements for subsequent reimbursement of expenses.

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Assistant Director Position Available

Preferred Values:

- **Visioning:** Ability to visualize the Coalition's future status and growth (structure, culture, leadership, target audiences, etc.) for long-term success.
- **Leading and managing change:** Challenge the status quo as appropriate, research organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, and lead necessary changes.
- **Passion for the mission:** Identifies with the Link mission and inspires others about it.
- **Credibility:** Demonstrates honesty, sincerity, humility and respect for others while modeling organizational values and inspiring trust from others.
- **Achieves results:** Sustains and improves organizational practices, priorities and performance. Makes financially-sound decisions. Optimizes resources. Initiates efficient and effective work practices.
- **Intelligence and judgment:** Makes informed decisions and successfully addresses complex organizational challenges through careful analysis, synthesis and integration of information. Identifies collaborating partners who can provide insights and information as needed.
- **Strategic thinking:** Provides focus for both short- and long-term direction of the Coalition.
- **Inspirational leadership:** Develops commitment in others by setting a personal and enthusiastic example and understanding what motivates others.
- **Stakeholder focus:** Responds to the needs and expectations of others with interest in The Link and the Coalition.
- **Financial development:** Cultivates, provides direction and assists the Executive Director with contacting foundations and donors. Ensures that generally accepted accounting principles and budgeting processes are adhered to.
- **Professional development:** Develops strong multi-disciplinary professional loyalties to the mission and values of the Coalition to leverage good will and ongoing collaborations and partnerships.
- **Talent management:** Works with the Board and the Professional Advisory Committee to attract and develop a diverse talent pool of advisors and volunteers needed to grow the Coalition.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Builds exceptional rapport and effective relationships with individuals and organizations who can advance The Link.

Job Duties

The Assistant Director will assist the Executive Director, who functions as the Coalition's chief executive, in a variety of responsibilities including, but not limited to:

Organizational Management and Administration

- Assist in conducting Board and Advisory Committee meetings.
- Write and distribute minutes of Board & Advisory Committee meetings.
- Submit monthly work and expenses reports.
- Assist in establishing and maintaining relationships with collaborating organizations.

Fund Development

- Help identify, cultivate and solicit potential additional sources of funding through personal/professional relationships and grant writing.

Information Technology

- Expand presence in all relevant social media.
- Explore feasibility of cloud-based resources and use of new technologies.

Publications

- Shadow the Executive Director to learn how the LINK-Letter is produced.
- Assist in generating news content for The LINK-Letter, such as:
 - Conducting state-by-state reviews of all pending bills to identify Link-related issues.
- Sign up for organizational newsletters and RSS feeds to obtain news media, legislative, and academic journal information for publication in The LINK-Letter.
- Encourage new subscribers.
- Assist in writing special reports addressing Link topics.

(Continued on Page 4)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Assistant Director Position Available

Professional Trainings

- Identify additional opportunities to present Link programs, both in-person and virtually.
- Shadow the Executive Director to observe Link presentations.
- Present and co-present Link trainings.
- Design Link PowerPoints and other training programs with emphasis on interactivity suitable for adult audiences.

Legislation

- Submit letters and briefs on behalf of the Coalition in support of relevant bills.

Research

- Scan and summarize research resources for articles of interest.
- Identify opportunities for funding that supports Link research.
- Conduct Link research and publish in academic journals.

Other duties as assigned

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The National Link Coalition, created under the auspices of the American Humane Association in 2008 and later supported by the ASPCA, was incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit in 2023. Our mission is to build greater legislative, academic, professional, and public awareness that acts of individual animal cruelty, abuse and neglect are not occasional aberrations but rather are frequently Linked to acts of domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse. We build on more than 40 years' worth of research and programs that demonstrate how these four forms of family and community violence are interconnected in what is now widely recognized as "The Link." Our emphasis is that agencies in these fields that cross-report and cross-train each other offer more effective prevention of, and response to, all forms of family and community violence. A multidisciplinary approach that addresses underlying and common causes of community and family dysfunction and violence has great potential for more effective strategies than do singular, isolated responses.

We have rapidly grown to become the most reliable and comprehensive Global Resource Center on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence. Our motto is elegantly simple: When animals are abused, people are at risk; when people are abused, animals are at risk.

Led by a Board of Directors and an Executive Director augmented by a robust Professional Advisory Committee comprised of nationally renowned experts in the prevention of all forms of family violence, the National Link Coalition actively addresses the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and professional and community awareness.

Our flagship publication, the free monthly LINK-Letter, is distributed via email to over 5,600 international multidisciplinary professionals and interested members of the public, bringing news in this dynamic and rapidly evolving field to the attention of animal care and control officials, domestic violence and victim services advocates, child and adult protective services, veterinarians, law enforcement, social workers, prosecutors, judges, academicians, human healthcare, and other interested parties.

Our [website](#) includes free downloadable resources, including the only National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies with telephone numbers for over 6,500 city and county agencies, and our Bibliography with over 2,500 academic journal and organizational publication references.

Our members conduct over 120 virtual and in-person trainings each year reaching thousands of multidisciplinary audiences nationwide and around the world.

We monitor and report on, and occasionally write in support of, over 200 proposals introduced each year in state legislatures and Congress that specifically address Link concerns.

We collaborate with numerous partner organizations on dynamic initiatives and informational publications that address emerging issues and opportunities.

The Assistant Director role is intended to grow into the senior position at an indeterminate point in the future as the successful candidate gains more experience and knowledge. The ideal candidate is someone looking for a position where they can work hands-on to make a tangible impact and take ownership of the Coalition's direction over time.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

Canadian Protecting Victims Act Expands Provisions for Animals and People

Canada's landmark passage of the Protecting Victims Act C-16 ([See the July 2026 LINK-Letter](#)) added many new provisions defining abusers' targeting of victims' animals as coercive control, similar to provisions enacted in a number of U.S. states. Our colleagues at Humane Canada's [Violence Link Coalition](#) have written a detailed explanation of the new law and how it will affect animal and human victims of domestic abuse and child sexual abuse exploitation.

The new law updated Canada's Criminal Code provisions for criminal harassment (s 264) and exploitation (s 279.04) offenses. They now include threats of harm and actual harm to animals known to the person the offender is targeting. The Coalition emphasized that the animals "known to" distinction is significant because it includes not only the victim's own animals, but also those of friends and family members that could also be targeted by perpetrators of abuse.

These offenses will also be updated to include monitoring the location and movements of the individual being targeted, which can be done through tracking devices.

The new Coercive Control offense specifically includes using, attempting to use, or threatening to use violence against and controlling or attempting to control the manner in which an intimate partner cares for any animal known to the intimate partner. This provision will not come into force until June 18, 2028, in order to allow adequate time for training criminal justice

"Having offenses against animals reflected alongside children of victims and the victims themselves acknowledges that they are also capable of being victims, unlike a sofa or table"

-- Violence Link Coalition

personnel so that they can recognize and respond to coercive and controlling behavior. That training must also include recognizing when a perpetrator of abuse is trying to manipulate principles of this new offense to frame their victims as abusers, which is an area of concern for many anti-violence advocates who work with survivors, the Coalition noted.

"Not only are these amendments significant in their potential to provide more support under the law than ever to victims of relationship violence, but they also recognize that this type of violence is not limited to single incidents but is part of a pattern of behaviors that abusers exhibit to dominate and control their targets, includ-

ing harming animals," the Coalition continued. "It also represents the societal shift toward animals being more than just property, as offenses against them fall under the willful acts in respect of certain property section of the Criminal Code. Having offenses against animals reflected under other areas of federal criminal law alongside children of victims and the victims themselves acknowledges that they are also capable of being victims, unlike a sofa or table."

The Protecting Victims Act C-16 also updated the Criminal Code provisions affecting animal sexual abuse and courtroom animals. A new section 160(3.1) defines the offense of representations of bestiality as knowingly publishing, distributing, transmitting, selling, making available or advertising any visual representation that is or is likely to be mistaken for a photographic, film, video or other visual recording of a person committing bestiality.

The Coalition explained that this is a hybrid offense, meaning prosecution can proceed with summary conviction or indictment. There is a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. The law further clarifies that the Criminal Code offense under section 171.1 that prohibits making sexually explicit material available to a child includes material that involves bestiality, which also falls under the illicit material definition of section 164(8) that governs warrants of seizure. Representations of bestiality is also considered a primary offence under the Sex Offender Information Interpretation in section 490.011(1), so prosecutors will be able to seek sex offender registration under ancillary orders in sentencing.

Finally, the Protecting Victims Act also provides improved courtroom testimonial support that allows a support animal under section 486.1 for witnesses under 18 and for those with mental or physical disability. Support animals will also be allowed for witnesses of any age who are testifying in cases involving sexual violence, criminal harassment, trafficking in persons, intimate partner violence, or other cases where the court deems it appropriate. It will also allow for the presence of a support animal during the reading of victim impact or community impact statements. Witnesses testifying or presenting statements in Canadian military court proceedings are also permitted the same access to support animals under amendments to the National Defense Act.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE... and THE LINK

AWI Grant Helps Illinois “Link Desert” Bloom

One does not normally associate Illinois with a “desert,” but the Animal Welfare Institute identified the state as a “safe haven desert”—an area that lacks adequate sheltering resources for companion animals of domestic violence survivors. The state, with 12.7 million residents, is believed to have only four domestic violence shelters that can co-shelter pets with human family members. Meanwhile, the state is experiencing a dramatic rise in domestic violence-related homicides and the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline receives over 60,000 inquiries each year.

To help address this need, AWI invited organizations throughout the state to apply for up to \$20,000 in Safe Havens Desert Grant funding through a competitive process. AWI has [announced](#) that [Oasis Women’s Center](#) in Alton has received a grant.

The center, which serves five under-resourced counties in downstate Illinois east of St. Louis, will use its Safe Havens Desert Grant to create a Companion Animal Support Program for domestic violence survivors with pets. The program includes the addition of pet-friendly shelter spaces, development of a new foster program, expansion of community partnerships, provision of transportation assistance, and strategic outreach in rural communities.

AWI reported that the Safe Havens Desert Grant had an immediate impact on the Center’s ability to better serve survivors with pets. “Within two days, we welcomed two dogs and one cat into shelter alongside survivors who shared that they would have never left their abuser without knowing their pets could come too,” said Oasis Executive Director Jenna Giess.



Jenna Giess

“We are thankful to Oasis Women’s Center for the swift action taken to expand their desperately needed services, so that more survivors in Illinois can find safety with their beloved companion animals,” said Claire Coughlin, director of AWI’s Companion Animals Program.

Launched in 2024, the Safe Havens Desert Grant program is designed to address critical, life-threatening gaps in resources by encouraging development of sheltering services for people with pets affected by domestic violence in areas of the country where such resources are scarce.

Other recent grants have been awarded to the Tupelo-Lee Humane Society in Mississippi and the Rape Abuse and Crisis Center in Fargo, North Dakota, two other states that are also under-resourced. Both recipients established pet-friendly sheltering services for domestic violence survivors in their areas.

AWI announced that [additional grant opportunities](#) will be announced later this year.

Ontario MP Calls for Link Training

A member of Ontario’s Parliament is calling on the provincial government to ensure that Crown prosecutors and other counsel are trained on the connection between animal abuse and gender-based and family violence.

Effie Triantafilopoulos filed a “[private member’s motion](#)”.

“Animal cruelty is often not an isolated act,” she said.

“Research increasingly shows that violence directed at animals can



be an indicator of escalating violence within the home. Better awareness and education across the justice system can help identify high-risk situations earlier, strengthen interventions, and improve protections for victims and their families.”

Her motion builds on Ontario’s Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS Act) that introduced tougher penalties for animal abuse and strengthened enforcement powers. Keira’s Law established mandatory education for judges and justices of the peace on intimate partner violence and coercive control.

Her motion aligns with Ontario’s Standing Committee on Justice Policy report on intimate partner violence ([See the January 2026 LINK-Letter](#)), which recognized the role coercive control and threats against pets can play and highlighted the importance of coordinated responses across the justice system.



AVMA Expands Animal Abuse Reporting Policy to Include The Link

The American Veterinary Medical Association has updated and expanded its [Policy on Animal Abuse and Neglect](#) to recognize for the first time that the veterinarian's responsibility to identify and respond to suspected or known animal maltreatment is based, in part, on The Link.

Given the profession's established role in protecting public as well as animal health, AVMA's previous policies in 2019, 2012, 2009, 2000, and 1995 (*See the [July 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*) stated that prompt disclosure of abuse is "necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people." The 2026 policy, approved by AVMA's House of Delegates in July, adds a key statement that such reporting is necessary "as substantial evidence demonstrates a strong correlation between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, including child abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence."

The 2026 iteration reinstates an earlier responsibility to report suspected animal abuse that had been omitted in 2019. It says, "It is essential that all veterinarians understand their responsibility to identify and respond to any suspected or known maltreatment of animals." It adds, "The AVMA considers it the ethical responsibility of the veterinarian to report suspected cases when an educational or supportive approach is not appropriate." This latter sentence echoes AVMA's [Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics](#), approved in 2024, that "A veterinarian has an ethical responsibility to report suspected animal cruelty and/or abuse."

The new policy further emphasizes The Link by adding, "In some jurisdictions, veterinarians are mandated reporters of animal cruelty and may

also be mandated to report other forms of abuse, such as child or elder abuse." It adds, "Every veterinarian has a professional obligation to be familiar with animal cruelty, abuse, and neglect laws in their jurisdiction and know how to report suspected cases."

A new section addresses for the first time the interdisciplinary interactions inherent in Link cases by encouraging "collaborative relationships and information sharing between animal services and human services organizations." As part of this outreach, AVMA supports "the ongoing development and delivery of training for shelter staff, animal control officers, and law enforcement regarding humane animal care, laws regarding animal maltreatment, and how suspected cases are recognized, reported, and handled."

The 2026 policy again emphasizes the "essential" need for accurate, timely record-keeping and documentation but adds a new recommendation: "Having a written protocol for the veterinary practice on recognizing and reporting suspected cases of animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect assists in appropriate documentation and timely response."

The 2026 iteration again calls on state legislatures to enact laws that provide immunity from liability in any civil, criminal, or state licensing action for any veterinarian who reports, in good faith, a suspected case of animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect to the proper authorities. It adds an enhanced "strong" recommendation that states also pass laws that exempt client/patient records from confidentiality restrictions when records are provided to the proper authorities as part of a good-faith report.

Veterinary Reporting of Suspected Animal Maltreatment

STATE	MANDATED	IMMUNITY or ALLOWED
Alabama	Mandate	NO
Alaska	Allowed	NO
Arizona	Mandate	Yes
Arkansas	Allowed	Yes
California	Mandate	Yes
Colorado	Mandate	Yes
Connecticut	Mandate	Yes
(animal fighting)		
Delaware	Mandate	Yes
Florida	Allowed	Yes
Georgia	Allowed	Yes
Hawaii	Mandate	Yes
Idaho	Allowed	Yes
Illinois	Mandate	Yes
Indiana	Allowed	Yes
Kansas	Mandate	NO
Kentucky	Allowed	Yes
Louisiana	Allowed	Yes
Maine	Mandate	Yes
(aggravated cruelty)		
Maryland	Mandate	Yes
Massachusetts	Mandate	Yes
Michigan	Allowed	Yes
Minnesota	Mandate	Yes
Mississippi	Allowed	Yes
Missouri	Mandate	NO
Nebraska	Mandate	Yes
Nevada	Allowed	NO
New Hampshire	Allowed	Yes
New Mexico	Allowed	NO
New York	Mandate	Yes
North Carolina	Allowed	Yes
North Dakota	Mandate	Yes
Ohio	Mandate	Yes
(companion animals)		
Oklahoma	Mandate	Yes
Oregon	Mandate	Yes
Pennsylvania	Allowed	Yes
Rhode Island	Mandate	Yes
Tennessee	Allowed	Yes
Texas	Allowed	Yes
Utah	Allowed	Yes
Vermont	Allowed	Yes
Virginia	Allowed	Yes
Washington	Allowed	Yes
West Virginia	Mandate	Yes
Wisconsin	Mandate	NO

AVMA Expands Animal Abuse Reporting Policy to Include The Link

Animal Abuse and Neglect

Approved by the AVMA House of Delegates July 2026

The AVMA recognizes that veterinarians may observe cases of suspected animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect as defined by federal or state laws, or local ordinances. Prompt disclosure of cruelty, abuse, or neglect is necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people, as substantial evidence demonstrates a strong correlation between animal abuse and interpersonal violence, including child abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence. It is essential that all veterinarians understand their responsibility to identify and respond to any suspected or known maltreatment of animals. In some jurisdictions, veterinarians are mandated reporters of animal cruelty and may also be mandated to report other forms of abuse, such as child or elder abuse.

Every veterinarian has a professional obligation to be familiar with animal cruelty, abuse, and neglect laws in their jurisdiction and know how to report suspected cases. The AVMA considers it the ethical responsibility of the veterinarian to report suspected cases when an educational or supportive approach is not appropriate. Veterinarians should be aware that accurate, timely record-keeping and documentation

of these cases are essential. Having a written protocol for the veterinary practice on recognizing and reporting suspected cases of animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect assists in appropriate documentation and timely response.

The AVMA strongly recommends that state legislation provides immunity from liability in any civil, criminal, or state licensing action for any veterinarian who reports, in good faith, a suspected case of animal cruelty, abuse, or neglect to the proper authorities. The AVMA also strongly recommends state legislatures pass legislation that exempts client/patient records related to suspected cases from confidentiality restrictions when records are provided to the proper authorities as part of a good-faith report. The AVMA encourages collaborative relationships and information sharing between animal services and human services organizations. The AVMA supports the ongoing development and delivery of training for shelter staff, animal control officers, and law enforcement regarding humane animal care, laws regarding animal maltreatment, and how suspected cases are recognized, reported, and handled.

Where Are Veterinarians Mandated to Report Other Forms of Family Violence?

This list indicates whether veterinarians are specifically identified in a list of mandated reporters, or are mandated because all residents of the state are required to report.

STATE	CHILD ABUSE	ELDER ABUSE	STATE	CHILD ABUSE	ELDER ABUSE
California	Identified		New Hampshire	Everyone	Everyone
Colorado	Identified	Identified	New Jersey	Everyone	
Delaware	Everyone	Everyone	New Mexico	Everyone	Everyone
Florida	Everyone	Everyone	New York		Everyone
Idaho	Everyone		North Carolina	Everyone	Everyone
Illinois		Identified	Oklahoma	Everyone	Everyone
Indiana	Everyone	Everyone	Rhode Island	Everyone	Everyone
Kentucky	Everyone	Everyone	Tennessee	Everyone	Everyone
Louisiana		Everyone	Texas	Everyone	Everyone
Maryland	Everyone		Utah	Everyone	Everyone
Mississippi	Everyone	Everyone	Wyoming	Everyone	Everyone
Nebraska	Everyone				

Lack of Veterinary Findings in Cruelty Case Judgments Seen as Information Gap

One of the few Link studies to emerge from South Korea is arguing that published judicial records of judgments in companion animal cruelty cases frequently omit veterinary assessments of the degree or duration of animals' suffering, resulting in gaps regarding the full welfare impact of abuse across all cases and whether imposed sentences were proportional to the suffering experienced.

The authors, based at the Animal Disease Diagnostic Division of the Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency, conclude that the limited and inconsistent visibility of veterinary information in published judgments indicates that the legal record often captures only part of cases' evidentiary picture. "Stronger integration of veterinary documentation into judicial processes may improve how harm is recorded and understood," they write. They add that future work should also address the broader selection limits of court-based datasets.

The study examined 501 criminal-court decisions issued under the South Korean Animal Protection Act between 2003 and 2025. Most cases involved dogs and blunt-force trauma; neglect-related deaths were described far less frequently. Almost 2/3 of offenders received monetary fines rather than imprisonment and only 14% resulted in incarceration. However, explicitly documented veterinary information was unevenly visible across the records; only 7 decisions contained an unambiguous, explicit reference to veterinary involvement.

"Veterinarians occupy a critical position at the interface between clinical practice, welfare protection, and legal processes."

-- Kim, Baek, Ku & Lee

They argue that court decisions can reveal recurring patterns of prosecuted abuse but that judicial records provide only a partial view of the broader animal abuse burden. Publicly accessible court records may document the nature of the prosecution, they argue,

but do not reveal the full spectrum of animal abuse or the severity of suffering experienced by the animals. "When situated within the limited but growing international literature, the South Korean findings resemble other judgment-based datasets in foregrounding overt violence more readily than chronic or diffuse forms of welfare harm."

In reviewing broadly consistent patterns reported in studies of cruelty case judgments from Finland, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Estonia and the U.S., they describe how veterinary medicine can provide clinical and forensic tools for documenting injury and neglect, including forensic pathology and clinical case series. However, many prosecuted cases are visible to researchers chiefly through legal records rather than detailed medical files as court records are not designed as clinical or welfare documents and often omit examination findings, necropsy results, treatment history, or behavioral observations.

"Veterinarians occupy a critical position at the interface between clinical practice, welfare protection, and legal processes. Studies from South Korea and comparative contexts have examined practitioners' intention to report suspected abuse, ethical and professional considerations around reporting, and the forensic investigation of suspected cruelty, including toxicological analysis in animal fatalities," they write. "These findings highlight both the potential and the constraints of veterinary involvement when abuse is suspected, especially in systems where mandatory reporting is not yet fully standardized."

They conclude, "This study highlights both the value and the limits of judicial records for animal welfare research. The findings identify documentation gaps, clarify what court records can and cannot show, and point to the importance of stronger collaboration among veterinarians, welfare researchers, investigators, and legal professionals."

-- Kim, A.-Y., Baek, J.-S., Ku, B., & Lee, K. (2026). Companion-animal abuse in South Korea: Welfare and veterinary implications from criminal-court decisions (2003-2025). *Animals*, 16(15), 2354; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani16152354>



For Additional Information

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

Study Highlights Difficulties in Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse

There is an ongoing source of frustration when reporting suspected cruelty: veterinarians and members of the public are concerned about an animal's welfare but don't know how and where to report their suspicions; and agency investigators need specific, accurate information that is actionable, objective, and legally useful. We at the National Link Coalition frequently receive calls from people trying to report a situation who either did not know who to call locally, or who received what they felt was an unsatisfactory response from the local agency.

To correct this information gap, we created our [National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies](#). Encompassing 51 pages of our website, it offers specific phone numbers of who to call in 6,500 cities and counties and guidelines as to what information is necessary to make a credible report that agencies can work with.

What American humane and animal control investigators have long known is now being echoed in Hungary where a new research study describes the difficulties faced in attempting to report abuse. The authors, based at Budapest's University of Veterinary Medicine, developed and tested a structured online prototype animal abuse reporting tool. The objective was to try to improve the public's knowledge of, and ability to, report while consid-

"A structured reporting system could support not only individual animal protection cases, but also future research into patterns of animal abuse, household risk, and community-level welfare concerns."

-- Kiss, et al.

ering both the needs of the public and the requirements of veterinarians, authorities, and animal protection professionals.

Suspected animal abuse and substandard animal care and housing conditions can be difficult to report because members of the public may be unsure how serious the situation is, which authority should receive the report,

and what information should be recorded to enable further investigations and assessments. "Professionals need clear and comparable information to assess cases and decide on the appropriate response," the authors write.

"The practical reporting of suspected animal abuse remains challenging. Reports may be incomplete, emotionally framed, insufficiently documented, or directed to an inappropriate organization. Members of the public



Our National Directory of Abuse Investigation Agencies lists phone numbers to call to report animal, child, elder, and domestic abuse in 6,500 cities and counties.

may fail to report because they are uncertain whether the observed situation is serious enough, fear retaliation or neighborhood conflict, do not know which authority is competent, or are unable to collect evidence that can be used in subsequent professional, administrative, or criminal evaluation." They also may be uncertain about the consequences of reporting and have concern about the animal's future should they report.

"The recognition of suspected animal abuse is complex. It may involve visible injuries, abnormal behavior, inadequate nutrition or water supply, inappropriate housing, restricted movement, lack of veterinary care, environmental hazards, or inconsistencies between the reported history and the animal's condition. The interpretation of these signs is not always straightforward," they add. "A single indicator is rarely sufficient to confirm cruelty, while several findings considered together may raise concern and justify further professional or legal assessment."

Meanwhile, in Hungary – as elsewhere -- animal protection cases are frequently handled by several actors, including veterinarians, animal welfare organizations, local authorities, police, and administrative authorities working in parallel but procedurally distinct administrative and criminal legal frameworks. "This legal and institutional complexity may improve case management

(Continued on Page 11)

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Making it Easier to Report Suspected Animal Abuse

(Continued from Page 10)

when responsibilities are clear, but it can also contribute to uncertainty about competence, incomplete information transfer, and delays in intervention.”

They note that veterinarians have a central role in identifying and documenting suspected animal abuse because their professional expertise allows them to assess injuries, clinical condition, pain, body condition, behavior, and potential consequences of inadequate care. However, many animal welfare cases are often first observed by laypersons, such as neighbors, animal keepers, or animal protection volunteers, who may not have the knowledge or confidence to evaluate the severity of a situation or decide where and how to report it.

They emphasize that the need for accurate reporting is intensified by The Link. They call for measures to increase the number and quality of animal abuse reports because suspected animal abuse is not only an animal welfare issue but also a matter of legal, professional, and public relevance with broader public health and social significance.

They emphasize how veterinary recognition and documentation of suspected animal cruelty may be particularly relevant “because violence against animals has been described as being associated with violence against humans, including interpersonal and family violence.” Citing associations between animal abuse and domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse, they write that “Animal abuse may therefore serve as a warning sign of wider household or community-level risk, and better documentation of such cases may support both animal welfare and broader violence-prevention research. This perspective is consistent with the One Welfare approach, which emphasizes the interconnections between animal welfare, human well-being, and the wider social environment.”

The results of their study of the online reporting interface supported their initial working assumption that the reporting of animal welfare cases is not limited by public concern alone, but also by uncertainty regarding case interpretation, competent authorities, evidentiary requirements, and the practical steps of reporting. The findings also indicated that a structured digital interface may serve as a bridge between lay observation and professional case assessment by guiding the reporter toward factual, comparable, and professionally interpretable information.

The results showed that respondents partly distinguished between criminal animal cruelty and substandard animal keeping, but uncertainty about reporting pathways remained. Professional feedback indicated that the prototype was understandable and useful, although further technical and content-related refinement is needed before practical implementation.

“Public reports can have direct procedural consequences, provided that they contain information that is sufficiently complete, locatable, and interpretable. This approach is also consistent with veterinary forensic recommendations, which emphasize the importance of accurate documentation, preservation of evidence, and systematic recording of clinical and contextual findings in suspected animal abuse cases,” they write.

“A structured reporting system could therefore support not only individual animal protection cases, but also future research into patterns of animal abuse, household risk, and community-level welfare concerns,” they conclude.

-- Kiss, A., Lorázkó, G., Korsós, G., Bozsó, D., Wagenhoffer, Z., & Fodor, K. (2026). From observation to structured reporting: Development and preliminary evaluation of an online animal abuse reporting system.



Veterinary Sciences, 13(8), 784.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/vetsci13080784>

How Is Animal Cruelty Reported and Investigated in Eastern Europe?

The study compared reporting systems in Hungary and several neighboring countries:

HUNGARY: Suspected criminal activity is reported to police. Substandard or inadequate animal care is reported to a municipal administrative public authority.

SLOVENIA: Anonymous electronic reporting to the food safety and veterinary authority.

SLOVAKIA: Structured online submission to the State Veterinary and Food Administration and its regional bodies.

AUSTRIA: A decentralized provincial system supported by animal welfare ombudspersons; urgent cases are reported to the police.

ROMANIA: Animal Police, especially when the animal is in danger.

SERBIA and CROATIA: Inspection- and authority-centered models.

UKRAINE: Complementary roles of civil legal assistance in preparing police reports.

Forensics Toolkit, Presence at Crime Scene Investigations, Aid Animal Welfare

As awareness of the veterinarian's role in animal cruelty investigations continues to grow, general practices are increasingly on the frontline of identifying, documenting and responding to potential cases of abuse and neglect, and preparation matters. In response, [Victim to Verdict](#), an Oregon-based team that offers forensic resources to veterinarians ([See the December 2025 LINK-Letter](#)) is providing additional information that explains the importance of creating a veterinary forensic toolkit for clinics, the critical role veterinarians can play at crime scenes alongside law enforcement, and practical resources to support documentation, evidence preservation, and chain of custody in forensic cases.

Creating a Veterinary Forensic Toolkit for Your Clinic

"A well-prepared forensic toolkit can make the difference between a routine clinical exam and documentation that holds up in court," they explain. "As awareness of the veterinarians' role in animal cruelty response grows, general practices are increasingly on the frontline and are often the first to detect and document injuries that may become evidence. Building a simple, standardized toolkit ensures preparedness, consistency and accuracy in these scenarios."

Victim2Verdict suggests a toolkit doesn't need to be elaborate, but it does need to be intentional and convenient to access. It should support three goals: thorough documentation, preservation of evidence, and maintaining chain of custody.

Documentation essentials:

- A dedicated digital camera.
- A standardized forensic exam form with space for notes and mapping of injuries.
- Body condition scale charts.
- Photo placards and photo scale.

Evidence collection supplies:

- Sterile swabs.
- Paper and plastic bags (use paper for biological samples like mats to prevent degradation).
- A small supply of forceps, scissors, scalpels and other tissue collection supplies and containers.

Chain of custody essentials:

- Lab sample and chain of custody forms.
- Tamper evident seals.

Additional forms, templates and specific case protocols are included in the [eBook](#) which accompanies *Animal Cruelty Investigations: A Collaborative Approach from Victim to Verdict*.



Co-founder Kris Otteman

Veterinarians are Valuable Experts at the Crime Scene

When law enforcement responds to an animal cruelty crime scene investigation and animal seizures, a veterinarian's expertise can be invaluable. Forensic veterinarians can assess animals in their original environment, document medical, environmental

and behavioral evidence, and identify conditions that may be relevant to determining the cause, duration, and severity of suffering. Their specialized training allows them to recognize indicators of neglect, emaciation, injury and disease while identifying evidence to be collected and preserved.

"Information gathered at the scene can provide essential context that cannot fully be reconstructed or recognized after the animals have been removed. This involvement strengthens the scientific foundation of animal cruelty cases, improves the quality of evidence identification and collection, and helps ensure that investigations are conducted thoroughly and in a manner that supports both animal welfare and legal proceedings," they explain.

Free Program Helps Animal Shelters and DVMs Establish Partnerships

The Open Door Veterinary Collective is offering a free, 1-hour [RACE CE approved program](#) on "The Veterinarian of Record Relationship." The program explores how veterinarians and animal welfare organizations can establish and maintain a successful Veterinarian of Record Relationship that benefits both partners and the animals so shelter animals receive timely, appropriate care and both partners stay aligned.

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Veterinarians Offer Assistance to Others Helping Pet Victims of Gender-Based Violence

When animal shelter veterinarian Sarah Kirk took the National Link Coalition's online [Master's Degree course](#) in animal abuse and interpersonal violence at the University of Florida in 2015, she was introduced to the reality that animal cruelty also impacts people. "As a shelter veterinarian for decades, I had certainly cared for animals that were presented with trauma. In some cases, abuse of the animal was known and prosecuted. Prior to my courses, I would not have thought about who else might be at risk," she explains in a [blog](#) for the Canadian Animal Shelter & Community Medicine Association.

The course caused her to wonder: Is there a child in the home? A partner? An elderly person? "I also learned that many people delay leaving their abuser, out of concern for their pet and not wanting to leave her/him behind."

After moving from the U.S. to Ontario in 2022, she had a deep desire to give back to her new country. "It seemed the perfect time to consider how I might be able to support people and their pets who were escaping abuse," she recalls. After considering the various options available for pet-friendly programs at gender-based violence shelters, she thought the best program would be for the person and their pet to be co-housed in the shelter, where each could provide comfort to the other.

After reading the Annual Report of one of her local GBV shelters whose goal was to become pet-friendly, she reached out and offered to help. In 2025, Sarah and her daughter Jill – also a veterinarian and a graduate of the University of Florida program -- saw their first patient.



Sarah Kirk (left) and Jill Kirk

What followed was the formation of the nonprofit [Purple Whiskers Shelter Support](#) program, which is encouraging more GBV shelters in Ontario to become pet-friendly by removing the barriers of public health concerns and cost of veterinary care. "We want to keep these brave animal and human survivors together, at a time when they need each other most. We want to give the GBV shelters the opportunity to say, 'yes,' when people call, seeking safety from abuse," she adds.

Purple Whiskers Shelter Support is raising money to provide funding to veterinarians who:

- Examine pet survivors of abusive environments and assess them for physical and mental trauma;
- Provide vaccines and parasite treatments to protect both human and animal residents;
- Provide veterinary behavioral counseling; and
- Offer referrals to offsite veterinarians as necessary.



IVFSA Issues Call for Abstracts for Milestone 20th Anniversary Conference



The International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association is accepting proposals to speak or present a poster at the Association's [20th Anniversary Conference](#), scheduled for June 15-19, 2027, in Baltimore, Md.

The deadline for submitting abstracts to the milestone event is March 1. [Click here](#) to submit an abstract. Travel scholarships are available.

The 20th Annual IVFSA Conference will include a look back at the organization's remarkable two decades of growth in the animal forensic field and a look forward at where IVFSA will lead in the future. The conference attracts some of the brightest minds in animal welfare, law, and forensic science.

The Conference will feature tracks in jurisprudence, animal welfare & community health, animal investigations, clinical and pathology veterinary forensics, and novel research and new approaches to cases.

The Dangers of Juveniles' Animal Cruelty – And a Tribute to Maternal Devotion

The following email came to us from Casey Tin in Hong Kong who wanted to acquaint us with a recent incident in Mainland China that demonstrates, all too sadly, several critical factors involved when juveniles commit horrific acts of animal cruelty. Without further details, we can only surmise that there has been a complete lack of response by law enforcement, behavioral health or judicial systems in China, which has never been known for having progressive animal welfare programs. We can also assume that the youths' uncontrolled aggression may have been exacerbated by peer pressure in committing these horrific actions as a group. And we can also recognize the danger – and shake our heads in wonder – when a younger generation feels they have to document everything on video and then disseminate it online to prove that they were there.

The incident, while horrifying for the dogs, reminds us that when juveniles display such a shocking absence of empathy, unless there is immediate and sustained intervention there is a likelihood that this will not be the only act of aggression that these individuals feel they can get away with.

“I am writing to you today with a heavy heart, deeply inspired by your lifelong dedication to uncovering ‘The Link’ between animal abuse and human violence, and your tireless advocacy for cross-reporting and public awareness.

“I would like to share a profoundly tragic yet incredibly moving account of an event that took place in Jieyang, Guangdong, on June 28th. While it involves a canine family, the behavioral and psychological dynamics exhibited by the underage perpetrators—and the incredible maternal devotion shown by the animal—directly align with your extensive research regarding animal abuse as an indicator of severe psychological deviation.

“A stray mother dog, warmly named ‘Wangwang’ by local residents, had recently given birth to three puppies. Tragically, they were cornered by four boys under the age of 14. These youths proceeded to launch a brutal and prolonged assault on the canine family. For nearly an hour, Wangwang endured severe physical trauma. Instead of fleeing to save her own life, she stood her ground, absorbing the violence in a desperate attempt to shield her newborn pups with her own body.

“The incident resulted in a horrific tragedy, as both Wangwang and her puppies lost their lives following the prolonged assault. Reports indicate that even in her final moments, she demonstrated a heart-wrenching instinct to protect and remain close to her offspring.

“Disturbingly, the youths documented the encounter and shared it online, displaying a chilling lack of empathy and treating the suffering of the animal family with mockery.

“As a leading global expert on the Link, you understand all too well the profound social and psychological alarm signals that such unprovoked youth violence represents. While socio-legal contexts are complex, the emotional depth of this mother dog and the moral disengagement of these children are universal challenges that emphasize the importance of international recognition and education regarding animal sentience and juvenile behavior.

“If your platform, research networks, or international advocacy regarding the Link allow you to highlight cases that emphasize the urgent need to address juvenile animal cruelty, Wangwang’s story serves as a poignant example of the need for intervention.



“Regardless of whether direct action can be taken, the goal is simply to ensure that her name and her display of maternal devotion are remembered by those dedicated to building a less violent world. Her name was Wangwang.

“Thank you for your tireless dedication to expanding the understanding of the Link and working toward a more compassionate world for all.

“With highest regards and respect,
Casey Tin
From Hong Kong”



THE LINK... in the LITERATURE

Animal Needs Assessment Underscores Collaboration between Humane and Social Services Agencies

A new study by the ASPCA that developed an Animal Needs Assessment to better understand animal welfare needs in New York City is reporting that in its community-based pet assistance program, cases referred by social services agencies often involved more serious animal concerns, underscoring “the close intersection of human and animal vulnerability, reinforcing the need for collaboration between social service and animal welfare organizations.”

The study, conducted by Emily Patterson-Kane, applied the needs assessment tool to 519 ASPCA Community Engagement cases from 2021-2024 and concluded that such needs assessments may help guide service planning and inform strategies for improving community-based animal welfare initiatives.

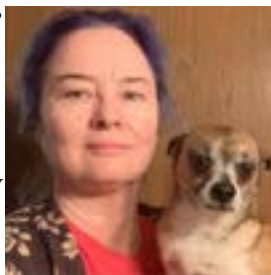
The ASPCA’s [Community Engagement](#) program assists pet owners who are referred by social services agencies, law enforcement, animal shelter partners, and the public by providing essential supplies with the goal of keeping pets and people together whenever possible. Such community-based outreach programs improve accessibility to veterinary care and promote pet retention, humane education and One

“These findings reflect the overlap between human and animal welfare needs.”

- Emily Patterson-Kane

Health. The ASPCA program offers clients such services as veterinary services, supplies of food and cat litter, rehoming, spaying or neutering, enrichment supplies, grooming, improved outdoor housing, behav-

ioral support, and euthanasia. A significant number of clients reported they were also receiving social services support including food assistance, housing aid or human health care, and 20% of clients requested referrals for social services.



Emily Patterson-Kane

“These findings reflect the overlap between human and animal welfare needs within the population served,” the study said.

“The importance of human and animal service interoperability and One Health associations between human and companion animal well-being was reinforced in this study,” it concluded.

“These findings show how social service and animal welfare organizations benefit from coordination of services, including maintaining good interagency relationships as well as cross-training, cross-reporting where applicable and required or permitted by law, and communication when interacting with the same households.”

-- Patterson-Kane, E. (2026). *Assessing animal welfare and service needs in a community-based program.*

Animals, 16(16), 2496.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ani16162496>

ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... and THE LINK

FBI Announces \$5,000 Reward, “Crush” Tipline

The federal government on Aug. 11 announced a \$5,000 reward and a new tipline for information leading to successful prosecution of Animal Crush offenders. To report suspected animal crushing incidents or offenders, please go to tips.fbi.gov or call 1-800-CALL-FBI.

The reward is offered by a 2025 federal task force that focuses on investigation and prosecution of cases of Animal Crushing and its Depiction. Animal crushing is intentional physical and psychological torture of animals with the intention of causing death, typically videotaped or livestreamed and available online.

Although 49 states now prohibit animal sexual abuse, there were no federal provisions prohibiting the internet and interstate availability of animal “crush” videos in which small animals are crushed or otherwise harmed to generate a sexual thrill until 2010. Research has found online animal sexual abuse to be an extremely strong predictor of and risk factor for child pornography and child sexual abuse materials.

The subsequent PACT Act (Preventing Cruelty and Torture) expanded the 2010 law, prohibiting such acts when they occur in interstate or foreign commerce, regardless of whether a video is produced. Convicted offenders face federal felony charges, fines, and up to seven years in prison. The PACT Act 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.

News from LINK COALITIONS

Caroline A. Griffin Named to Board of Directors

The National Link Coalition is honored to announce that Caroline A. Griffin, co-founder of Baltimore's renowned [Show Your Soft Side](#) campaign to end animal abuse before it starts by teaching youths that even the most powerful public celebrities have a soft heart for animals, has been appointed to our Board of Directors.

Griffin, who serves as the campaign's Vice President and Program Director, practiced law for 20 years before devoting herself full-time to animal protection. In 2009, she was appointed Chair of the Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission in Baltimore, following the brutal burning death of a dog named "Phoenix". She is the chair of the Animal Welfare Institute Board, the chair of the Maryland Spay Neuter Advisory Board, and is a Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. She was recently reappointed to the Mayor's Commission.

The all-volunteer campaign has published and distributed hundreds of posters, calendars, billboards, public service announcements, videos, and other materials with photographs of athletes showing their "soft side" by cuddling their pets. The posters include a message that "only a punk would hurt a cat or dog".



Caroline A. Griffin

What started out as a local campaign in 2010 targeting Baltimore teens quickly went global. Show Your Soft Side was incorporated as a nonprofit in 2013 to create a more compassionate world for animals while providing support for the most vulnerable.

The campaign works to change the mindset of young people who all too often see the maiming or torturing of defenseless cats and dogs as a sign of toughness or manhood. The campaign's message, augmented by dramatic photos of "tough guy" athletes, known as "softies", snuggling their pets, is that compassion toward animals is a strength and not a weakness.

The organization's many projects include:

- Spay/neuter, vaccination and microchipping for Baltimore's street cats;
- Distributing posters and educational materials to schools and youth groups in multiple states;
- Phoenix Fund grants to Maryland rescue organizations to provide medical care for severely abused and neglected animals;
- Training law enforcement and animal control officers on the best practices for combatting animal cruelty;
- Donating pet food to keep homeless dogs and cats fed;
- A reward fund for tipsters whose information leads to arrests of animal cruelty offenders; and
- Testifying before the Maryland General Assembly on animal protection bills.

"Our ultimate goal is to stop animal cruelty before it starts," Griffin said in describing the campaign in a magazine interview (See the [June 2017 LINK-Letter](#)). "It's true that a picture is worth a thousand words. Kids universally gravitate toward these tough, successful athletes with their pets. For many people, animal cruelty is simply too disturbing to even contemplate and the campaign galvanizes people without making them turn away."

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.

LEGISLATION... and THE LINK

Most state legislatures have already adjourned or are on summer break. As 2026 sessions head into the final stretch, we're still following 214 LINK-related measures -- 23 of which have been signed into law. Please join us in following their progress and alert us to any additional bills we may have missed!

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

Note: Listing 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. 4166 and **S. 2196**, the Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence and Stalking Survivors Act of 2025, would add to U.S. Code Title 18, Section 921(a) a new misdemeanor crime of stalking. This would include a course of harassment, intimidation or surveillance that places a person in reasonable fear of, or harm to, the health and safety of, a pet, service animal, or emotional support animal.

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.

H.R. 7544, the Illegal Alien Animal Abuser Removal Act, would make any illegal alien convicted of animal cruelty or fighting subject to immediate deportation.

H.R. 7567, the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026 (the "Farm Bill") would reauthorize Protecting Animals With Shelter funding of \$3,000,000 annually through 2031 to make domestic violence shelters pet-friendly.

H.R. 8480, the Protect Our Pets Act, would increase penalties for the most horrific acts of animal abuse including crushing or sexually exploiting animals.

H.R. 8723, the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-risk Trafficking Act of 2026" or the "FIGHT Act of 2026", would prohibit gambling on animal fighting and sponsoring, exhibiting, or causing a minor under age 16 to attend an animal fight.

H.R. 8911 and **S. 4562, the Animal Violence Exposes Real Threat of Future Violence Act (AVERT Act) of 2026** would require the Department of Justice to conduct a study into the Link between cruelty towards animals and cruelty towards humans and report its findings and recommendations to Congress within three years. The bills would earmark \$2 million in funding for mental health service providers, police, and animal welfare organizations to prevent animal cruelty and rehabilitate offenders.

ARIZONA

SUCCESS!! **HB 2995** was signed into law on **June 22**. It requires courts to include a history of domestic violence coercive control in determining child custody and parenting time. It adds to the definition of coercive control "threatening to kill or injure a household pet." Arizona already includes acts of animal cruelty within its definition of domestic violence.

HB 2997 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have imposed additional penalties for individuals who commit acts of animal abuse or neglect in the presence of a minor.

SB 1587 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed parties to a dissolution of marriage to enter into an enforceable agreement or ask the court to enter an order regarding the possession or care of a companion animal and outline factors the court is to consider. It would have created a rebuttable presumption that service animals should remain with the party for whom they provide a service. "Companion animals" would have been defined as including pets, service animals, and animals acquired for business purposes.

CALIFORNIA

AB 119 was declared inactive. It would have required the Department of Social Services to develop a standardized curriculum for mandated reporters of child abuse, which include animal control officers.

SB 1276 would extend existing provisions prohibiting the production and distribution of online sexual content, including animal sexual abuse, involving a minor to also prohibit the downloading or streaming of that sexual content.

COLORADO

HB 26-1131 died when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have given courts authority to make determinations for the care and custody of pet animals in proceedings for dissolution of marriage and legal separation, taking into account the health, safety, well-being, comfort, and best interest of the pet. The court's decision would have also included whether either party has committed abuse, cruelty, neglect, or violence toward an animal or human. It would also have permitted a court to award temporary custody and care of a pet animal when issuing an emergency protection order.

CONNECTICUT

H.B. 5264 died when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded "Desmond's Law's" provisions allowing courts to appoint an advocate in proceedings concerning the welfare or custody of a dog or cat to all defined companion animals. It would also expand 3rd-degree assault to include domestic animals, and establish an animal abuse task force.

H.B. 5438 died when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have allowed applicants and respondents at hearings to issue protection orders, which can include provisions to safeguard the victim's animals, to present or refute evidence demonstrating a pattern of harassment.

SUCCESS!! **S.B. 155** Requires the Department of Children and Families to include in annual reports to the General Assembly statistics about the number of reports of animal harm, cruelty or neglect received by its own personnel or cross-reported from the Department of Agriculture's local animal control officers.

SUCCESS!! **S.B. 318** requires the Commissioner of Agriculture, in consultation with the Office of Victim Services, to study the impact of the need for placement services for the animals belonging to domestic violence victims.

DELAWARE

SUCCESS!! **House Substitute Bill for HB 415** requires veterinarians to report suspected abuse or neglect of animals to the Office of Animal Welfare or other appropriate authority, with confidentiality assured and with immunity from civil and criminal liability and disciplinary action for reporting in good faith. They will need to complete training on the subject every 6 years in order to retain their licenses. Disciplinary sanctions could be imposed for failures to report.

FLORIDA

SB 468 and HB 921 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have required veterinarians, technicians and other employees to report suspected animal cruelty with exemption from criminal and civil liability, professional disciplinary action and employer retaliation for making reports in good faith. Medical records could be released without violating confidentiality. Altering medical records would be a misdemeanor; failure to report would subject the veterinarian to disciplinary action.

SUCCESS!! **HB 559** makes it a felony for an adult to commit aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, or sexual activities involving animals in the presence of a minor, or causes a minor to commit aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, or sexual activity with an animal.

SUCCESS!! **HB 1159** replaces the term "child pornography" with "child sexual abuse material". It revises the punishments for sexual activities involving animals to a second-or third-degree felony, and requires offenders to be banned from owning, residing with or working with any animals for five years.

SB 796 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed the Board of Veterinary Medicine to rescind the registration of any veterinary professional associate, veterinary technician, or veterinary technologist who is convicted of animal cruelty or animal fighting.

SUCCESS!! **HB 277 and SB 682**

add a respondent's threats to injure or kill a family pet, service animal or emotional support animal to the criteria courts can use when determining whether petitioners seeking an injunctive protection order are in imminent danger of domestic violence.

GEORGIA

HB 1409 passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor. The bill would have added animal service workers, animal control officers, humane society employees, animal cruelty investigators, and animal shelter personnel to the list of professions mandated to report suspected child abuse to the Division of Family and Children Services.

SB 102 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have extended existing prohibitions against dog-fighting to include cockfighting, including: owning, training, transporting, selling, charging admission, permitting a minor to attend, or wagering on any cock for the purpose of fighting.

HAWAII

HB 698 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have increased criminal penalties for various forms of animal cruelty because "The legislature finds that animal cruelty offenders are a threat to the health and safety of all members of our communities, especially vulnerable populations. Recent research has shown that animal cruelty is a predictive and co-occurring crime with violence against humans, including children, intimate partners, and the elderly."

ILLINOIS

HB 72 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have amended 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 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have created 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 1904 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have required, rather than permit, courts to award petitioners costs and attorney's fees if a civil no-contact order is granted. These orders include requiring the respondent to stay away from and not harm any animals.

HB 3028 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded the definition of prohibited dissemination of bestiality and other obscene sexual materials to include computer-generated images.

HB 3367 and HB 4475 died when the General Assembly adjourned.

They would have allowed 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.

SUCCESS!! HB 4540, the "Companion Animal Custody Equity

Act," will enable courts to consider the well-being of a dog or cat during a possession dispute regardless of the marital status of the parties.

SB 1716 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded the definition of prohibited dissemination of bestiality and other obscene sexual materials to include the use of "end-to-end encryption messaging systems or devices," such as encrypted messaging and email services.

SB 2091 died when the General As-

sembly adjourned. It would have made it a felony to injure or kill a service animal.

SB 2103 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded protections granted to petitioners' pets under Stalking No Contact Orders to also include Harassment No Contact Orders.

INDIANA

SUCCESS!!

HB 1165 increases the penalty for animal cruelty from a Class A misdemeanor to a Level 6 felony if the offense is committed in the immediate presence of a minor. It also updates its unique "domestic violence animal cruelty" statute to now include abusing, abandoning or neglecting an animal, as well as killing it, as a method of coercive control. It is a Class 6 felony.

IOWA

HF 227 and HF 869 died when the

Legislature adjourned. They would have granted veterinarians immunity from administrative, criminal or civil liability for making good-faith reports of alleged animal misconduct. Veterinarians who knowingly make false reports would have been subject to disciplinary action and civil liability and guilty of a misdemeanor.

HF 670 died when the Legislature

adjourned. It would have given juvenile courts jurisdiction in proceedings concerning a child under 17 years of age if the alleged offense were animal torture.

SF 2159 died when the Legislature

adjourned. It would have included bestiality among prohibited Internet materials considered harmful to minors.

KANSAS

HB 2707 died when the Legislature

adjourned. It would have modified the definition of abuse in the Protection From Abuse Act to include acts or threats relating to pets, and allow courts to include pets in protection orders. Such orders could grant the plaintiff with custody and control of the pets and restrain the defendant from harming or coming into contact with the pets.

KENTUCKY

HB 125 died when the Legislature

adjourned. It would have created new crimes of possession of a firearm by convicted domestic violence abusers and subjects of domestic violence protection orders.

HB 246 ("Kyan's Law") died when the Legislature adjourned.

It would have required animal control officers to receive training on recognizing child abuse, with immunity for acting in good faith. Local government units would have been able to opt out of the training.

SUCCESS!!

HB 418 was attached as an amendment to **SB 122** and **signed into law.** It requires courts determining child custody to consider whether there are allegations of domestic violence and abuse against either party; it would be a presumption that joint custody and equally shared parenting time would not be in the best interests of the child if one party has committed two or more acts of domestic violence and abuse. Kentucky's definition of domestic violence and abuse in KRS 403.720 includes acts against animals intended as coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge against a household member.

HB 637 died when the Legis-

lature adjourned. It would have required veterinarians to report if an animal for which they have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship has been abused." Existing law only permits veterinarians to file such reports.

LOUISIANA

SUCCESS!!

HB 126 will allow victims of sexual abuse to be accompanied by a facility dog. The dog will need to be obscured from the jury at all times. It became effective Aug. 1.

MAINE

LD 962 died in committee.

It would have created a new crime of Aggravated Operating Under the Influence for causing the death of a pet.

MARYLAND

SUCCESS!! **HB 282** and **SB 182** add “psychological harm” to the definition of abuse of a vulnerable adult, “the observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a vulnerable adult’s ability to function due to severe emotional distress caused by an intentional act or series of acts.” However, it is not specified whether threats to, or harm of, a vulnerable adult’s animal could be specifically categorized as psychological harm — as is often the case in domestic violence laws

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 update Sec. 21 of Chapter 119 to 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 4542 would make an individual responsible for the death or injury of a service animal liable for economic damages.

HB 4648 would add sentencing enhancement points for causing the death of a companion animal during the commission of another crime.

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.

HB 5409 would permit the Crime Victims Compensation Fund to reimburse victims needing immediate relocation up to \$2,500 in expenses for pet boarding or pet-related rental deposit fees.

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** **died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have created a statewide Link-based Office of Animal Protection in the Department Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to be more effective in enforcing animal cruelty laws that protect animals and people.

HF 3696 and **SF 3847** **died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have expanded the definition of a “crime of violence” to include conviction for felony animal cruelty.

HF 3946 and **SF 4301** **died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have amended “domestic abuse” to include “manifesting a purpose or intent to injure any pet or companion animal owned, possessed or kept by the family or household member.”

MISSISSIPPI

HB 730 **died in committee.** It would have removed the phrase “mankind” from the archaic definition of “the detestable and abominable crime against nature committed with mankind or with a beast”.

MISSOURI

SUCCESS!! **HB 1839** and **HB 2921** will impose civil penalties on commercial entities that allow minors to access harmful sexual material, including bestiality, online.

SUCCESS!! **HB 2292** and **SB 899** will require animal control officers and animal humane investigators to report suspected elder abuse and child abuse. Child and adult protective services workers, psychologists, mental health professionals, social workers, school counselors, educators, and law enforcement, probation and parole officers will be required to report suspected animal abuse to a Missouri Animal Control Association hotline. All reporters will be exempt from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reporting. Reporters will have to complete one hour of training on The Link between animal and human abuse and how to identify and report suspected abuse.

HB 3048 and **SB 1497** **died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have allowed courts issuing protection orders, which already allow awarding care and custody of pets, to impose a ban on the respondent from possessing or acquiring firearms.

NEBRASKA

LB 172 **died when the Legislature adjourned.** It would have expanded the definition of child pornography, which includes exposing children to online acts of bestiality, to include computer- or AI-generated visual imagery.

SUCCESS!! **LB 753** allows courts hearing requests for domestic violence protection orders, which include protections for and possession of pets, to allow existence of military protection orders issued against members of the armed forces to be offered as evidence of the respondent’s past conduct and the need for a protection order.

LB 876, the Immediate Protection from Abuse Act, died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed law enforcement officers to issue an Immediate Protective Order against a restrained person whom the officer has reasonable grounds to believe poses a threat of harm against the victim or family or household member. The order would have required the restrained person to relinquish sole possession of pets to the victim or household/family member and to be prohibited from coming into contact with, harming or killing the animals.

LB 1000 was indefinitely postponed. It would have increased penalties for repeated violations of domestic violence protection orders, which include protections for and possession of pets.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

HB 1438 was held over for interim study. It would have required mental health caseworkers to report instances of animal abuse by their clients, to law enforcement or the NH SPCA. Reporters would not face monetary liability or cause of action for reports made in good faith.

SUCCESS!! **HB 1522** expands the definition of domestic violence abuse (which already includes acts of animal cruelty) to add “coercive control”. Coercive control includes acts intended to threaten, intimidate, harass, isolate, coerce, control, or compel compliance of a petitioner to reasonably fear for their physical safety, including harming, or threatening or attempting to harm, a petitioner’s child, relative, or animal.

NEW JERSEY

A 369 and **S 1916** 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.

A 814 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 1951 and **S 405** 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 3809 and **S 1150** would expand the definition of domestic violence to include psychological abuse. While threats against a person’s animals are not specifically included in the definition of domestic violence, courts are allowed to consider such acts as coercive control in determining whether to issue a protective order.

S 2974 would require the Attorney General and the Administrative Director of the Courts to add training about recognizing the indicators of coercive control to domestic violence training requirements for law enforcement officers, judges and court personnel. Under New Jersey law, threatening to harm or kill an individual’s pet is defined as an indicator of coercive control by an abuser.

NEW MEXICO

SB 80 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added harm or threatened harm to an animal within the definition of “abuse” under the Family Violence Protection Act, and allow courts to issue protection orders granting one party exclusive or shared possession and control of any animals and prohibiting one party from harming or taking the animals.

NEW YORK

A 599 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added 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 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have allowed 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,” died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have prohibited 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 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have set increased prison terms for acts of animal cruelty when committed in the presence of a child.

A 730 and **S 1205 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have increased penalties for animal fighting and aggravated animal cruelty and require defendants convicted of aggravated animal cruelty to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

A 740 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed 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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have created 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 have been enhanced if the act occurred in the presence of a child.

A 897 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have criminalized knowingly causing a minor to attend an animal fight.

A 1391 and **S 5544 died when the Legislature adjourned.** They would have required persons charged with enforcing anti-cruelty laws to file a report when they have reasonable cause to believe that abuse or maltreatment of a child has also occurred. The bill would further have provided 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, A 1885 and S 5895 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have relocated 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 memo describing the bill cited academic studies that "have found a clear link between animal cruelty during youth and violence against humans as an adult" and numerous documented studies that show that "there is a direct Link between acts of cruelty to animals and violence toward others, including child abuse, spousal abuse, elder abuse and other violent behavior."

A 1530 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have established "care and treatment of service animals, therapy dogs and companion animals in residential programs for victims of domestic violence." These would have included allowing residents' service animals and therapy dogs full access to the shelters as long as they did not create an undue burden.

A 1630 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. It would have amended 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 have been 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 died when the Legislature adjourned. It had cited the prosecution of animal cruelty as a way to protect public safety in requiring all 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 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. They would have established 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 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have included animal fighting as a criminal act within the category of enterprise corruption crimes.

A 1945 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have enabled veterinarians to earn continuing education credits for providing free veterinary care for individuals residing in domestic violence shelters.

A 2387 and S 6812 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have established a 24-hour toll-free animal abuse reporting hotline.

A 3158 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have required courts to require a mental health evaluation for offenders convicted of aggravated animal cruelty or animal fighting.

A 3206 and S 1159 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. They would have created a new category of "domestic violence crimes" to include interfering, harassing, intimidating, or harming a family or household member's service animal.

A 3528 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have made 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," died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have required an investigation into possible domestic violence or abuse for persons who have been accused of animal abuse.

A 4899 and S 2280 went through several iterations but died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have required law enforcement officers to conduct a lethality assessment as part of the standardized domestic incident report form. One question to be asked on the assessment form would have been "Did they ever threaten to kill you, your children, or your pets?"

A 5815 and S 4613 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. They would have expended 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," went through several iterations but died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have required 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 died in committee. They would have expanded the definition of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing serious physical injuries or the use of a weapon.

A 7831, S 6986 and S 7010 died in committees when the Legislature adjourned. They would have made 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.

A 8375 and S 7612 passed both the Assembly and the Senate. They 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.

A 10826 and S 8030 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have required 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.

A 10857 and S 8035 died in committees. They would have expanded protection orders which allow courts to enjoin an individual from harming an animal to also grant the petitioner exclusive care, custody or control of the animal.

A 11182 and S 9427 died when the Legislature adjourned. They would have defined threats or harm to animals as coercive control.

S 470, "Kirby and Quigley's Law," died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have expanded aggravated animal cruelty to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony.

S 1411 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have required animal cruelty offenders to undergo a psychiatric analysis and evaluation.

S 6880 died in committee when the Legislature adjourned. It would have authorized a lengthier prison sentence for committing aggravated animal cruelty during an incident of domestic violence.

S 8927 passed the Senate but died in the Assembly. It would have directed courts considering the awarding of possession of a companion animal in a divorce settlement to include: whether the animal was acquired before or during the marriage; which party generally provides the animal with veterinary care, social interaction and compliance with regulations; and which party has the greater ability to financially support the animal.

S 10308 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have required anyone with a farm operation that houses horses or cows to complete an animal cruelty prevention workshop that would include laws regarding cross-reporting of animal abuse to proper authorities.

NORTH CAROLINA

SB 274 would replace the “crime against nature” with the term “bestiality”.

SB 573 would define standards for adequate space and shelter for animals and define “companion animal hoarders” as those having 10 or more animals, fails to abide by the standards, and has an inability to recognize or has a reckless disregard for the deleterious conditions in which the animals are living. It would require individuals convicted of companion animal hoarding to undergo psychological evaluation and treatment.

SB 591 would make cockfighting and animal-fighting paraphernalia illegal and prohibit allowing minors under age 18 from attending a cockfight or dogfight.

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.

SB 265 would add a history of conviction for animal cruelty offenses to the other violations that would disqualify individuals from being allowed to foster or adopt a child.

SB 393 would make it illegal to create, record, photograph, film, develop, reproduce, or publish any obscene material that depicts another person engaging in sexual conduct with an animal. Bona fide uses would be exempted. It also raises the crime of bestiality from a misdemeanor to a felony.

OKLAHOMA

HB 2058 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have expanded existing provisions to include pets in domestic violence protection orders to also include any adult victim of a crime with a need to prevent further victimization.

SB 1728 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added a new category of “coercive control”, which would have included committing or threatening to commit cruelty to an animal that intimidates a household member, to the Protection From Domestic Abuse Act.

SB 1982 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added a new crime of “unlawful pornography” which would have included images of sexual activity with an animal.

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.

HB 1932 would expand Pennsylvania’s bestiality law to prohibit any form of sexual contact with an animal as well as organizing, promoting, aiding or participating in any such acts; committing such acts in the presence of a minor; and elevating the crime from a misdemeanor to a felony.

HB 1933 would require veterinarians, technicians and assistants, humane societies, and animal control agencies to report suspected aggravated animal cruelty to law enforcement, with immunity from civil and criminal liability and state licensing action.

HB 2018 would allow Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board investigators to access and review records of reports to local animal control agencies.

HB 2476, the Protecting Pets in Domestic Violence Situations Act, would allow out-of-pocket expenses related to domestic violence survivors’ having to relocate or temporarily board their household pets to be compensable under the state’s Crime Victim Compensation Program.

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

SB 906 would have the Department of Labor and Industry establish a Family and Medical Leave Fund allowing employees to take paid leave for a qualifying act of violence. These would include “abuse of a vulnerable adult”, which would include an act of violence against that person’s service or emotional support animal.

RHODE ISLAND

H 7133-A and S 3217 died when the General Assembly adjourned. They would have extended provisions for including household pets in protection orders to also allow courts to award plaintiffs custody of the animals and grant a restraining order or other injunctive relief if necessary.

H 7194 and S 2723 died when the General Assembly adjourned. They would have added crimes against companion animals to the definition of domestic violence under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.

S 2489 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have included “coercive control,” including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates another, within the definition of “domestic abuse”.

SOUTH CAROLINA

H4123 and S 919, the Protection of Minors from Pornography and Obscenities Act, died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have closed a loophole and make it illegal to expose children to sexual activity, which includes bestiality, that is present in only part of materials. Currently, such acts must comprise the totality of the materials.

H 5505 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have created a new crime of “sexual abuse of an animal”. South Carolina already has an archaic statute criminalizing “buggery with mankind or with beast”.

SOUTH DAKOTA

SUCCESS!! SB 81 clarifies the definition of the crime of harming a service animal belonging to a person with a disability to remove the requirement that the animal be in its harness at the time of the injury. It was signed into law on March 9.

TENNESSEE

HB 1444 and SB 1475 died when the General Assembly adjourned. They would have added aggravated animal cruelty to animals as an offense for which a juvenile may be classified as a serious youthful offender.

UTAH

HB 23 would have increased the penalty for injuring, harassing or endangering a service animal from a misdemeanor to a felony, but that provision was deleted in an amended version that was signed into law.

HB 341 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have made it a Class B misdemeanor to cause or allow a minor to attend a dogfight or a cock fight.

SUCCESS!! SB 72 creates a new definition and standalone criminal offense of “obscene animal abuse material”; separates animal sexual abuse from the current definition of pornography; adds animal crushing to the offense of distributing obscene animal abuse material; and ensures that obscene animal abuse material is treated throughout the code as pornographic materials.

SB 102 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added animal control officers to the list of professionals designated as first responders.

SB 115 died in committee. It would have required animal control officers to report suspected child maltreatment to the Division of Child and Family Services if: there is a child in the home with the alleged abused or neglected animal; a child safety concern is observed during the animal abuse investigation; or if the officer takes “serious enforcement action” in a home with a child. All animal cruelty convictions would be reported quarterly to DCFS to determine if the conviction warrants a child abuse investigation. DCFS caseworkers investigating alleged child abuse or neglect would have been permitted to report a concern of animal abuse or neglect to local animal control or law enforcement authorities. Veterinarians, who are already permitted to report suspected animal abuse, would have been protected from an employer’s prohibiting such reports or penalizing the veterinarian making the report.

VERMONT

H.492 died when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have introduced “coercive control” into the animal cruelty context. Individuals who commit or threaten animal cruelty in order to influence a victim of domestic abuse would have faced additional penalties.

SUCCESS!! H.578 was signed into law on June 8. Engaging in sexual conduct with an animal in the presence of a minor or in which a minor is a participant is now a crime of aggravated animal cruelty.

H.875 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have expanded the prohibition against promoting and possessing sexual content involving children, including bestiality, to include computer-generated images.

VIRGINIA

HB 208 died when the General

Assembly adjourned. It would have added a new procedure for issuing “anti-harassment” orders to existing provisions that already include granting possession of pets in protective orders. The anti-harassment order would have protected the petitioner, family and household members and include granting the petitioner possession of any companion animal.

HB 266 died when the General Assembly adjourned.

It would have created a new centralized system for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, whereby reports would go to the state Department of Social Services rather than local departments. Virginia animal control officers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect with immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting in good faith.

SUCCESS!! HB 901 was signed into law on April 13. It will allow courts to issue an emergency substantial risk order against individuals believed to pose a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or others. The order could include a ban on possessing firearms. Evidence courts could consider in issuing the order could include “any recent act of violence, force or threat by the subject of the petition toward an animal.” It became effective July 1.

SUCCESS!! SB 495 was signed into law on April 13. It allows courts to include recent acts of violence, force or threat toward an animal as cause for issuing an Emergency Substantial Risk order prohibiting a respondent under a protective order from possessing firearms for the duration of the order. It took effect July 1.

WASHINGTON

SB 6306, “providing equal protections for children and pets”, died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have required animal control officers to notify law enforcement when they have probable cause to believe that circumstances affecting the animal may also affect the child. Children taken into custody as a result of these reports could not be returned home until a court has determined that the home is safe for both the child and the animal and a joint safety plan for both has been developed.

WEST VIRGINIA

HB 4130 and HB 5207 died when the Legislature adjourned. The bills would have established a new crime of hoarding of animals. Offenders would have faced misdemeanor fines of up to \$500 and risk having their animals turned over to an animal shelter for care and relocation.

SUCCESS!! HB 4412 was signed into law on April 1. It establishes liability for publishers and distributors of sexual material harmful to minors, including “patently and sexually offensive” materials including bestiality.

HB 4725 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have added a new section to West Virginia Code 61-9-19 (Crimes Against Chastity, Morality and Decency) to make the commission of a sexual act with an animal a felony, punishable by a fine of \$1,000 to \$5,000.

HB 5322 and HB 5335 died when the Legislature adjourned. The bills would have made sexual abuse of an animal and related activities a misdemeanor; offenders with prior sexual abuse convictions, or who cause serious bodily injury or death to the animal, or who engage a minor would have been guilty of a felony.

HB 5419 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have defined working law enforcement and Search & Rescue K-9s as law enforcement officers; assault or battery of an on-duty animal would be treated similar to a crime against a human law enforcement officer.

SB 192 and SB 688 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have created a new misdemeanor crime of Assault Upon a Service Animal and subject the offender to making financial restitution for costs.

SB 714 died when the Legislature adjourned. It would have allowed the Board of Veterinary Medicine to punish or suspend the license of veterinarians and technicians to practice upon conviction for acts of cruelty, abuse or sexual abuse to an animal or human.

WYOMING

HB 72 died in committee. It would have created a new crime of promoting obscenity to a minor that would have included depictions of sex between a human and an animal.

CANADA

SUCCESS!! Bill C-16, the Protecting Victims Act, was given Royal Assent on June 18. The new law amends the Criminal Code to create a new offence that prohibits engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward animals known to an intimate partner, and also criminalize the distribution of visual representations of bestiality.

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 CALENDAR

Sept. 16 -- Raleigh, N. Car.: Joyce Glass, Clarissa Noureddine, and Stasia Dempster will present "Animal Cruelty Cases and Stakeholders: Investigation, Prosecution, Resolution and the Link to Interpersonal Violence" at a conference for the [North Carolina Animal Cruelty Collaboration](#). The event is approved for CLE by the NC State Bar and for CE by the NC Veterinary Medical Board, and is eligible for consideration for CEUs by the National Animal Care & Control Association.

Sept. 16 and 17 -- Leesburg, Va.: Loudoun County Animal Services Deputy Chief Rebecca Smokoska and Christine Watson DVM will present "A Collaborative Approach to Animal Cruelty Investigations: Veterinary Pathology, The Link, and Virginia Laws" in a [workshop](#) at Loudoun County Animal Services.

Sept. 17 -- Canton, Ga.: Dan Ettinger will present "Foundations of Animal Hoarding, Cruelty, and Neglect" at the [Southeastern Animal Control Association Conference](#).

Sept. 24 -- United Kingdom (online): The Links Group UK will conduct a [webinar](#) on "The Use and Abuse of Animals by Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse".

Sept. 24 -- Sydney, Australia: Lucy's Project will launch the [National Roadmap for Change](#) to Prevent and End Family Violence Against People and Animals with panels of Link advocates and legislators.

Sept. 29 - Oct. 1-- Wichita, Kansas: Besty BnB will present on the benefits of implementing pet-inclusive support within behavioral health services at the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Central Kansas' [annual conference](#).

Sept. 30 -- Louisville, Ky.: Phil Arkow will present "Learn What the Monster Likes – and Feed It! Bridging the Animal Control/Rights/Welfare Gap by Focusing on The Link between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence" at the [Kentucky Animal Care & Control Association](#) Annual Training Conference.

Sept. 30 -- Coleraine, United Kingdom: The Links Group UK and RDA Causeway Coast & Glens will present a [workshop](#), "The Link: Connecting Cruelty -- Coercive Control."

Sept. 30 -- Columbus, Ohio: Vicki Deisner and Aviva Vincent will be presenting on The Link at the [Public Children Services Association of Ohio's](#) Annual Conference.

Sept. 30-Oct. 2 -- Detroit, Mich.: M. Jenny Edwards and Brian Holoyda will present on how animal crush offenders differ from others being treated for sexual offenses at the [Annual Conference](#) of the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse.

Oct. 1 -- Allegan, Mich.: [Allie Phillips](#) will present on "'When Animal Abuse Links to Family Violence: Strategies for Safety'" for the Allegan County Coordinating Council on Domestic Violence.

Oct. 4 -- Asheville, N.C.: Phil Arkow will present "Another One Health Role for Veterinarians: Response to Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence" at the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association's [Compassionate Care Symposium](#).

Oct. 6 -- Red Lodge, Mont. (online): Phil Arkow will present "The Link between Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence – and How Rural Montana Can Better Protect People and Their Animals" in a webinar for [Domestic and Sexual Violence Services](#).

Oct. 7 -- (online): Katherine Compitus will present "Animal Hoarding Disorder: Insights from Animal House and Clinical Best Practices" in a [webinar](#) for the American Psychological Association's Human-Animal Interaction section.

LINK TRAINING CALENDAR

Oct. 14 -- Daytona Beach, Fla.: Don't Forget the Pets will hold a free in-person training [workshop](#) on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

Oct. 14-16 — Toronto, Ont., Canada: The International Association of Veterinary Social Work's [9th Summit](#) will feature: Phil Arkow presenting "Protecting 'Woman's Best Friend': Assessing the Impact of Animal-Inclusive Protection Orders"; Shoshana Mostoller and Erin Doyle presenting "Keeping Families Together: Advancing Pet-Inclusive Shelter Policy in New England"; Kristina Hill presenting "Preventing Animal Hoarding through Cross-Sector, Less Punitive Systems: A One Health Approach"; and Aviva Vincent presenting "Whole Families, While Lives: Integrating Veterinary Social Work into Child Welfare Practice."

Oct. 16-18 — Washington, D.C.: Randy Lockwood will be among the many speakers at the [Animal Law Conference](#), sponsored by the Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Lewis & Clark Law School.

Oct. 21— Pennsylvania (online): The [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular bi-monthly meeting.

Oct. 21-23 — Richmond, B.C., Canada: Courtney Dowdall will present the results of a pilot study on using canine behavioral consultants to help domestic violence survivors' traumatized dogs settle into transitional housing at the British Columbia Society of Transition Houses' [Annual Training Forum](#).

Oct. 22 — Colorado Springs, Colo. (online): Michelle Welch will present "The Investigation and Prosecution of Hoarding Cases" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Oct. 23 -- Atlanta, Ga.: The 27th [Animal Protection & Wellness Expo](#) on Animal Crimes, Cruelty and Cases Training will provide training on topics including Animal Crimes & Civil Cases, The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence, Local Ordinances & State Laws, Police Officer Safety, Investigations, De-escalation, First Aid in Animals, and Initiatives.

Oct. 31 -- San Antonio, Texas: The Center for Pet Family Well-Being's 2026 [One Health Systems Summit](#) will feature presentations from leaders from public health, healthcare, veterinary medicine, housing, social services, education, animal welfare, policy, and other sectors to examine how the human-animal bond matters to systems, not just individuals, and how to repair the structural barriers that have resulted in fragmented systems that fail pet families and pet-inclusive care.

Nov. 3 — Colorado Springs, Colo. (online): Danielle Works of RedRover will present "Safety Planning with Pets" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Nov. 4-6 — Vancouver, Wash.: Nancy Blaney and Kathleen Wood will be among the more than two dozen speakers presenting at the [Association of Prosecuting Attorneys](#) 15th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference.

Nov. 6 — Raleigh, N. Car.: Phil Arkow will present "Another One Health Role for Veterinarians: Responding to Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence" at the [North Carolina Veterinary Conference](#).



Nov. 10 -- S. Padre Island, Texas: Makayla Moore will present "Silent Victims, Shared Violence: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Animal and Human Abuse" at the [Texas Animal Control Association's](#) 52nd Annual Conference.

Nov. 12 -- Pittsburgh, Pa.: Don't Forget the Pets will hold a free in-person training [workshop](#) on how to create and sustain pet housing programs for survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.



LINK TRAINING CALENDAR

Nov. 25 — London, U.K.: Phil Arkow will speak at The Links Group UK's [25th Anniversary celebration](#) inaugurating 16 Days of Activism 2026.

Dec. 2 — United Kingdom (online): The Links Group UK will conduct a [webinar](#) on “The Use and Abuse of Animals by Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse”.

Dec. 8 -- Raleigh, N. Car (online): Phil Arkow will present “Another One Health Role for Veterinarians: Response to Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence” in a [veterinary forensics selective webinar](#) for the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine.

Dec. 16 — Pennsylvania (online): The [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular bi-monthly meeting.

Jan. 19, 2027 -- Orlando, Fla.: Jennifer Bonovich will present “Veterinary Forensics for the Shelter Veterinarian” and “Animal Neglect: Recognizing, Documenting, and Treating Animal Neglect and Abuse Cases From a Forensic Viewpoint” at the [NAVC/VMX](#) Veterinary Conference and Expo.

Jan. 21, 2027 -- Colorado Springs, Colo. (online): Nina Stively of Loudoun County, Va. Animal services will present "How Many is Too Many? Animal Hoarding Cases A(doption) to Z(oonoses) in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Jan. 25-27, 2027 -- Atlanta, Ga.: The NACA ACO [Level II Training tour](#) program will include such topics as animal hoarding, animal fighting, and the ACO as first responder.

March 4, 2027 -- Colorado Springs, Colo. (online): Betsy Biffl will present "Cross-Reporting Laws and Why They Matter" in a webinar for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

March 8-10, 2027 -- Moore, Okla.: The NACA ACO [Level II Training tour](#) program will include such topics as animal hoarding, animal fighting, and the ACO as first responder.

March 14, 2027 — Portland, Ore.: Phil Arkow will present “Protecting Woman’s Best Friend: Assessing the Impact of ‘Animal-Inclusive Protection Orders’” at the Animal Legal Defense Fund’s 35th [Annual Animal Law Conference](#).

March 25, 2027 -- (online): Phil Arkow will present “Another One Health/One Welfare Role for Veterinarians: Responding to Animal Cruelty and Other Family Violence” in a [webinar](#) for the Justice Clearinghouse.

June 15-19, 2027 -- Baltimore, Md.: The International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association will hold its 20th Anniversary Annual [Conference](#).



THE LINK... in the NEWS

Extremist Gets Record 77-Year Sentence for Child Sexual Abuse and Animal Cruelty Videos

The longest federal prison sentence ever imposed on what authorities classify as a “nihilistic violent extremist” was imposed on Aug. 19 against Kyle William Spitze, 27, of Friendsville, Tenn., for producing and distributing online child sexual abuse materials and “crush” videos depicting animal cruelty.

[WXTV](#) reported that Spitze was sentenced to 77 years in federal pris-

on. The U.S. Department of Justice identified him as a member of the networks “764” and “HarmNation”, online extremist groups that use threats, coercion and blackmail to target vulnerable people, including children, through social media.

These tactics include producing sexually explicit material, harming themselves or animals, and committing other acts of violence. Spitze pled guilty to four counts in the case,

which began in 2023 when the FBI began investigating tips that HarmNation members were distributing child sexual abuse materials.

Investigators said Spitze hosted a channel containing images and videos of girls who harmed themselves with variations of Spitze’s online aliases written in blood or carved into their bodies, and images of mutilated animals.

Man Charged with Killing Kittens to Punish Daughter

Lee County, Fla. Sheriff's deputies responding to a report that a man was allegedly trying to drown a two-month-old kitten named "Luna" arrested David Charette, Jr., who reportedly told officers that he would abuse and kill the family's kittens in front of his teenage daughter whenever she "acted up." A [Facebook post](#) from Sheriff Carmine Marceno's Office said that detectives learned that Charette had killed two other kittens in the past year, smothering one and burning the other with a blowtorch. Deputies searched the back yard of the residence to try to find the two kittens' corpses; Luna was taken to an animal hospital where she was reportedly recovering. Charette was charged with felony animal cruelty.



Sheriff Marceno

Woman Charged with Child and Animal Abuse

Police in Berea, Ky. conducting a welfare check on possible child neglect arrested Tiffany Madsen, 36, on charges of "wanton endangerment," criminal child abuse and animal cruelty. [LEX-18 TV](#) reported that police found a front porch covered in mounds of trash with a very foul odor, and the interior of the residence had no running water and was full of fleas, flies and spiders. The arrest report said feces was caked in the floor and holes in the wall and mixed in with children's clothes and toys. Four children were placed in the care of family members and three dogs and five cats were removed by Madison County Animal Control.



Link Case Cited as Need for Cross-Reporting

When Bobby Atkinson, 37, of Louisville, Ky. was confronted by his wife about an alleged affair, police in Louisville, Ky. arrested him on charges of allegedly setting her two dogs, "Brooklyn" and "Seven" on fire, threatening to kill her, and using a firearm to intimidate her. [WAVE-TV](#) reported that Atkinson was also accused of telling his wife, "If we didn't have a daughter together, I'd shoot you and stand over you." Atkinson's wife was too fearful for her family's safety to be interviewed on camera. (See the [June 2026 LINK-Letter](#))

Meanwhile, Sheila Joneleit, the executive director of the [Arrow Fund](#) -- a Louisville-area nonprofit that is creating a justice fund to provide veterinary treatment for animal victims of extreme abuse -- cited the incident as an example of The Link. "When people set dogs on fire because they're trying to make a point with their ex-spouse, it is pure terror," she told news media. "It's pure torture of the animal."

Joneleit emphasized that it is crucial that people who torture animals are brought to justice. "It's important to arrest and convict animal abusers so that we get them off the streets and they don't hurt other animals or other people," she added.

Atkinson was charged with two counts of animal torture, two counts of animal cruelty, menacing, and terroristic threatening. The dogs were recovering from their injuries at Louisville Metro Animal Services.



Drug Bust Leads to Conviction for Dogfighting and Alligator Cruelty

Marquis Williams, of Jacksonville, Fla., is facing the possibility of 65 years in prison after what started out as a drug investigation discovered nine dogs and evidence of animal fighting equipment and a 9-foot-long alligator. The 4th Judicial Circuit's State's Attorney's Office [reported](#) that Williams was convicted of 15 charges of animal fighting, animal cruelty, narcotics, and alligator-related charges. Jacksonville/Duval County Sheriff's SWAT and narcotics units executing a warrant at his home and surrounding properties found cocaine, oxycodone and marijuana and the alligator without access to water. Nine dogs, all of which appeared to be in poor condition or severe neglect, were also seized. Florida law prohibits illegally killing, possessing or capturing alligators, crocodiles or their eggs.



Child and Animal Sexual Abuse in Louisiana

Couple Charged with Bestiality and Child Abuse

An investigation into suspected physical child abuse resulted in Lafourche Parish, La. Sheriff's deputies arresting a Thibodaux couple on charges of bestiality and child cruelty. After receiving reports that Phillip Babin, 28, had allegedly struck the daughter of Hailey Mire in the face with a curtain rod, Babin was arrested and charged with child cruelty. [WDSU-TV](#) reported that a subsequent investigation into the couple's devices reportedly found videos of sexual acts involving a dog. Babin and Mire, 24, were then charged with 36 counts and 47 counts, respectively, of sexual abuse of an animal. Mire is also facing a charge of obstruction of justice.

Baton Rouge Attorney Indicted on Child and Animal Sex Abuse Charges

Meanwhile, a search through the archives of [WDSU-TV](#) found an older and unrelated case from 2016 in which the U.S. Attorney's Office in Baton Rouge, La. announced a federal grand jury had indicted an attorney on charges of possessing and distributing child pornography that involved bestiality. [WDSU-TV](#) reported at the time that Christopher Young, 53, of Baton Rouge, was part-owner of a hotel in Costa Rica where he traveled frequently. During one trip, he received two videos of boys engaging in bestiality and then distributed the videos from 2013 through 2015. The U.S. Attorney said 38 people, on 33 different occasions, had received the videos from Young's smartphone. The outcome of that case was not clear.

Son Charged with Shooting Mother and Killing Her Two Dogs

When police in Mason, Ohio responded to a domestic violence call, it resulted in an hours-long shooting and standoff incident in which Jarret Buttrey, 27, was accused of shooting his 65-year-old mother and killing her two dogs. Police responded to two 911 calls after the mother called to say she had been shot and the dogs had been killed. Police and prosecutors said she had been shot four or five times and that in the 911 call the mother said that Buttrey has a history of mental illness but that he had stopped taking his medications. She had apparently let him move back in with her despite others telling her not to allow it, [WLWT-TV](#) reported. The woman was taken to her hospital where condition was not disclosed; Buttrey was being held under a \$300,000 bond.



FBI Nabs "Most Wanted" Suspect on Animal Fighting and Narcotics Charges

The FBI announced that a man who had been a federal fugitive for three years and who was on their 10 Most Wanted list was captured and charged in connection with drug-trafficking and animal-fighting conspiracies. [WAVE-TV](#) in Louisville, Ky. reported that Gregory Henderson, Jr., 46, had been arrested in Louin, Miss., 11 months after a federal warrant was issued for his arrest on charges of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute controlled substances, conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, and conspiracy to engage in an animal-fighting venture.

The FBI said Henderson was wanted for "his role as the leader of a violent, neighborhood-based gang" in Indianapolis "affiliated with the Gangster Disciples and has significant drug distribution ties to the Sinaloa Cartel." They also said that he is accused of distribution of cocaine, fentanyl and methamphetamine in Indianapolis and of being involved in a dogfighting criminal enterprise that "resulted in the severe abuse and death of numerous dogs." The FBI had said that Henderson has ties to Louisville, Lexington and Cincinnati and had been considered armed and dangerous leading up to his arrest.

Domestic Disturbance Call Leads to Animal Cruelty Charge

Carlos Pineda, of Sparks, Nev., was arrested on multiple charges including animal cruelty when police responded to a domestic disturbance call. [KTVN-TV](#) reported that Pineda allegedly threw a dog over a fence, injuring it. Officers said that when they arrived they also saw a victim hiding in the home who had injuries from the incident.



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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