



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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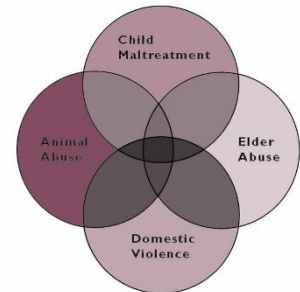
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor



OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

CROSS-REPORTING... and THE LINK Day-Long Webinar Trains 500 Social Workers and Others on Cross-Reporting The Link

The passage of **HB 33** in Ohio – which mandates dog wardens and animal control officers to report suspected child abuse and veterinarians, social services, counselors, and marriage and family therapists to report suspected animal abuse (*See the [January 2021 LINK-Letter](#)*) – created a platform for a Sept. 21 statewide training program targeted to social workers and others in the human and humane services fields. 357 participants watching “Safer Together – Cross-Reporting for Humane and Human Services” – plus nearly 150 more who registered and will watch the [recorded version](#) of the all-day



Vicki Deisner

Zoom webinar – heard 10 Ohio and national authorities discuss aspects of The Link between animal abuse and human violence as they impact social work, senior services, behavioral healthcare, academia, children’s services, victim services, county boards of services for the developmentally disabled, law enforcement, animal control, and humane societies. CE credits were made available for social workers.

“Family violence is a large challenge that is more than one agency can handle. Collaboration allows all of us to better assist all the people and animals we work so hard to protect. This webinar is a chance to explore opportunities to build communications and relationships,” said webinar organizer Vicki Deisner, government affairs representative for the [Animal Welfare Institute](#) and executive director of [Ohio Animal Advocates](#), who led the four-year fight to get **HB 33** enacted.

Deisner described why **HB 33** was needed and how it will save human and animal lives. Ohio had previously enacted pet protection orders, felony-level animal cruelty penalties and a ban on bestiality. In order to enforce these new laws more comprehensively it was necessary to get additional professionals to report suspected animal abuse.

Emphasizing that cross-reporting leads to safety and stability, Deisner reiterated that the role of human services and veterinary personnel is not to investigate suspected animal cruelty but rather to report it to appropriate agencies who will then conduct the investigations.

Asking Children About Animals Can Reveal Adverse Childhood Experiences

Barbara Boat, an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and Executive Director of the Childhood Trust, recalled an incident where an SPCA humane agent photographing animals during a cruelty investigation thought to also photograph the family's young children who were going barefoot in the winter and the house's deplorable living conditions. The officer reported the case to children's services so the family could have a better life.



Barbara Boat

Boat described the CDC's landmark ACES study cataloging Adverse Childhood Experiences and how an increased number of ACES in children's lives leads to developing physical health problems later in life and an earlier death. The study developed the concept of "toxic stress" – prolonged, unremitting stressors for which there is no recovery. Toxic stress triggers cortisol neurochemical reactions which damage the child's developing brain, decrease bone density, lower one's immunity, and cause people to cope by adopting such unhealthy behaviors as excess eating, drinking and smoking.

But the ACES study neglected to include children's exposure to animal cruelty as an adverse experience. Boat emphasized three points that the health community should not overlook: that children share the same environment as their animals; that behaviors that harm animals also harm humans; and that if we don't ask children about their pets we won't know what's really going on. A majority of fatalities and visits to ER stemming from dog bites involve children, and these children are rarely screened to see if child abuse or neglect is also occurring. "The medical system has been late to the gate on this," she advised.

Subsequent studies began to identify other childhood experiences which the ACES study also omitted, such as bullying, discrimination and housing insecurity, but there is still very limited research on the long-term impact of children's witnessing or perpetrating acts of animal abuse.

Boat developed the [Childhood Trust Survey on Animal-Related Experiences](#) as a screening tool with 10 questions to ask children during interviews. "It's amazing the other information you can get," she said. Identifying a child's chaotic environment where pets are not cared for may indicate the family's inability to care for children. A rapid turnover of pets may indicate an inability for the family to make long-term commitments. Learning how pets' bad behaviors are punished can reveal a child's corporal punishment. Asking a child about a favorite or special pet can indicate an ability to make attachments, or identify where a child might be vulnerable to loss by a sexual abuser who targets that animal to ensure the child's silence. "When those pets are threatened, children comply."

Boat advised child welfare workers that pets can enhance a child's life but loss of that pet can intensify the impact of other adversities and make a child more vulnerable to toxic stress. "It's not about being judgmental. It's recognizing there may be some things you need to address by knowing about the animal," she said. "And positive experiences with pets can reverse the effects of ACES if recognized early through cross-reporting."

Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: Addressing Potentially Lethal Situations

Det. Sgt. Todd Curtis of the [Perrysburg, Ohio, Police Department](#) described how a rash of domestic violence homicides prompted his department to take a new look at domestic violence offenders to gain a greater understanding of their motivations. Knowing that domestic violence calls are the most dangerous incidents for police officers – many of whom are ambushed before they even knock on the door – and that a woman’s threatening to leave is the most dangerous time for her, Curtis began including incidents of animal abuse in the department’s lethality assessments.



Det. Sgt. Todd Curtis

“Abuse of any living creature is a choice behavior. These abusers are masters at it,” Curtis said. Abusers are “malignant narcissists” who will target the victim’s weakest links, whether it’s children from a previous marriage or making their pets or horses mysteriously disappear as a way to exert their power and control. “This is a power-fulfillment behavior. Whatever they’re doing is to enhance their own self-esteem.” Animals are specifically targeted because abusers learn there is a relatively low risk of arrest for animal cruelty, which they don’t even know is a crime.

The police department is working with the humane society, whose officers make referrals to the police when they go out on cruelty investigations to help alert them to potentially lethal domestic violence situations. “Having that connection identifies people who need to be on our radar,” Curtis said.

“We need to understand why survivors stay,” he said. “The intimidation and control that goes on behind closed doors occurs every day. This isn’t just a problem between two people – it’s a community problem.” He called cross-reporting laws such as [HB 33](#) valuable tools to get people to understand the dimensions of domestic violence and to get agencies working together on the problem.

Facing Issues with the Pets of the Homeless – In the Shelter and On the Streets

Stacey Burge, CEO of the [Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati](#), described her agency’s response to homeless families with pets. The Network’s mission is to be inclusive and offer emergency sheltering and housing to families however they choose to identify themselves. In 2012 a rash of families showing up at the shelter with pets prompted the agency to recognize that many people consider pets as members of their family.



Stacey Burge

“How do you look at a child who’s lost their home and tell them they also have to give up their pet?” she asked. “That’s not ethical in any way.” They began a formal process of incorporating pets, and a PetSmart grant helped to convert a small room at the emergency shelter into a kennel. “As soon as we started doing that, our phone started ringing,” she recalled, with other area shelters for the homeless and domestic violence survivors asking to house pets there.

Realizing there was a greater community need, they obtained another grant from PetSmart and tripled their holding capacity for pets to create a fully functioning pet shelter plus a foster-care program for pets with special medical needs and people needing short-term hospitalization.

The pet program is run by a social worker who partners with other agencies' case managers to get all the information and referrals needed to include the pets in families' planning and new housing. "We want to make sure the pet stays in the family's life," she said.

Burge said there is still some resistance in agencies, whether it's animal welfare groups who don't believe the homeless should have pets or human services caseworkers who already feel overburdened with caseloads. But the Network is trying to bring these groups together in a common focus.

"The reality is people don't plan to become homeless and that people and pets provide support for each other," she said. "There are all sorts of opportunities for us to intervene. Keeping their pets with them is a fabulous way to support that family's success and motivation."

Recognizing the Signs of Child and Elder Abuse

Janet Hoy-Gerlach, an associate professor of social work at the University of Toledo, conducted two programs describing telltale signs of child maltreatment and elder abuse for professionals in other fields who may not know what situations might suggest possible abuse. The cross-reporting provisions of **HB 33** are designed to uncover red flags for appropriate agencies to investigate further. "It's not on us to investigate or substantiate, it's to let the child welfare experts know there's a concern. They have a whole evidence-based screening process that they use," she said.



She detailed Ohio's child welfare and adult protective systems and guidelines for how to report possible abuse. She described the differences between abuse – a deliberate act of physical, sexual, emotional, or exploitative commission -- and neglect – an act of omission. She listed the details that are needed when making a report.

She emphasized that the animal abuse/elder abuse connection is the newest and least understood aspect of The Link, despite strong anecdotal evidence of the co-occurrence of animal neglect and self-neglect, caseworkers being denied access due to clients' aggressive or excess numbers of animals, and older adults refusing interventions out of concern for their animals' care.

With only a handful of peer-reviewed studies published, this is "an under-researched area compared to other Link areas. Of all the areas of the Link, this the one with the least attention and focus, which is concerning." The fact that organizations such as the National Adult Protective Services Association and the National Sheriffs Association are recognizing this Link, however, is encouraging. Animal hoarding is an especially pernicious problem and health risk for older adults and necessitates an integrated community response, such as the Clark County, Ohio's Combined Health District's [Hoarding Task Force](#) which she called "a proactive way to get everybody in place to get that integrated response."

"There are lots of opportunities for partnerships," she concluded. "The well-being of elders and animals can be interconnected, for better or worse. It starts by asking if pets are a strength or a stressor for them and going from there, and if there are any abuse and neglect issues working together to address them."

Providing Pet Sheltering Services for Domestic Violence Survivors

[My Sister's Place](#), in Athens, Ohio, serves three counties in the southeastern part of the state with domestic violence sheltering and services. Clinical social worker Jordan Vincent explained how in 2012 the shelter started receiving hotline inquiries from women who couldn't leave their dangerous situations because there was no place that would also accept their pets. They conducted a survey of hotline callers and realized that the issue was a significant barrier to safety and needed to be addressed.



Jordan Vincent

Initially, My Sister's Place tried to develop relationships with local boarding kennels and foster homes, but the logistics of finding space at odd hours when clients were in crisis and ensuring that all pets were current on their vaccinations proved too daunting. Many survivors were living in poverty, had abusers who were preventing them from going to a veterinarian, and lacked transportation.

Vincent explained how they switched gears, received a \$20,000 grant from the Kenneth A. Scott Trust, and built an air conditioned and heated kennel on their property with dog runs and cat cages. "Clients can now bring their pets to the shelter if they don't have other options," she said.

She emphasized that the kennels not only get clients and pets out of crisis situations and reduce the risk of lethality but also provide clear therapeutic benefits that help clients and their children to better cope with the stresses going on in their lives. The funding also helps pay for pets to be spayed or neutered and vaccinated, basic medications and veterinary care. A local pet store provides supplies at cost.

She related a case history of a woman whose puppy had been abused and how her abuser had threatened to kill her if she left. The woman managed to escape with the puppy and eventually came to the shelter. "I'll never forget the look on her face when she introduced me to her dog," said Vincent. With the dog also at the shelter, "There was a noticeable improvement in her motivation and mood to help her get to a better place in life. She really credits our program with giving her a fresh start. We hope cross-reporting will give us earlier interventions."

Researching Elders, Caseworkers and Caregivers about Pet Concerns

Adding to the limited research on eldercare and elder abuse issues when pets are involved, Jessica Bibbo of Cleveland's [Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging](#) described her current research project. The study interviewed 455 Adult Protective Services caseworkers and caregivers working with elders to learn more about pet issues facing the clients, the caregivers and the caseworkers.

The study will report that pets can be an important part of elders' support systems, especially if the person is isolated or is experiencing dementia. A pet may offer these individuals the last opportunity to feel independent and care for another being at a time then they are becoming increasingly dependent on others for their care. Pets give them a chance to feel needed and a structure and a routine by which they can shape their day.



Jessica Bibbo

Caregivers see a need for planning that includes the pet and such issues as regular exercise, going to veterinarians, shopping for pet food, and making provisions in advance should the client die or need to move. “The social determinants of health include everybody in the home. Being in an abusive situation affects every individual in that home, whether they have two legs or four. A person’s health and situation are intertwined. If that individual has a pet you need to plan for that pet as well,” Bibbo said.

APS caseworkers identified several issues that they encounter, including animal hoarding, clients refusing to get medical care for fear of leaving the animals alone, unintentional neglect of the pets, and unsanitary conditions in the home which can lead to foreclosures and prevent home care agencies from entering the residence. “They also reported how important the human-animal bond is to older adults but that there may be other issues that need to be addressed in order to be able to enjoy the human-animal bond and the animals in their lives.”

The project is identifying both the benefits and challenges for elders with pets and will create materials for professionals and caregivers working with older adults to help them understand what they need to be aware of and what they may see in working with this population. “Asking about pets allows you to more fully understand the client’s support network and their worries and concerns,” she said.

How to Identify Animal Abuse and Report It

Andrew Warner, a humane agent for the [Humane Society of Greater Dayton](#) and manager of the shelter’s Safe Haven program, described the differences in Ohio between animal control officers, animal wardens and humane agents. Only sworn officers are allowed to investigate animal cruelty, creating a confusing patchwork of programs with enforcement responsibilities. A directory available online from Ohio Animal Advocates lists investigating agencies in all Ohio counties.



Andrew Warner

He presented an extensive list of telltale signs of conditions that might suggest animal abuse or neglect, including observed physical abuse, extreme malnutrition, open scars and scabs, a limping animal, bruises and scars, collars embedded in the animal’s neck, infestations with fleas and tick, severely matted fur, and overgrown nails.

Warner noted that his humane society’s priority is to work with pet owners to help them achieve acceptable standards of care for their pets, where possible, rather than automatically removing the animals from the home. By doing so, “Everyone’s lives are enriched. Our first goal is education,” he said. If that fails, he said, “Turn to law enforcement to remove the animals from harmful situations.” He counseled personnel in human services now mandated to cross-report: “You should think of yourself as a reporter, not an investigator. But the more information you can provide, the better.”

Continuing the Conversation through Collaborative Coalitions

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow presented a keynote address summarizing how animal abuse interfaces with child, domestic and elder abuse and described how The Link impacts social work, veterinary medicine, animal care and control agencies, and domestic violence and child protective services. He closed out the event with guidelines to help community groups launch or enhance multi-disciplinary coalitions against violence. The webinar was funded by Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust.

DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK

Can a Dog Be a Victim of Domestic Violence? Can Her Owner Be a Victim of Animal Cruelty?

The Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys have filed an *amici curiae* (“friend of the court”) brief in a case going to the Washington State Supreme Court to determine that animal cruelty can be a crime of domestic violence and whether the owner of a killed dog is also a victim of animal cruelty.



The case, *Washington v. Charmarke Abdi-Issa*, involves an incident where Julie Fairbanks was in an intimate relationship with Abdi-Issa who killed her dog “Mona.” Abdi-Issa was convicted of animal cruelty and the trial court found that two sentence enhancements applied, including one declaring the crime to be one of domestic violence. The appellate court disagreed, holding that the sentence enhancements could not apply because neither Julie nor Mona were a “victim.”



The brief argues that because “the crime of animal cruelty is closely related to domestic violence, and is often used as a tool to terrorize or control domestic violence victims,” animal cruelty should constitute a crime of domestic violence under the intent of Washington’s domestic violence statutes “that the official response to cases of domestic violence shall stress the enforcement of the laws to protect the victim and shall communicate the attitude that violent behavior is not excused or tolerated.”

Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and Utah specifically define coercive-control animal abuse as an act of domestic violence. Washington does not have such a law, but its definition of domestic violence includes crimes against property, such as Mona.

The brief argues that Washington’s Sentencing Reform Act defines a “victim” as anyone who has sustained emotional or psychological injury as a direct result of the crime. Since Fairbanks suffered the loss of her dog who was her emotional companion, she should be considered a victim of animal cruelty.

The trial court found that Fairbanks had been in a domestic violence relationship, that Abdi-Issa used Fairbanks’ bond with Mona to exert control over her and had threatened to kill and take out his anger on both Mona and Fairbanks. “The facts of this case typify the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence,” the brief argues, citing extensive Link research.

The brief also acknowledges that Mona, as a dog, does not qualify as a “victim” under the laws involved in this particular case, but asks the Court to refrain from holding that animals can *never* be considered to be victims of crime. The brief cites cases in Oregon and Colorado where courts have recognized animals as victims of the crime of animal cruelty, and notes that such a case may still one day come before the Washington Supreme Court.

NCJFCJ to Recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month with Purple Thursday Photos

In an effort to recognize October as **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** and to honor survivors, the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges is inviting people to participate in **Purple Thursday**, Oct. 21. To participate, take a selfie or a picture of your team with everyone wearing purple. Submit the photo by e-mail **no later than Oct. 15** to fladson@ncjfcj.org



Pet Friendly Florida Shelters Stage Unique Fundraisers Clay County Shelter to Raise Funds to Replace Aging Kennels



Pet kennels at Quigley House in Florida

[Quigley House](#), the dual-certified domestic violence and sexual assault center serving Clay County Fla., will hold a pet-themed fundraiser on Oct. 23 to raise funds to replace and refurbish existing dog and cat holding facilities. Development Director Christy McMillan tells *The LINK-Letter* that plans for the event include a Pet Parade, costume contest, talent show, K-9 demonstrations, and interaction with veterinarians, groomers and doggie daycare centers. The event will also help educate the community on The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse

Orlando Shelter Conducting Calendar Pet Photo Contest

Meanwhile, another pet-friendly shelter in Florida has come up with a creative fundraiser by offering the public the chance to have their pets included in the 2022 [Paws for Peace calendar](#). Harbor House of Central Florida, based in Orlando, has a pet photo contest. Contestants can pay \$15 for a chance to enter their pet's photo and \$1 per vote from family and friends; the top 12 pets to receive the most votes will be featured on each month of the calendar.



Contestants can also guarantee a spot on the calendar for a \$50 donation to reserve a specific day, such as the pet's adoption anniversary, birthday or memorial. Specific dates are first come/first served. No humans are allowed in the photos which had to be submitted by Sept. 30. Calendars can be purchased in December 2021. All proceeds benefit the Paws for Peace kennel that has housed more than 350 pets at the domestic violence shelter since it opened in 2012 (*See the [August 2012 LINK-Letter](#)*).

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK **Bay Area Mobile Vet Service Recognized for Aiding Domestic Violence Pet Victims**



When domestic violence survivors with pets leave abusive situations, it can be extremely difficult to find a domestic violence shelter that accepts pets. Fortunately, California has [19 and counting](#) pet-friendly shelters but finding safety can be further compromised if their pets have not been fully vaccinated and if medical records are unavailable.

To solve this problem, [Ruthless Kindness](#) was formed in 2017 in Sonoma County, Calif., by veterinarians Sarah Reidenbach and Kate Kuzminski. The nonprofit provides free 24/7 on-call veterinary services through a mobile medical unit so victims and others who are at-risk have the vaccination records and other things needed to be able to bring their pets with them to safety. It partners with about a dozen shelters for persons experiencing domestic violence and homelessness and has served 300 pets.



Sarah Reidenbach (left) & Kate Kuzminski

Ruthless Kindness was formed when Reidenbach was working as the medical director at the Sonoma County Humane Society and saw survivors and other at-risk individuals who were not seeking safety because they didn't want to be separated from their animal family members. The program was designed to fill gaps in services in underserved communities. "Suffering animals are linked to suffering people. Forgotten animals are linked to forgotten people," reads the organization's [website](#).

Providing medical services for survivors' animals helps get in front of the roots of abuse, violence, abandonment, and neglect. Ruthless Kindness also rescues farm animals, conducts humane education programs, and provides free tele-support to at-risk pet owners. It collaborates extensively with local partners and is establishing an MOU with the Sonoma County Family Justice Center.

In recognition of these accomplishment, Ruthless Kindness recently won a [Jefferson Award for Public Service](#). The local award is offered by KPIX-TV, the CBS affiliate serving San Francisco and the Bay Area. The Jefferson Awards are a national program established in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis as the "Nobel Prize for public service." Awards recognize people who make a difference on a daily basis in their local communities—unsung heroes who do extraordinary things without expectation of recognition or reward. Awards are given at both the national and local levels. Local TV stations participate in recognizing individuals who positively impact their communities.

Auburn Students Learn About Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse

Jessica Rock, Assistant District Attorney in the Towaliga, Ga., Judicial Circuit and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney handling animal crimes in the Southern District of Georgia, presented at the Auburn University College of Veterinary medicine. She spoke to the next generation of veterinarians on "The Importance of Documenting and Reporting Suspicions of Animal Abuse."



Study Examines Finnish Veterinarians' Reporting of Suspected Abuse to Police

Recent urbanization in Finland has dramatically increased the popularity of companion animals, resulting in an increase in the number of animal welfare problems. Municipal veterinarians have the responsibility and authority to investigate cases of animal abuse and are required to notify the police of violations of the nation's Animal Welfare Act. However, enforcement of these provisions as they affect companion animals has historically been lax, with most violations of not officially reported to the police, and those that are reported are not investigated as often as other crimes. Potential reasons for this reduced response include stress and fatigue due to excessive workloads and recurrent threatening situations, ambiguous definitions of unnecessary suffering, and reserving the limited resources of both the police and official veterinarians for the most serious cases. Also, compassion toward an animal owner and moral distress from reporting underprivileged people to the police may prevent an official animal welfare authority from initiating a criminal procedure.

A recent year-long study of veterinarians' inspection findings and the resulting actions in Helsinki identifies the factors that predict their submitting investigation requests to the police. The most common forms of animal abuse were lack of basic maintenance and care (42% of cases) and insufficient veterinary care (27%). The municipal veterinarians investigated the complaints in 85.5% of the cases, and performed at least one physical inspection of the animals' premises in 50.7% of the cases, but requested a police investigation in only 9.6% of all cases with detected non-compliances.

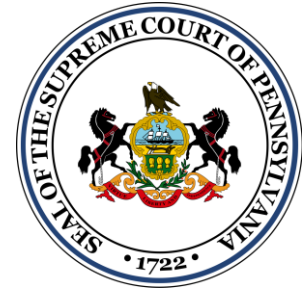
The detection of violence against animals predicted requests for police investigations. Violence toward an animal was reported in 15% of the complaints but only detected in 3% of all cases. The authors note that confirming cases of violence is challenging: animals can only be superficially examined during an inspection, and it is often impossible to prove the cause and mechanism of observed injuries without forensic pathology. Eyewitness accounts are crucial when confirming cases of animal abuse, and police investigations are necessary to record statements.

The authors recommend that to improve the animal welfare control system and the investigation of crimes against animals, cooperation between officials should be developed. The key roles of veterinarians as initiators and expert witnesses in criminal procedures have been widely recognized, and the need for efficient cooperation between the veterinarians and the police has been emphasized. They cite the recognition of violence against companion animals as a form of domestic violence as further underlining the need for collaboration between veterinarians and police, who can perform essential roles when seizing animals, investigating suspected crimes, and providing executive assistance or participating in animal welfare inspections. They call for a joint education program for official veterinarians and the police to develop a shared understanding of unnecessary suffering as a definite condition of animal crime and further studies to improve the understanding of the prevalence of violence against animals and to advance methods used by animal welfare control to identify cases of violence.

-- Valtonen, E., Koskela, T., Valros, A., & Hänninen, L. (2021). Animal welfare control-inspection findings and the threshold for requesting a police investigation. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 8:736084. doi:10.3389/fvets.2021.736084

Therapeutic Interventions... and THE LINK **Pennsylvania Upholds Use of “Comfort Dog” in Courtroom**

Pennsylvania has become the [latest state](#) in which an appeals court has upheld the right of juvenile witnesses to be accompanied by a trained supportive dog when testifying in court and when protocols are in place to ensure the dog’s presence does not unfairly prejudice a jury.



On Sept. 22, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued decisions in *Commonwealth v. Purnell* related to a criminal case involving a “comfort dog” named Melody. Melody had accompanied an autistic 13-year-old girl as she testified against a defendant charged with murder and firearms violations in the death of a person shot seven times. The child witnessed the shooting, said that the shooter had pointed the gun at her before fleeing the scene, and feared that a gang would further harm her.

The trial court was asked to allow her testimony as she was accompanied by Melody as a way to alleviate her trauma; the defense countered that the dog’s presence would invoke sympathy for the child and that the girl, who was reported as having a “propensity to get distracted”, might not be able to focus on her testimony. The prosecutor argued that the dog was needed due to her fear for her safety.

With no Pennsylvania case law addressing comfort dogs in the courtroom, the judge opted to allow it but referred to it as a “service dog” and hidden from the jury’s view. The Supreme Court opinion noted that the dog did not appear “in any way disruptive to the trial” and that the child needed time to recover her composure, as she had started to weep. The defendant was convicted and sentenced to 20.5-to-47 years.

The appeals court rejected the defense’s arguments that the dog’s presence generated sympathy and prejudiced the jury against the defendant and that the prosecution had failed to establish the necessity of the dog. It upheld the trial court’s decision writing, “The use of comfort dogs for witnesses with mental, psychological or emotional conditions appears to be a matter of first impression in Pennsylvania.” The Supreme Court’s majority opinion concurred, stating that the trial court had successfully balanced the extent to which a comfort dog may assist a witness in providing truthful testimony with the need for that accommodation against potential prejudice to a defendant. The court was correct in considering the dog’s training, providing the jury with limiting instructions, and employing means to limit the jury from viewing the dog.

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For Additional Information

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

Juvenile Offenders in Texas Train Homeless Shelter Dogs

The Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department in Richmond, Texas has joined the growing ranks of institutions that are incorporating animal-assisted therapy programs to rehabilitate both youthful offenders and homeless dogs. The [Canine Leadership Program](#) is a special program within the department and operates as a partnership with Fort Bend County Animal Services, the nonprofit Fort Bend Partnership for Youth, and the Houston Humane Society. The program focuses on finding permanent homes for homeless dogs from Fort Bend County Animal Services while teaching valuable skills to youth from Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation.



Chet Rittgers

Canine Coordinator Chet Rittgers tells *The LINK-Letter* that the dogs chosen to participate in the program are from Fort Bend County Animal Services. Fort Bend Partnership for Youth assists in providing food and supplies for the program. The Houston Humane Society vaccinates, spays or neuters and provides heartworm preventative for the program dogs. Youth from Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation spend time with the dogs learning to train and care for them. They teach them basic obedience as well as a few cute tricks. At the end of the training period the youth assist in promoting the dogs for adoption to permanent homes.

News from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Mexican Link Coalition Making Progress in Animal Welfare Reforms

A newly-formed effort to use The Link between animal abuse and human violence as a means to advance animal welfare legislation in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico is beginning to see results. Verence Rivera Soto with the [Asociación Hidalguense para la Protección de los Animales \(AHPAAC\)](#) (*See the August 2021 LINK-Letter*) tells us that a meeting will be held on Oct. 15 to present “Animal Welfare as a Tool in Crime Prevention.” State, municipal and judicial government officials will attend and will discuss a Protocol of Action to the State Attorney General’s Office, an Initiative to Modify the Political Constitution of the State of Hidalgo, and amendments to the Criminal Code in Matters of Crimes Against Animals.

SOCIAL WORK... and THE LINK

Link-related Veterinary Social Work Openings Available in Four Cities



MedVet, a chain of some 30 emergency and specialty veterinary facilities across the U.S., is seeking Veterinary Social Workers for its facilities in Worthington, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Garden City, Idaho; and Chicago. The position’s responsibilities include: providing crisis intervention for clients experiencing high stress, emotions and difficult situations; providing referrals to community mental health professionals; connecting clients with community resources; establishing working relations with community resources and programs; and consulting with staff on difficult ethical decisions including reporting suspected animal abuse. Full job descriptions and application procedures are available on the [MedVet website](#).

LAW ENFORCEMENT... and THE LINK

Six Link Proposals Offered to Canadian Parliament

Humane Canada – the national federation of SPCAs and humane societies in our northern neighbor -- has published its [2021 national policy platform statement](#) for Parliamentary legislators. Among the 25 recommendations being proposed to MPs addressing animal welfare concerns are six specific Link-based requests:



- Provide funding dollars to strengthen the Criminal Justice System’s response to animal cruelty through training for enforcement officers, crown prosecutors and the judiciary on animal crimes and the Violence Link to improve community safety and reduce societal violence and vulnerability -- as identified in 2021 through a Senate Observation in Bill C-3;
- Increase effectiveness of the Criminal Code in recognizing the Violence Link by including animals as victims in Section 2, adding a Coercive Control offense which recognizes animal abuse as a factor and adding animal cruelty as an aggravating feature of other offenses;
- Ensure that all reporting and tracking systems, including the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System and the Major Case Management System, integrate animal cruelty;
- Create an Animal Cruelty Offender Database so that offences and offenders can be tracked;
- Fund mandatory training for Justice stakeholders to entrench knowledge of animal welfare and the Violence Link into the system; and
- Ensure that animal issues are tracked by Statistics Canada including information about companion animals in Canadian households and co-occurrence of animal abuse and interpersonal violence.

These proposals are all framed in a Link context. “Evidenced-based research shows that violence against animals and violence against people are not separate and distinct problems. Rather, they are part of a larger pattern of violent crimes that often co-exist and are popularly known as the ‘Violence Link’. Cases of partner abuse, gang violence, youth crimes, assaults, homicides, sexual assaults and child abuse also commonly include animal abuse, however, the justice, public safety and social service system does not recognize or incorporate animal welfare into their systems,” the policy platform states.

“We are pleased to see that some of our Violence Link asks are featured in the policy platforms of a few of the political parties, signaling a growing recognition of the Violence Link among politicians,” said Hannah Brown, coordinator of the Violence Link program.

THE LINK in the LITERATURE
ASPCA Cruelty Research Seed Grants
to Foster Coordinated Community Responses



The ASPCA has [announced the availability of grants](#) for high-quality research that will enhance communities' capacity for coordinated responses to animal cruelty, which is critical to the welfare of animals and people. The research also aims to empower communities to prevent and respond effectively to cruelty, and to heighten awareness and responses to animal cruelty by key professional audiences such as legislators, veterinary professionals, law enforcement, prosecutors, social service professionals, and animal welfare organizations. A typical grant under this program is \$10,000-\$15,000 with a maximum of \$25,000. The total funding available for this grant opportunity is \$55,000. The application deadline for grant proposals is Oct. 25.

The Cruelty Research Seed Grant program study period is one calendar year from the time of award, with investigator and organizational recipients eligible to apply for one, no-cost extension for one additional year. The program acknowledges that the effort to prevent and effectively respond to animal cruelty can be advanced by multiple disciplines and diverse areas of expertise (e.g., public health, criminal justice, law, public policy, psychology, sociology, social work, veterinary medicine, and animal behavior).

Investigators and/or research teams affiliated with U.S. public and nonprofit entities, such as universities, colleges, veterinary hospitals and clinics, and other institutions are eligible to apply. Applications from historically and currently underserved backgrounds and/or those who are in the early stages of their career are strongly encouraged.

The program solicits research proposals that will inform public policy, the legal field, and/or criminal and clinical casework. Of particular interest is research that heightens awareness of animal cruelty and provides evidence that informs key community stakeholders and allied professionals in preventing and responding to this animal welfare issue. Projects with the primary aim of providing services or building infrastructure will not be considered.

A second and similar ASPCA seed grant program is offering grants of up to \$35,000 for research into [applied animal behavior](#) that responds to behavior problems experienced in shelter animals and victims of animal cruelty. Typical grants will be in the \$10,000 - \$15,000 range and are available for multi-disciplinary approaches embodying ethology, biology, psychology, physiology, veterinary medicine, and other scientific areas. Such research could inform forensics in law enforcement and criminal prosecutions. The deadline for applications is also Oct. 25.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

Link Focus Based on Original Meaning of “Humane” Seen as Advancing Well-Being

North Americans primarily associate the word “humane” with “humane society”, a definition implying animal protection. However, the origins of “humane” and “humane society” are complex and primarily reflect an abiding interest in human and societal welfare rather than animal welfare. The evolution of the American association of humane societies with animal protection contrasts with its British usage describing organizations that rescue victims of drowning and prevent premature burials.

A new article by National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow explores the mystery regarding the evolution of “humane society” as applied to animal protection. He argues that a Link approach – returning to the original roots of “humane” that describe animal cruelty as cause for human and societal concern as a potential sentinel for interpersonal violence -- rather than a strict focus on animals’ welfare or their rights, holds great promise for advancing legislation and community programming that improve the well-being of human and non-human animal species and the prevention of crime.

-- Arkow, P. (2021). “Humane criminology”: An inclusive victimology protecting animals and people. In K. Spanjol, C. Lavery & H. Grant (Eds.). *Social Sciences* 10: 335. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10090335>.

Link/One Health Approach Seen as Viable Court Strategy in China

One of the few academic articles from China describing animal welfare implications for human welfare observes that strategic litigation to protect animal welfare worldwide encompasses several tactical themes: environmental protection, child abuse, veterinarian malpractice, product liability, and the pet’s status as a quasi-family member. This litigation strategy, as themed in One Health, has been observed in legal practice in China. Using 1,520 zoonosis-related civil lawsuit judgments, this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of this litigation strategy in animal health cases. It reported that Chinese courts were indeed persuaded by the One Health litigation strategy, even when bound by the discretion rules. The authors suggest that using this litigation strategy results in more successful outcomes and larger damage awards, so there might be a practical value in using this strategy in animal welfare lawsuits.

-- Wu, K., Yu, Y., Chen, C., & Fu, Z. (2021). Is One Health a viable strategy in animal health litigation: Evidence from civil lawsuits in China. *Animals*, 11(9), 2560. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ani11092560>

Portuguese Veterinary Forensic Study Cites Link Literature

The first forensic study of dog and cat deaths in Portugal cites extensive Link literature to emphasize that animal abuse and interpersonal violence can occur simultaneously and that the public’s greater awareness of animal issues is largely responsible for the increased number of animal cruelty complaints to law enforcement agencies. “Crimes against companion animals are universal and represent a major problem in human/animal interaction. Animal crimes are a widespread phenomenon with serious implications for animal welfare, individual well-being and for society in general,” write the authors. “It is now recognized that crimes against animals and domestic violence can co-exist and that animal abuse can be indicative of intrafamilial problems. Animal cruelty occurs within a social context, and it is the responsibility of the community members working in the field of animal health and safety to find resources to put an end to animal victimization, namely by promoting greater understanding of the human/animal relationship.” The study at the Portuguese national pathology laboratory for agrarian and veterinary investigations characterized deaths of dogs and cats by blunt-force trauma, firearms, poisoning, and asphyxiation.

-- Araújo, D., Lima, C., Mesquita, J.R., Arorim, I., & Ochoa, C. (2021, Sept. 20). Characterization of suspected crimes against companion animals in Portugal. *Animals*, 11, 2744. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11092744>

COVID-19 and The Link



Mary Renck Jalongo

abuse were exacerbated.

Study Examines Worldwide Impact of Lockdowns on Pet-Keeping and The Link

A remarkable, comprehensive synthesis of the research exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pets and pet-keeping practices concludes that dogs and cats fared both better and worse than prior to the lockdowns, and that people who were already struggling suffered the most deleterious effects while pets with pre-existing behavioral issues were the most affected by the angst of their caregivers, the dramatic changes in lifestyles, and the turbulent times in which they were living. Issues related to The Link between human and animal

Mary Renck Jalongo, professor emerita at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, writes that during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became undeniable that the welfare of human and non-human animals is inextricably bound, whether from the zoonotic transmission of the virus from animals to humans or from the sweeping changes to daily living that had major consequences for the dynamics between pets and people. These included:

- Early in the crisis, questions about pets transmitting the disease to humans caused some panic abandonment, relinquishment and euthanasia of pets.
- In Mexico, pet overpopulation was already a public health threat and the number of stray animals tended to increase.
- After it appeared that these initial fears were unfounded, there was an international surge in the acquisition of cats and dogs. Homeless dogs and cats were adopted in unprecedented numbers in a global emptying of shelters. Purebreed dog breeders were inundated with demands for puppies and had long wait lists; the Kennel Club in the U.K. reported a 168% increase in people searching for puppies during 2 months of lockdown alone. (Possible explanations for this international phenomenon varied. After it became clear that lockdowns would go on for an extended period, pets were viewed as companions who might help to ease feelings of isolation and bring joy to children confined at home and deprived of interaction with peers. The continuous presence of adults in the home was also perceived as conducive to helping a new pet adapt to the household.
- Some people were taken in by online scams and purchased nonexistent dogs. The U.K. reported a sharp increase in the number of dogs stolen. Many parents unwittingly procured puppies from “puppy mills” or on a whim with little forethought.
- Problem behaviors in children and pets were exacerbated by close quarters and the stresses of confinement.
- A child who would normally be in the care of a family member, childcare or school suddenly was in the company of a pet cat or dog all the time. Pets who are noisy or demanding of attention sometimes disrupt the focus needed for work and school. Interactions that previously were problematic between children and pets tended to escalate. Dogs typically spend nearly half their day sleeping yet, during lockdown, they may have had almost no quiet or alone time.
- Quarantines, lockdowns, supply chain problems, business closings, and the suspension of various services created many pet-keeping challenges: getting proper food and access to groomers, trainers, doggy daycare and veterinary services, and providing care if owners were to become incapacitated.

- Adults who were first responders or essential workers' customary arrangements for pets' care while working were sometimes unavailable.
- A study in Italy found the incidence of serious dog bites from family dogs increased while bites from unfamiliar dogs decreased, presumably due to the stay-at-home orders.
- Bringing children and pets together put children at risk of injuries when caregivers are inexperienced with managing children and pets, otherwise occupied, or unaware of appropriate child–pet interactions.
- After some restrictions were relaxed and people were outdoors again, dogs encouraged routines such as taking a walk which not only increased physical activity but also provided opportunities to interact with other people from a distance.
- The presence of pets in the household was identified by 26% of caregivers as exerting a positive effect on sleep quality in young children.
- Pets became a complementary social support that provided stability, counteracted unpredictability, and supplemented technology-initiated human-to-human interaction. Spending time with family pets was identified as a key strategy for coping with stress during long periods of quarantine and lockdown, particularly for children who lost a loved one to COVID-19.
- Virtual experiences with pets also occurred. Companion animals often made a surprise appearance during work and school gatherings, sometimes eliciting positive comments, providing a quick break, or offering comic relief.

The pandemic exacerbated known risks of family violence affecting all vulnerable family members, Jalongo writes. For troubled families, forced confinement to homes tended to intensify and increase conflict. When a family member is already volatile, a minor annoyance from a pet can prompt an angry outburst with violence directed toward the animal and/or other family members, a recurrent theme in studies of intimate partner violence.

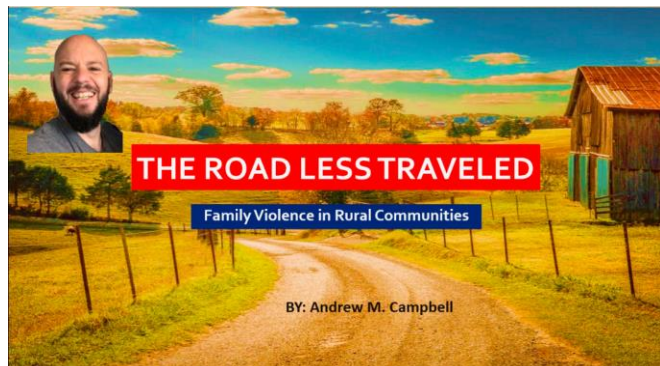
Throughout the world, the incidence of child neglect, abuse, and violence within families increased significantly during the pandemic; the European Union reported a 60% increase in the incidence of domestic violence. Given that dogs and cats are sensitive to the emotional tenor of human interactions, their welfare in a family characterized by conflict is severely compromised. Nevertheless, for many victims of violence, pets can represent a safe haven that helps them to cope with adverse family situations, she notes.

Jalongo concludes that it remains to be seen how pets — particularly those that were newly acquired in record numbers during the crisis — fare after some semblance of normalcy is reinstated. There is concern in the animal welfare community that large numbers of pet cats and dogs will be abandoned or brought to shelters after people go back to offices, finances are stretched, and drastic changes to daily routines occur. If parents do decide to rehome, abandon, or even euthanize a child's pet it is important to consider that, if a child is bonded with an animal, losing it is a major developmental event.

– Jalongo, M.R. (2021, Aug. 18). Pet keeping in the time of COVID-19: The canine and feline companions of young children. *Early Childhood Education Journal* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01251-9>.

RAISING LINK AWARENESS

Increased Risks of Link-Based Family Violence in Rural Areas Explored



Andrew M. Campbell, whose groundbreaking research on the animal abuse and domestic violence ([See the July 2019 and April 2020 LINK-Letters](#)) has usually focused on the urban area of Indianapolis, has turned his attention to a relatively unexplored area by looking at family violence overlaps in rural America. In a Justice Clearinghouse webinar, “The Road Less Traveled: Family Violence in Rural Communities,” held in partnership with the Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives

Association, Campbell emphasized that the barriers to detection, prevention, response, and escape from family violence are exacerbated in rural communities and “we need to think creatively.”

He called family violence in rural areas “a nightmare,” a major challenge to address, and an even harder challenge for victims. Victim vulnerability is increased and offender accountability is lowered when greater distances and long driveways separate victims from neighbors, victim service agencies, and domestic violence and animal shelters. Rural victims and perpetrators are essentially living in extreme isolation on an island, often with limited access to internet broadband, cellphone coverage, public transportation, and a vehicle. Meanwhile, many people move from urban areas to what they think is a more serene country lifestyle, but while the stressors of urban living are reduced there are more family stresses, greater access to firearms, and an increased risk of alcohol and substance abuse in rural living, “which is very concerning to the occurrence of family violence,” he said.

INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Campbell described the “insurmountable obstacles” many victims face in a “lock-in scenario” where the victim is trapped with the perpetrator with no way out and detection is extremely difficult. They may be separated from their own families and more likely to live in a community where the perpetrator’s family resides. She may be unaware of shelters or resources – and over 25% of women in small and rural areas live more than 40 miles from the nearest shelter, and many rural counties have no shelters. In tight-knit communities where everyone knows each other, victims fear being ostracized and perpetrators who are well-known and respected rarely get prosecuted.

Rates of domestic violence incidence and frequency are higher in rural areas and are especially alarming among Native American and Alaskan women, who often live in rural areas; 84% of these women have experienced domestic violence and 97% of those incidents were committed by non-native perpetrators, he said. Only 31% of Native American lands are within a 60-minute drive of a sexual assault program. During the pandemic more people in Alaska died of domestic violence than of COVID. The 10 states with the highest rates of domestic violence are largely rural. Campbell suggested adopting a public health approach that sends mobile clinics into rural communities and have mobile domestic violence shelters visit rural churches to extract victims, since church may be the one place the abuser allows her to go.

CHILD MALTREATMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Campbell said the usual risk factors for child abuse and neglect – low income, education and employment levels – are not as predictive in rural areas as are such other factors as an increased rate of single-parent families and co-occurring cases of elder abuse. An abused grandparent may be a child’s emotional support and in some rural areas the same caseworkers have to handle both child and elder abuse. Rates of child abuse are higher in rural areas and reporting abuse is a barrier when the perpetrator is a well-respected member of the small community.

58% of rural communities have no licensed childcare providers and rural areas have a greater likelihood of children’s caregivers having been victims of child maltreatment themselves. Peer pressure in rural schools can be so intense that youth suicide rates are nearly double those in urban areas, perhaps as a result of bullying, and there is an alarming increase in victimization of LGBTQ youths in rural areas.

ELDER ABUSE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Although the number of reported cases of elder abuse are similar in rural and urban areas, the number of incidents before the victim calls for help is more than double in rural communities, he said. Reasons for not reporting include older victims living with, and being dependent upon, their adult children; embarrassment; fear of being ostracized by the community; and an opioid crisis that causes addicted children to move back in with their parents. “This increase in severity and incidence is very concerning,” he said.

ANIMAL ABUSE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Cats are more common than dogs in rural households, and prisoners and serial killers with childhood histories of animal abuse have reported that they often specifically targeted cats. Farm animals may also be victimized, he noted. In urban areas, neighbors are the most common reporters of animal abuse but the isolation factors of rural living remove this substantial source of reporting. Meanwhile, a significant number of rural counties lack either an animal shelter or a dedicated animal control agency.

When we think about abuse, it’s not a 1-dimensional issue – it’s a 3-dimensional issue affecting adults, children and pets, Campbell said, and increased opportunities for abuse always result in more abuse. When people are at risk their pets are also at risk. “Their well-being is tightly tied together. Once it starts it only gets worse and it happens again and again. Once the ball starts rolling it just keeps rolling faster and faster,” he said. “And when neighbors are few and far-between, it’s a major problem for reporting. Regardless of how we look at family violence we can’t help anyone unless we help everyone.”



To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it's free!*)
– Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow
(arkowpets@snip.net)
Please tell us what organization(s) you're with
and where you're located.

Canadian Violence Link Coalition to Hold National Conference

An all-star line-up of Canadian, American and British Link authorities will highlight Canada's national [Violence Link conference](#). The two-day event, scheduled virtually for Nov. 4-5, will help multidisciplinary professionals learn more about how animal abuse is Linked with family violence and will bring together criminal justice stakeholders for cross-sectoral training on how to collaborate and stop the cycle of violence. Featured speakers and topics include:

- Alberta SPCA: "One Family Welfare: Safety for Animals and People in Crisis"
- Sandra Anderson & Crystal Giesbrecht: "Becoming Pet-Friendly: Guidance for Domestic Violence Shelters"
- Animal Legal Defense Fund, National Link Coalition, & University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work: "The Impact of COVID-19 on Link Cases"
- Animal Welfare Institute: "Components of a Successful National Directory of Safe Havens for Domestic Violence Survivors and their Pets"
- Sarah Bernardi: "Veterinary Social Work: A Field at the Intersection of Human-Animal Safety"
- Sens. Yvonne Boyer & Pierre Dalphond: "The Violence Link: Senate Perspectives on Social Context and Our Relationships with Animals"
- Hannah Brown, Kendra Coulter, Amy Fitzgerald, & Louise Lathey: "The 2021 National Violence Link Awareness Survey: Raising Awareness Among Professionals"
- Calgary Humane Society, Calgary Police Service & Edmonton Police Service: "Battling Violence Link Crimes: Strategies from the Alberta Enforcement Perspective"
- Canadian Centre for Child Protection: "Multi-perpetrator Sexual Offending Against Children and Animals"
- Kendra Coulter, Emily Harrison & Dawn Rault: "Communication and Cross-Reporting: Collaborating to Better Protect People and Animals"
- Margaret Doyle: "The Link as Seen by the Veterinary Team"
- Leslie Hadfield: "Agency Collaboration and Integration: Breaking Down the Silo Walls"
- Brinda Jegatheesan & Elizabeth Ormerod: "Animal Abuse as Sentinel for Human Cruelty: The Bioecological Model as a New and Useful Approach towards Understanding the LINK for Prevention and Intervention"
- Christian Lim & Victoria Shroff: "Overlapping Vulnerabilities: The Violence that Links Humans and Animals"
- Sarah May Lindsay: "You Just Have to Do It: Voices from the Front Line of Radical Sheltering"
- April Moore & Kimberlee Shaw-Ellis: "Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: Making the Link and Making a Difference"
- Rochelle Stevenson & Celeste Morales: "Connected Violences: The History, Our Present, and Hope for the Future" and "The Necessity of Trauma-Informed Practice for Animal and Human Victims of Violence"

The national conference will be followed by a Nov. 6 [Prosecution of Animal Abuse Conference](#) and a Nov. 12 [Ottawa Violence Link Workshop](#).

Link Cited in Call for Canadian Legislative Action on Animal Welfare



Peter Sankoff & Kendra Coulter

The Link between animal abuse and human violence was featured in an Aug. 20 opinion column in the [Toronto Star](#), Canada’s largest-circulation newspaper, in an appeal to update that country’s antiquated animal cruelty laws and poor international rankings for animal welfare. Kendra Coulter, of Brock University, and Peter Sankoff, a law professor at the University of Alberta, wrote that the silence emanating from the Canadian government on animal welfare issues is conspicuous and alarming. “Erosion moves faster than the federal government when it comes to animal protection,” they wrote.

Noting that two-thirds of Canadian households have pets and that polls regularly show that a fierce opposition to animal cruelty is one of the few values that unite all Canadians, they noted that the COVID-19 pandemic in particular has revealed the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health.

“Plus, animal abuse regularly occurs before or alongside violence against women, children and seniors. Protecting animals is not a distraction from today’s most pressing social and environmental issues — animal protection is inextricably connected to the health, safety and well-being of everyone in Canada,” Coulter and Sankoff wrote.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We’re Watching

Many state legislatures sessions have ended, but we’re still anticipating another record year for bills addressing animal abuse and its Links to other forms of family and community violence. Here are the **121 bills** that we know to have been introduced so far. [Please let us know](#) of any others that we may have missed.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



U.S. H.R. 763, the Child and Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to require that data collected by the federal government from state child protection agencies include information about animal abuse as a risk factor for child abuse. The bill is in the House Education and Labor Committee.



Arkansas HB 1497 expands the permitted use of certified facility dogs for child witnesses to also include vulnerable witnesses (e.g., with intellectual or developmental disabilities), and expands the areas where these dogs may assist witnesses from courthouses to also include law enforcement investigations, children’s advocacy centers, prosecutors’ offices, and offices of court-appointed special advocates and guardians ad litem. **The bill was signed into law on April 21.**





Florida SB 96 / HB 7039 establishes a legislative intent to require reporting and cross-reporting protocols between child protective and animal services personnel based on The Link between the welfare of family animals and child safety and protection. It requires child protective investigators to report known or suspected animal cruelty and grants them criminal, civil and administrative immunity for such reports. It similarly requires animal control officers to report suspected child abuse to the state hotline. The Florida Department of Children and Families and the Florida Animal Control Association will jointly develop a one-hour training module on The Link and on timely cross-reporting procedures. It also redefines bestiality as “sexual contact with an animal” and bans animal pornography. **SB 96** passed the Senate 40-0 and the House 116-0 and **was signed into law** by Gov. Ron DeSantis on June 29. It took effect on July 1.



Kentucky HB 215 would define animal abuse when committed in the presence of a minor child as first-degree aggravated animal abuse, a Class C felony. The bill was in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**



Maryland HB 186/SB7 expands the existing “Court Dog and Child Witness Program,” which allows facility dogs or therapy dogs to accompany child witnesses in court proceedings and other court processes, to now include such dogs in Veterans Treatment Courts. The program is also renamed as the “Court Dog Program.” The measure was **signed into law on May 18.**



Massachusetts H.1716/S. 943 would expand the power of Department of Children & Families employees and contractors to report suspected animal abuse over a longer period of time. Current law allows such cross-reporting only during their specific 10-15 day investigation or evaluation timeframe. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Missouri SB 71 allows adult protection orders and child protection orders, full or ex parte, to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening to commit abuse against a pet. A protection order may include an order of custody of the pet where appropriate, as well as any funds needed to cover the medical costs resulting from abuse of the pet. The bill passed the Senate and the House and **was signed into law** by Gov. Mike Parson on June 29. It takes effect on Aug. 28.



New Jersey A 4880 and S 3168 would expand the definition of child abuse to include acts of animal cruelty against their animals. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.



New York A474 and A3726 would increase prison terms for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child in order to minimize psychological damage to a still-developing minor’s sense of judgment and ethical conduct. **A474** is in the Agriculture Committee and **A3726** is in the Codes Committee.



New York A1353 would make it a crime to unjustifiably injure or kill a companion animal to threaten, intimidate or harass another family member. The penalty would be increased if the act occurs in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



New York A748 and S 4130 would define the releasing or failure to control an animal so as to prohibit an agent of a residential facility operated by children and family services as second-degree assault. The bill is in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.



New York A1816, recognizing the adverse impact animal fighting can have on a child’s emotional development and potential for antisocial behavior, would make it a misdemeanor to knowingly cause a minor child to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



North Carolina H 544 would make it a felony to permit a person under age 18 to attend or participate in any dog- or cock-fighting. The bill passed the House and is in the Senate Committee on Rules and Operations.



Pennsylvania SB 78 (Kayden’s Law – Preventing Abuse in Child Custody Proceedings), in noting that domestic abuse against a partner, spouse, child or pet can be part of a pattern of emotional and psychological abuse, would allow courts to include a person’s prior conviction for animal cruelty or animal fighting to be considered in determining custody of the child and whether the person posed a threat of harm to the child. The bill passed the Senate and is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island S 308 would increase penalties for animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child. The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be **held for further study**.



Texas HB 1071 allows courts to permit qualified facility dogs and therapy animals and their trained handlers to accompany witnesses if the presence of the dogs would assist the witness in testifying. **It was signed into law on June 3 and took effect on Sept. 1.**



Washington HB 1292 would have created a new crime of “providing harmful material to a minor” that would have included “patently offensive representations or descriptions” of bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill was in the Committee on Public Safety **when the legislative session ended.**

Animal Abuse and Elder/Disabled Abuse



Maryland SB 159/HB 281 requires new humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, and existing personnel to receive six hours of continuing education annually, on a variety of topics including the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bills were **signed into law on May 18.**



Maryland HB 234/SB 607 prohibits the willful and malicious killing, injuring, or interfering with a service animal. Offenders face up to two years in prison and/or a \$2,500 fine and may have to pay restitution for all damages. **The bill was signed into law and takes effect Oct. 1.**





New Jersey A 4880 and S 3168 would expand the statutory definition of elder abuse and abuse of the developmentally disabled to include acts of animal cruelty against animals owned or possessed by the persons affected by these types of abuse. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.



Pennsylvania HB 1681 would impose a 25-year ban on offenders convicted of sexual intercourse with an animal from employment working with care-dependent adults. Facilities covered by the employment ban would include residential care homes, long-term nursing homes, home health care agencies, hospices, adult daily living centers, personal care homes, assisted living residences, and any other public or private organization that uses public funds to provide care to care-dependent individuals. The bill is in the House Committee on Aging and Older Adult Services.

Animal Sexual Abuse



Colorado Ballot Initiative 16, proposed for 2022, "Protect Animals from Unnecessary Suffering and Exploitation" (PAUSE), would amend bestiality statutes to criminalize safe and common artificial insemination of dogs, horses and livestock as a "sexual act with an animal." Colorado veterinarians and animal welfare groups are opposed to the proposal.



Connecticut HB 5193 would have increased the penalties for engaging in sexual contact with an animal. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Florida SB 96/HB 7039 redefines bestiality as "sexual contact with an animal" and bans animal pornography. It also establishes a legislative intent to require reporting and cross-reporting protocols between child protective and animal services personnel based on The Link between the welfare of family animals and child safety and protection. The new law raises bestiality from a 1st-degree misdemeanor to a 3rd-degree felony. **SB 96** passed the Senate and House unanimously and **was signed into law** on June 29 and took effect on July 1.




Hawai'i SB 343/HB1085 establishes the crime of sexual assault of an animal as a Class C felony, or Class B felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Because animal sexual assault is strongly linked to child sexual abuse, interpersonal violence and other animal cruelty, convicted offenders will now be required to surrender all sexually abused animal(s), reimburse animal services agencies for the animals' care and medical treatment, attend psychiatric or psychological counseling, make restitution to animals' owners, and be prohibited from owning any animals, residing in any household where animals are present, and working or volunteering with animal establishments for at least five years after release from incarceration. **The measure was signed into law on June 7** and took effect immediately,




Missouri HB 373 would have required mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding; it was in the Rules Committee **when the legislative session ended**.




New York A614 would make sexual contact with animals a felony if serious injury or death of the animal occurs, require offenders to relinquish all animals, bar them from future possession of animals, and undergo psychological evaluation. It is in the Agriculture Committee.

 **Oregon Ballot Initiative 13, proposed for 2022, would add breeding domestic, livestock and equine animals to the definition of sexual assault of an animal.**


 **Washington HB 1292 would have made providing harmful material to a minor, including bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture, as a gross misdemeanor or Class C felony. The bill was in the Public Safety Committee when the legislature adjourned.**

 **West Virginia HB 2827 would have created a new felony offense of sexual crimes against animals. The bill was in the Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**


 **Wyoming HB46 defines and creates the misdemeanor crime of bestiality; The bill passed the House 60-0 and the Senate 30-0. On March 30 it was signed into law and took effect on July 1.**




Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders


 **Canada Bill C-3 requires Canadian judges to receive training on the Violence Link between animal abuse and sexual and domestic violence as part of their continuing legal education. The bill passed Parliament's Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and was enacted by Royal Assent on May 6 as 2021 Annual Statute c.8.**



 **Arizona HB2451 would allow petitioners to request a "severe threat order of protection" to prohibit respondents who have made a credible threat of death or serious physical injury to self, others, or cruel mistreatment of an animal, or from possessing a firearm. The bill was being held in the House Judiciary and Rules Committees.**

 **Arkansas HB 1724 cites the lockdown pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic as "a worst-case scenario for victims experiencing domestic violence" and the rationale to expand existing provisions that allow courts to include pets in domestic violence orders of protection. The measure also allows courts to issue protection orders based on a respondent's "course of control" or "disturbing the peace." The premise for the measure states that the COVID-19 shelter-in-place and other restrictions are being used "as a scare tactic to keep victims isolated from their children or support systems. It became law on April 30 as Act 1068.**



 **California AB 258 would require emergency shelter and transitional housing programs for the homeless to allow residents to keep pets. The Assembly Judiciary Committee approved it and sent it to the Appropriations Committee. SB 344 would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop and administer a program to award grants to shelters for the homeless to provide shelter, food and basic veterinary services for residents' pets. It passed the Senate and the Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development and was sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. (It is not clear whether these bills would cover homeless persons who are fleeing domestic violence.)**



California SB 320 would codify what has been inconsistent inter-agency communications and enforcement of provisions prohibiting subjects under domestic violence restraining orders (which may include pet protection provisions) to surrender ammunition as well as any firearms. It passed the Senate and the Assembly and was sent to the Governor on Sept. 17.



Connecticut SB 6 would have added “a pattern of coercive controlling behavior” that includes cruelty or the threat of cruelty to animals to the provisions by which a family member may apply to the Superior Court for restraining order relief. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



District of Columbia B23-0181, the Intrafamilial Offenses and Anti-Stalking Orders Amendment Act of 2020, was signed into law on Jan. 13 as **D.C. Act 23-571**. It clarifies procedures by which victims of intrafamily offense, sexual assault, child sex trafficking, or individuals whose animals are victims of an intrafamily offense, to petition for a civil protection order. “Intrafamily offense” is defined as a criminal offense against an intimate partner or family/household member, or cruelty to animals owned by an intimate partner, or family/household member. Courts may also issue an anti-stalking order if the petitioner fears a household animal is endangered by the respondent. **It took effect May 18.**



Illinois HB 1907 would require the Department of Human Services to establish a grant program, incorporating third-party funding and services, for counties with populations greater than 200,000 to support domestic violence shelters and service programs that assist domestic violence survivors’ pets. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



Kentucky HB 26 would include violence against a domestic animal used as coercive conduct within the definitions of “domestic violence and abuse” and “dating violence and abuse” and would allow judges to award possession of a domestic animal to the petitioner in a protection-from-abuse procedure. **HB 215** would define animal abuse when part of an incident of domestic violence and abuse or dating violence and abuse as first-degree aggravated animal abuse, a Class C felony. The bills were in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**



Maine LD 535 requires courts adjudicating the dissolution of marriages to consider the well-being of companion animals in the disposition of property. The bill became law in June without the Governor’s signature and **will go into effect in October.**



Maryland SB 159/HB 281 requires new humane society and animal control officers to undergo 80 hours of training, and existing personnel to receive six hours of continuing education annually, on topics including the association between animal abuse and abuse of the elderly or domestic violence. The bills passed both houses and **were signed into law on May 18.**



Massachusetts S.939/H.1820 would expand existing provisions that prevent respondents in a domestic violence protection order from harming, taking or disposing of household animals to also include protective orders issued in sexual assault harassment cases. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Mississippi SB 2091 would have allowed municipal and justice courts to include companion animals in awarding protection orders. **The bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri SB 71 allows adult protection orders and child protection orders, full or ex parte, to restrain or enjoin an individual from committing or threatening to commit abuse against a pet. A protection order may include an order of custody of the pet where appropriate, as well as any funds needed to cover the medical costs resulting from abuse of the pet. The bill passed the Senate and the House and **was signed into law** by Gov. Mike Parson on June 29. It took effect on Aug. 28.



Nevada AB 350 would have increased the penalty for harming or killing a companion animal from a Category C felony to a Category B felony if the act was committed to threaten, intimidate or terrorize a person. The bill was in the Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



New Jersey A 4880 and S 3168 would expand the statutory definition of domestic violence to include acts of animal cruelty against animals owned or possessed by the persons affected by these types of abuse. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.



New Jersey S 930 would allow courts to designate ownership or protective custody for a pet in an animal cruelty violation, domestic violence, matrimonial action, action for dissolution of a civil union, or judgment of divorce or dissolution or maintenance giving primary consideration to the well-being of the animal. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New York A1353 would make it a crime to unjustifiably injure or kill a companion animal to threaten, intimidate or harass another family member. The penalty would be increased if the act occurs in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



New York A510/S3039 would expand existing domestic violence pet protection orders to allow courts to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals and to order respondents to stay away from the animals or take, transfer, harm, or conceal the animals. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Children & Families Committees.



New York A5775/S4248 would require courts to consider the best interest of a companion animal when awarding possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills passed both the Senate and the Assembly.





New York A3985 (“Bella’s Law”) would require the Office of Children & Family Services to investigate possible domestic violence or abuse for persons who have been accused of animal abuse. The bills passed the Senate and Assembly and are back in the Senate.





The Ohio Supreme Court on April 15 **closed a gap** in its inclusion of pets in domestic violence prevention orders by finally including a prohibition against respondents removing, damaging, hiding, or disposing of companion animals in the standard protection order form. Although these provisions were first enacted in 2014, they were not specifically included in the standardized form until this year.



 **Pennsylvania HB1031** would amend the Protection from Abuse Act to allow courts to grant temporary ownership rights over companion animals in protection orders and direct defendants from possessing, contacting, attempting to contact, transferring, or relocating companion animals or entering the property of anyone sheltering the animal. Final agreements would allow courts to direct defendants to not abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or use physical force against the animal. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.


 **Rhode Island H 5569** would permit family courts to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint. The House Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study.


 **Texas HB 674** would have required the public to be informed about the availability of provisions to include pets and other companion animals in protective orders. The bill passed the House and was in the Senate Jurisprudence Committee **when the Legislature adjourned.**


 **Washington HB 1293**, the “Survivors’ Justice Act,” would have allowed courts to reduce what may be considered unduly harsh sentences for offenses committed by domestic violence survivors where the domestic violence was a significant contributing factor to the criminal conduct. However, judges could have imposed sentences above the standard range in a number of aggravating circumstances including “intent to obstruct or impair human or animal health care or agricultural or forestry research or commercial production.” The bill was in the Committee on Public Safety **when the legislative session ended.**

Animal Hoarding

 **Missouri HB 373** would have added animal hoarding to the definition of animal neglect and require mental health evaluations for offenders. It was in the Rules Committee **when the legislative session ended.**

 **New Hampshire HB 366** defines animal hoarding and sets forth a provision for a person charged with animal hoarding to be given a psychiatric evaluation. The bill has been retained in the House Environment and Agriculture Committee **for action in the 2nd year of the session.**

 **New Jersey S 1760** establishes the crime of animal hoarding and requires mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty and hoarding offenders. The bill is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee.

 **New York A1229** would create a violation of companion animal hoarding and allow courts to order mental health evaluations and prohibit possession of animals as penalties to give law enforcement needed tools for early intervention before a situation becomes a full-blown cruelty case. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



U.S. H.R. 1016, the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act, introduced because of cited Links between animal cruelty and violence against humans, would enhance enforcement of federal anti-cruelty laws, such as interstate trafficking of fighting animals, by creating an Animal Cruelty Crimes Section at the U.S. Department of Justice's Environmental and Natural Resources Division. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law.



Illinois HB 3531 would expand the state's criminal code prohibitions of violent video games to include games in which a character kills or causes serious physical or psychological harm to an animal. Psychological harm would be defined as including depictions of child abuse, sexual abuse, animal abuse, domestic violence, and violence against women. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



Kentucky HB 486 would require law enforcement officers to receive training on The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. The bill is in the Committee on Committees. The bill was in the Committee on Committees **when the Legislature adjourned.**



New Jersey A 1572/S 746 would bar animal abusers from possessing a firearm. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



New York S197/A1633 ("Kirby and Quigley's Law") would expand aggravated animal cruelty to include harm to a pet during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Senate Agriculture and Assembly Codes Committees.



New York A99 would make the release of or failure to restrain an animal so as to prevent a police officer or peace officer from performing his or her duties an assault in the second degree on a police officer. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee,



New York A558 would prohibit individuals convicted of serious felony offenses against animals from possessing firearms. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A2661/S6112 would define animal fighting as a criminal act when referring to enterprise corruption. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.




New York A7267 would require the prosecutor in each county to appoint an assistant district attorney to oversee the prosecution of crimes against animals. The bill is in the Local Governments Committee.




Oregon HB 2271 would have appropriated moneys from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to enable local district attorneys and law enforcement agencies to add resource prosecutor positions dedicated to assisting the prosecution of animal cruelty offenses. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**





Pennsylvania HB 1570 ("Cash's Law") would allow courts to add a sentencing enhancement in cases of burglary or criminal trespass where a domestic animal is harmed or killed in the course of that crime. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Pennsylvania HB 1903** would allow courts to issue an Extreme Risk Protection Order prohibiting persons from owning or controlling a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a substantial risk of suicide or death or serious bodily injury to another person. A history of animal cruelty and/or domestic abuse are among the factors the court may consider in determining whether to issue an ERPO. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Washington HB 1038** would have barred individuals convicted or found not guilty by reason of insanity of animal cruelty from possessing a firearm. The firearm provision already exists for persons convicted of or found not guilty by reason of insanity of domestic violence. The bill was in the Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary **when the legislative session ended.**


Cross-Reporting

 **Florida HB 47 and SB 216** (“Allie’s Law”) would have required veterinarians, technicians and other animal treatment provider employees to report suspected animal cruelty (at locations other than commercial food-producing animal operations) to authorities with immunity from civil and criminal liability, professional disciplinary action and employer retaliation. Failure to report would be grounds for disciplinary action. It would be a misdemeanor to destroy or alter medical records to conceal animal cruelty. Reporting at commercial food operations would be permissive. **HB 49 and SB 218** would have allowed veterinary records to remain confidential if animal cruelty is reported as a means to protect veterinarians and to encourage such reports by making them feel safe to do so. **HB 47 and HB 49 died** in the House Regulatory Reform Subcommittee; **SB 216 and SB 218 died** in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

 **Hawai’i HB1086/SB609** requires veterinarians to report animal injury, death or abuse to law enforcement where there is reasonable cause to believe that the animal is a victim of dogfighting or animal abuse. The measures give veterinarians immunity for civil liability for making the reports. **HB1086 was signed into law** on June 28 and took effect immediately.



 **Iowa HF 623** would amend the Iowa Veterinary Practice Act to grant veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil or criminal liability for actions undertaken in assisting in the investigation or prosecution of animal abuse and neglect cases, including reporting such abuse. The bill was in the Senate Agriculture Committee **when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **Massachusetts H.1716/S.943** would remove the 10-day time limit within which social services workers may report suspected animal abuse and allow them to report at any time. The bills are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Missouri HB 643** would have given immunity from civil liability to anyone who reports suspected animal cruelty in good faith; intentional filing of a false report would have been a misdemeanor and civilly liable. The bill was in the House Committee on Crime Prevention **when the legislative session ended.**



New Jersey A 2734 would require employees of the Department of Children & Families to report suspected abuse of a companion animal to the Chief County Humane Law Enforcement Officer or State Police, and of a livestock animal to the Chief County Humane Law Enforcement Officer and the Department of Agriculture. The bill is in the Assembly Women and Children Committee.



New Jersey A 2426/S 1980 would allow certified animal control officers to enforce municipal animal control ordinances and require them to report suspected animal cruelty to notify the municipal humane law enforcement officer. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



New Jersey A 4880 and S 3168 would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, investigators of domestic violence and abuse, employees of the Department of Children and Families and Divisions of Aging and Developmental Disabilities, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities, police officers, or any person who has reasonable cause to believe an animal has been subjected to an act of animal cruelty to report the suspected violation to the appropriate law enforcement officer, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture and Senate Environment and Energy Committees.



New York A 5823-A/S 5023-A would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal's injury, illness or condition is the result of animal cruelty to report the incident and would allow the disclosure of records concerning the animal's condition and treatment. (Existing law allows voluntary reporting.) The bills have passed the Senate and Assembly.



New York A 5780 would permit mandated reporters of child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Committee on Children and Families.



Oregon HB 3071 adds all elected officials of the state, state agencies, boards, commissions or departments, and all elected city and county elected officials, to those mandated to report suspected child and elder abuse. **The bill was signed into law on June 11.**





Texas HB 4330 would have required veterinarians to report suspected cruelty of non-livestock animals to the county sheriff or municipal police agency; reports made in good faith would have been immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative discipline. Texas veterinarians currently have immunity for reporting all animal abuse but are not mandated to do so. The bill was in the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence **when the Legislature adjourned.**


Psychological Evaluation of Offenders





Connecticut H 6251 would have required police, prosecutors and judges to receive training or education on The Link between animal abuse and commission of crimes so that cases are prosecuted and adjudicated with an understanding and consideration of such information, and require any and all resolutions to animal cruelty cases to include mandatory psychological evaluation and sessions to identify the potential for more serious criminal behavior. **The bill died** in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **Missouri HB 643** would have allowed courts to impose psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment for adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders. Evaluation and treatment would have been mandatory for animal torture or motivation or upon second and subsequent convictions. **HB 373** would have required mental health evaluations for offenders of bestiality and animal hoarding. The bills **died when the legislature adjourned**.

 **New Jersey S 1760** establishes the animal cruelty crime of animal hoarding and requires mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty offenders, including animal hoarders. The bill is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee. **S 2179 (“Shyanne’s Law”)** would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders; that bill is in the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee.


 **New York S230** would require courts to order psychiatric analysis and evaluation of animal abusers and to unseal the records of juvenile animal abuse offenders. **S229** would require courts to impose psychiatric evaluations for defendants convicted of aggravated animal cruelty. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.


 **New York A524, S1257 and S1259** would prohibit persons convicted of “Buster’s Law” (aggravated cruelty to animals) from owning pets unless authorized by a court order after appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing determined the person showed clear and convincing evidence of capable and sound mental capacity and ability to properly care for the animal. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committees.

 **Texas SB 48** allows courts to require defendants convicted of certain animal cruelty and animal fighting crimes to undergo psychological counseling or other appropriate treatment programs. **The measure was signed into law on June 14 and takes effect on Sept. 1.**



“CASA for Animals”

 **Florida S 1316/H 1003** would have provided for the appointment of lawyer and legal intern advocates for the interests of an animal in civil and criminal proceedings regarding the welfare, care or custody of animals. **The bills died** in the Senate Governmental & Accountability and House Criminal Justice & Public Safety Subcommittees.

 **Illinois SB 153** would allow courts to appoint attorneys or law students as special advocates to assist the court in prosecution of cases involving the injury, health or safety of a cat or dog and represent the interests of justice. Advocates could monitor the case and attend hearings; consult with persons and review records relevant to the conditions of the cat or dog or the defendant’s actions; and present information and recommendations to the court. The bill is in the Senate Rules Committee.

 **New Jersey A 4533/S 2868** would allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the interests of animals in cruelty cases. **S 2868** passed the Senate 34-0 and joined **A 4533** in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



New York A 5315/S 3525-A would allow courts to appoint volunteer lawyers and law students to advocate for animals' interests and to help ensure the well-being of living animal victims in civil and criminal animal welfare proceedings. The bills are in the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committees.



Rhode Island H 5577/S 534 would permit civil and criminal courts to appoint pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to act as animal advocates in animal cruelty and abuse cases addressing the animals' welfare or custody, in the interests of justice. The House and Senate Judiciary Committees recommended they be held for further study.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

94 Animals, Feces-covered Teen Removed from Filthy Indiana House



Nancy Clemmer

Police in Alexandria, Ind., who had previously responded to about 15 complaints of pigs and other animals running loose, arrested a would-be animal rescuer on charges of keeping 94 animals and her 13-year-old daughter in a fly-infested and feces- and urine-saturated home. Nancy L. Clemmer, 58, was charged with felony and misdemeanor counts of animal neglect and neglect of a dependent child, according to the [Anderson, Ind. Herald Bulletin](#). The girl, who was described as "filthy and had what appeared to be animal feces on her," was placed into foster care. Police removed 21 dogs, 21 guinea pigs, nine chickens, three pigs, six lizards, three chinchillas, and other animals. Several dead raccoons, guinea pigs, baby chickens, dogs, and macaws were also found. The property included a main house, in which the birds, dogs and goats ran freely while Clemmer and her daughter lived in an adjacent residence; the Madison County Board of Health condemned the property the next day. Detective Brian Holtzleiter told news media that there was so much trash and debris he had to clear a path to approach the front door. The odor and fumes from the residence were so overpowering a health department representative vomited and officers had to don fire department hazmat suits.



Ohio Murder-Suicide Leaves 4 People and Dog Dead

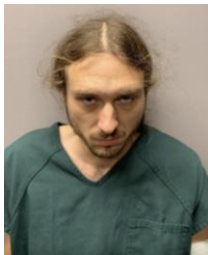
An Avon Lake, Ohio man is believed to have shot and killed his wife, two children, and dog before taking his own life. [WJW-TV](#) and the [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) reported that police responding to a welfare check when the wife, Heidi Hull, 46, an insurance executive, failed to show up for a conference call found the bodies of her, her husband Jeffrey Hull, 50, their two children, Garrett, 9 and Grant, 6, and the family dog. All had suffered gunshot wounds; although the incident was under investigation police believed Jeffrey Hull killed the others before taking his own life. The school district dispatched counselors to all area schools for students, staff and families who needed support and guidance.

Released Ex-Con Charged with Homicide and Killing Victim's Two Dogs



Troy Davis

A Sacramento, Calif. man who had been released on his own recognizance in June following charges of auto theft was back in court in September on charges of homicide, burglary, arson, and intent to rape in a case which also killed the victim's two dogs. [KXTV](#) reported that Troy Davis, 51, is eligible for the death penalty in the murder of Mary Tibbitts, 61. Davis is also accused of killing Tibbitts' two dogs, "Molly" and "Ginny". David had previously also been released from prison following felony convictions in 2017 and 2018 for assault with a deadly weapon and robbery. Tibbitts' body was found when firefighters responded to a fire at the residence. Home security footage showed Davis apparently masturbating on a neighbor's front porch.



Auriel Scattergood

Stabbing Suspect Charged with Murder and Animal Abuse

An Ashland, Ore. man was arrested and charged with murder and animal abuse over a stabbing that left one person dead and a dog injured. The [Jackson County Sheriff's Office](#) reported that Auriel Zipher Scattergood, 30, was quickly apprehended after someone called 911 at 2:14 a.m. after an altercation involving a stabbing. Scattergood was charged with second-degree murder, second-degree assault, and aggravated animal abuse. The stabbing victim had not yet been identified pending notification of next of kin. The dog was receiving care at a veterinary clinic.

Dog and Laundromat Owner Attacked in Anti-Asian Hate Crime

In what is being described as an anti-Asian hate crime, an unnamed 66-year-old Asian laundromat owner in the Nob Hill section of San Francisco told police he was walking his dog, a golden retriever named "Cody," when an unknown male suspect held a lighter close to the dog. According to [Fox News](#), the suspect became confrontational when the laundromat owner asked him what he was doing, spit on him, called the owner the "N" word, and punched him in the face. The suspect fled the scene and the victim was transported to a hospital. Cody, who reportedly likes to sit on top of the dryers, and the laundromat owner are a popular duo in the neighborhood, and a neighbor brought the victim flowers after hearing the news.



Cody and the laundromat owner after the attack

Accused Serial Rapist Also Charged with Killing Victim's Dog

A suspected serial rapist in Indianapolis, who apparently posed as a utility or service worker to gain access to his victims' homes in central Indiana, is thought to have sexually assaulted at least eight women during home invasions dating back to last year, including one incident where he allegedly also killed a family dog. The [Indianapolis Star](#) reported that Darrell Goodlow, 37, had been arrested; he was subsequently charged with 61 counts of rape, burglary, kidnapping, criminal confinement, strangulation, sexual battery, and killing a domestic animal. Two of the assaults apparently occurred after police had warned the public about a serial rapist. Police said Goodlow allegedly threatened to kill at least three of his victims.



Bryan Riley

Ex-Marine Indicted in Murder of Family of Four and Their Dog

A former Marine who mistakenly believed he was rescuing a sex trafficking victim was indicted on 22 counts including murder, attempted murder, armed burglary, kidnapping a minor, arson, and animal cruelty for allegedly killing a family of four and their dog, torturing an 11-year-old girl, and engaging in a gunfight with Polk County, Fla. law enforcement officers. Bryan Riley, 33, of Brandon, Fla. could face either the death penalty or life in prison. [Media and police reports](#) said Riley thought the family was hiding a victim of sex trafficking and tortured the girl trying to locate “Amber,” a sex crimes victim who doesn’t exist. Police said that Riley had a fight with his girlfriend, donned a bulletproof vest, and went to the victims’ house around 1 a.m. where he did reconnaissance, planned diversions and an exit strategy, slashed other vehicles’ tires, and set up glowsticks to aid his escape and so “Amber” could see her way out. Authorities said he shot and killed a 62-year-old grandmother, the family dog, a 26-year-old woman and her 3-month-old baby boy whom she was holding, and the woman’s 40-year-old boyfriend, before shooting the girl twice trying to get her to reveal where “Amber” was. The girl survived by playing dead and was in intensive care after undergoing four surgeries.

Man with Restraining Order Against Him Charged with Arson in Killing of Family’s Dog

Brandon Jerold Smith, 24, of Los Angeles was charged with animal cruelty and arson for allegedly setting his family’s dog on fire and killing the dog, a Welsh corgi named “Hennessy.” The [Los Angeles Times](#) reported that prosecutors said Smith hanged the dog on a fence in a nearby park and lit it on fire, using lighter fluid as an accelerant. The [Canyon News](#) reported that Serena Prentice, who has a child with Smith, has a restraining order with him and left with the child when Smith started exhibiting violent behavior toward her and the dog. Prentice also claimed Smith had posted videos on social media of catching birds and setting them on fire and shooting at dogs through fences. Information as to why Smith may have sought to harm the dog was not disclosed. Smith reportedly had had the 7-year-old dog since she was a puppy, and graphic CCTV videos detailed the incident.



Brandon Smith



Ravon Service

Brooklyn Residents Charged After Dog Excrement Drips Through Ceiling on Two Sleeping Children

After deplorable conditions in a Brooklyn, N.Y. apartment deteriorated to the point where feces and urine from 20 dogs leaked through the floor into a bedroom below where two children slept, Ravon Service, 26, was charged with 20 counts of torturing animals, 20 counts of neglect, two counts of actions injurious to a child, and criminal mischief. Tafaniel Michaud, 27, was charged with criminal mischief, according to the [New York Post](#). The dogs were packed in wire cages in one room. The ASPCA and NYPD Animal Cruelty Investigation Squad removed the dogs. After being released from custody, Service returned to the apartment with three other people and allegedly assaulted the landlord and her husband for reporting the animal abuse. The landlord suffered a cut lip and her husband had a broken rib from the attack. Service, a woman and two teenaged boys were arrested and charged with gang assault, menacing, harassment, and weapons offenses, according to the [Post](#).

Canadian Link Cases

Our Canadian Violence Link Coalition colleagues have shared with us several recent cases demonstrating how animal abuse can be a coercive control tactic and is often linked to other crimes and complexities:

Ottawa Man with “Propensity for Violence” Gets 5 Years for Torturing Puppy

Calling the killing of a 9-month-old puppy named “Bane” torture, a judge in Ottawa, Ont. sentenced Jake Garvin, 22, to five years in prison because of what the judge said was his “propensity for serious violence.” Garvin had pled guilty to killing his dog, having an illegal sawed-off shotgun, and threatening to torture and kill his parents in 600 violent text messages. The [Ottawa Citizen](#) reported that Garvin’s neighbors made three audio recordings of beatings of the pup, named after the Batman villain that Garvin said he wanted to train to kill and who previously had surgery for a stab wound. Ontario Court Justice Robert Wadden said the two-year history of abusive text messages demonstrated long and protracted abuse and a significant risk that he would use the gun. The judge said a substantial sentence “reflects society’s denunciation of the offenses of cruelty to animals.” Meanwhile, the College of Veterinarians of Ontario is investigating the practitioner who failed to report Bane’s being treated for the two-inch stab wound; Ontario veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal abuse, [the newspaper reported](#).

Saskatchewan Man Charged in Attacks on Two Exes’ Dogs

Travis Mark Dauvin, of Thode, Sask., was charged with allegedly killing one dog and injuring another that belonged to two ex-girlfriends. Dauvin alleged that the injuries suffered by Melissa Buggs’ Maltese named “Jake” occurred when the dog fell down the stairs; a necropsy revealed the dog had four broken ribs, a punctured lung and bruising, according to the [Saskatoon Star Phoenix](#). Buggs only reported the incident nine months later after her relationship with Dauvin ended, and Dauvin was charged with killing the dog. Court records found that four previously, Dauvin had been charged with using a broken broom handle to allegedly hit a Rottweiler puppy named “Brita” belonging to Morgan Sieben during an argument toward the end of their four-year relationship. Sieben said the beating stopped only when she reached for her phone to start recording. Dauvin posted on Instagram that he believed his exes are jealous and want money.



“Jake” (left) and “Brita”

Alberta Man Gets Year in Jail in Death of Girlfriend’s Kitten

Dawson Troy Miller, 21, of Calgary, Alberta, pled guilty to animal cruelty after recording himself beating a kitten named “Prince,” belonging to his 16-year-old girlfriend following a heated argument and sending her the videos. The cat’s injuries were so severe he had to be euthanized. He was sentenced to 12 months in jail and a lifetime prohibition from owning animals.

[Court documents](#) show that Miller has seven prior convictions in Youth Court for which he received either probation or community service and restitution. He has a history of substance abuse, criminal activities, suspension from school, financial difficulties, treatment for mental health issues, a borderline IQ, and discord in the family home. His father reportedly left home when Miller was 3 with a history of drug use.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NOTE: The pandemic has caused most in-person trainings to be canceled, rescheduled or converted into virtual formats. Click on the underlined hyperlinks for more detailed information.

Oct. 12 (online): Sandra Brackenridge will lead a [virtual café](#) on the role of Veterinary Social Workers in hospital settings.

Oct. 13 & Oct. 21 – New York City, N.Y. (online): The New York University’s Silver School of Social Work and the Animals & Society Institute will present a [two-part live online program](#) on “BARK: Behavior, Accountability, Responsibility, and Knowledge: A Diversion Intervention for Adults Who Abuse Animals” incorporating the AniCare Approach.

Oct. 15-17 – Portland, Ore. (online): The Animal Legal Defense Fund’s [Animal Law Conference](#) will feature 16 presentations on a variety of topics related to The Link.

Oct. 18-29 – San Diego, Calif. (online): The San Diego Humane Society’s Humane Law Enforcement [Training Academy](#) for animal care and control officers includes modules on domestic violence and child and elder abuse.

Oct. 20 (online): The Human-Animal Bond Research Institute’s annual [Pet Week on Capitol Hill](#) will address the Link between animal abuse and domestic violence with an online presentation on “2021 Pet Legislation: Saving Lives on Both Ends of the Leash.”

Oct. 20 – Pittsfield, Mass. (online): The [Human-Animal Violence Education Network \(HAVEN\)](#) will hold its October meeting.

Oct. 20 – Austin, Texas: Paul Needham will present “Weighing the Ethical and Practical Issues of Hoarding” at the 38th Annual [Adult Protective Services Conference](#).

Oct. 20 – Boulder, Colo. (online): John Romero and Justice Montoya-Lewis will present “On the Bench: The Link Between Animal Cruelty, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse and Neglect -What Tribal Judges Can Do,” at the National American Indian Court Judges Association’s 52nd annual [Virtual Conference](#).

Oct. 27 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Oct. 29 – New Rochelle, N.Y. (online): Phil Arkow will present “The ‘Dark Side’ of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse and its Link with Human Violence” for an [Animal and Human Health class](#) at Iona College.

Oct. 29 – Austin, Texas (online): Texas Unites for Animals and the Texas Humane Network will hold the [“Laws for Paws” Symposium focusing on The Link](#). The free symposium will: commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month; examine Link cases in Texas; discuss signs of The Link and opportunities for cross-reporting; and address trending legislation and legal issues in animal cases related to domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse.

Nov. 4-5 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will hold its [National Violence Link Conference](#).

Nov. 6 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada (online): The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will hold its annual one-day [Prosecution of Animal Abuse Conference](#). Prosecutors Tara Dobec and Christian Lim will provide updates on recent animal abuse and Violence Link cases.

Nov. 6 – Maple Ridge, B.C., Canada (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar on “The Violence Link and Veterinarians: Recognition and Response to Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” for the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association/Society of BC Veterinarians Chapter](#).

Nov. 10 – Forsyth, Ga.: The [Georgia Public Safety Training Center](#) and Animal Law Source will partner for the Crimes Against Animals Symposium, which will feature presentations on “The Link – Animal Cruelty & Human Violence” and “Correlation Between Human Trafficking and Sex Crimes Against Animals & Children.”

Nov. 11 (online): Massachusetts Assistant District Attorney Erin Aiello and Janette Reeve with Humane Society International will present a webinar on “Preparing for Court: Tips for Effective Testimony about Animal Crimes,” including special considerations for cases related to intimate partner violence, for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

Nov. 11 (online): Phil Arkow will present on The Link for [One Health Partners](#).

Nov. 11 (online): The [Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association](#) will conduct a Link webinar.

Nov. 12 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada: The Canadian Violence Link Coalition will host a special half-day [Violence Link Workshop](#) specifically for multi-disciplinary criminal justice professionals working in the Ottawa community whose work intersects with The Violence Link.

Nov. 18 – Alexandria, Va. (online): Phil Arkow will discuss “How Pet-Inclusive Social Work and Cross-Reporting Can Improve Delivery of Domestic Violence Victim Services” for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [National Advocacy Learning Center](#).

Nov. 24 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Dec. 1-3 – Baton Rouge, La.: The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Animal Legal Defense Fund will conduct the 10th [National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

Dec. 7 (online): Andrew Campbell will present “Livin’ on a Prayer: Better Utilizing Places of Worship to Aid Victims of Family Violence” in a [Justice Clearinghouse webinar](#).

Dec. 22 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Jan. 20, 2022 (online): Linda Fielder and Emily Lewis will present “Partners in Investigating Animal Crimes” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Jan. 25, 2022 (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Criminal Justice: Preventing Crimes Against People by Focusing on Animal Abuse” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Jan. 26, 2022 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): The [Keystone Link](#) will hold its recurring meeting.

Feb. 17-18, 2022 – Columbus, Ohio: Phil Arkow will present “Recognizing, Recording and Reporting Suspected Animal Abuse and Neglect” and “All in This Together: Pooling Limited Shelter Resources to Help People and Animals” for the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).

May 3, 2022 (online): Phil Arkow will present “The Forgotten Partner in Responding to Animal Abuse: The Veterinarian” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

July 19, 2022 (online): Emily Lewis will present “The Complexities of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multidisciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

Phil Arkow, Coordinator

Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
Etowah, N. Car.

Lesley Ashworth

Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

Diane Balkin, J.D.

Retired Chief Deputy District Attorney, Denver, Colo.
Retired Senior Staff Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund
Denver, Colo.

Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Univ. of Cincinnati College of Medicine
Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Cincinnati, Ohio

Steve Dale

Nationally Syndicated Radio Host and Author
Chicago, Ill.

The Hon. Rosa C. Figarola

Retired Circuit Probate Judge, 11th Judicial Circuit
Miami, Fla.

Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Research,
ASPCA Department of Strategy & Research
Woodstock, Ga.

Joey Orduna Hastings

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

Helen Holmquist-Johnson, MSW, Ph.D.

Director, Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC)
Colorado State University School of Social Work
Ft. Collins, Colo.

Kendall Houlihan

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

Mark Kumpf, CAWA

Director, Detroit Animal Care & Control
Detroit, Mich.

Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Consultant, ASPCA
Falls Church, Va.

Paul Needham

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

Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D. (ALTERNATE)

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

Allie Phillips, J.D.

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

Gale Rasin, J.D.

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

Chelsea Rider, J.D.

Director,
National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse
Dallas, Texas

The Hon. John J. Romero, Jr.

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

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

President, Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC
Veterinary Services Director, Div. of Animal Care & Control
Boston, Mass.

Hugh Tebault III

President, The Latham Foundation
Alameda, Calif.

John Thompson

Executive Vice President
Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association
Alexandria, Va.

Kathleen Wood

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