



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



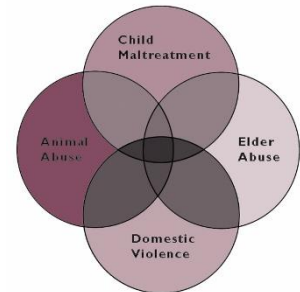
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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MASS MURDER... and THE LINK

Buffalo, N.Y. Supermarket and Uvalde, Texas Shooters Reported to Have Also Abused Animals



Payton Gendron

The accused mass shooters in the horrific Buffalo, N.Y. supermarket and Uvalde, Texas elementary school massacres have become the latest in a string of alleged mass murderers whose ignored early warning signs included a history of torturing animals. The [Washington Post](#) described online Discord chat app postings from the alleged Buffalo shooter, Payton S. Gendron. “In addition to laying out mounting plans for a mass shooting, the messages amount to a wide-ranging journal of a troubled 18-year-old, who described killing and mutilating a cat and being taken to a medical facility for psychiatric evaluation after he stated in a high school class that he planned to commit ‘murder/suicide.’”

A [subsequent New York Post article](#) described the incident where Gendron wrote he had repeatedly stabbed a feral cat, smashed its head on a concrete slab, then decapitated it with a hatchet; he posted a photo of the cat and he and his mother dug a shallow grave in the backyard. “Honestly right now I don’t feel anything about killing that cat,” he wrote. “I thought I would be in pain but I literally just feel blank.” He took meticulous notes, recording the time when blood spilled from the cat’s mouth, which knife he used, how many times he swung the hatchet, and posted a photo of his own face sprayed with the cat’s blood. This level of aggressiveness would have put him into a category of high risk for public safety. But a month earlier he also wrote that his own cat, “Paige,” had spent more time with him than any person in his life over the past few years and hoped his family would take care of her when he was gone.

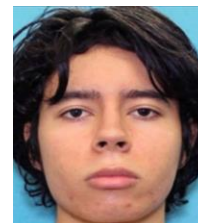
The postings featured thousands of lines of racist, antisemitic and often rambling remarks, and repeated references to a white supremacist ideology of “replacement theory” which imagines a nefarious plot to replace White Americans with people of color. He detailed months of planning and practicing for the

EDITOR’S NOTE:

There will be no issue of *The LINK-Letter* published in July. We’ll resume our normal monthly publication with an expanded double edition in August.

attack and obtaining his weapons, which he kept secret from his parents, despite having been held for a mental health evaluation last year after making a threatening remark at his high school in Conklin, halfway across New York State. He also apparently conducted a reconnaissance mission of the market the day before the attack and bought a helmet with a GoPro camera and livestreamed the massacre. Gendron, 18, surrendered to police after the attack and pled not guilty to charges of murder.

Less than two weeks later, the 18-year-old suspect in the deadly Uvalde massacre that killed 19 students and two faculty members and wounded 17 others was also reported to have had a history of abusing cats and dogs. [ABC News](#) reported that Salvador Ramos, 18, who was killed by law enforcement officers during the rampage, allegedly committed animal abuse and displayed videos of the cruelty to users on the Yubo social live streaming media platform.



Salvador Ramos

Two users familiar with online posts attributed to Ramos told ABC News the suspect would go on live video and play videos of him abusing animals, including cats. One Yubo user said Ramos would allegedly publicize the abuse and would “put cats in plastic bags, suspend them inside, throw them at the ground and throw them at people’s houses.” Ramos allegedly “would display these videos while laughing and boasting about how him and his friends did it ‘all the time.’” Neither law enforcement investigators nor ABC News could definitively confirm that the alleged account belonged to the accused shooter.

[The Daily Beast](#) reported that Ramos “had a long history of anger and aggression that was somehow overlooked for far too long,” including “beating a little dog senseless,” according to a former classmate. “He would go to the park and try to pick on people and he loved hurting animals,” said Jamie Arellano, who attended Uvalde High School with Ramos.

Other recent young alleged mass murderers believed to have histories of torturing animals include:

- Arcan Cetin, 20, Cascade Mall shootings, Burlington, Wash.
- Nikolas Cruz, 19, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Fla.
- Ethan Crumley, 15, Oxford, Mich. High School.
- Andrew Golden, 11, and Mitchell Johnson, 13, Westside Middle School, Jonesboro, Ark.
- Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, Columbine High School, Littleton, Colo.
- Sienna Johnson, 16, Mountain Vista High School in Highlands Ranch, Colo.
- Kip Kinkel, 15, Thurston High School, Eugene, Ore.
- Adam Lanza, 20, Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Conn.
- John Michael Legg, 19, and Frederic Allen Rogers, 23, home invasion in Morgan County, Ala.
- Luke Woodham, 16, Pearl High School, Pearl, Miss.

Older mass murderers and school shooters believed to have animal cruelty histories include:

- Seth Ator, 36, Midland/Odessa, Texas rampage.
- Mark Barton, 44, Atlanta, Ga. day-trading offices.
- Alexander Hernandez, 34, string of shootings in San Fernando Valley, Calif.
- James Huberty, 41, McDonald’s massacre, San Ysidro, Cal.
- Devin Kelley, 26, Sutherland Springs, Texas church.
- Stephen Paddock, 64, Las Vegas, Nev. music festival.
- Jarrod Ramos, 41, Annapolis, Md. *Capital Gazette* newspaper.
- Dylann Roof, 21, Emanuel A.M.E. Church, Charleston, S.C.
- Patrick Sherrill, 44, Edmond, Okla. post office.

A Statement from the National Link Coalition on Animal Abuse's Links with School and Other Mass Shootings

June, 2022

Amid the discussions of gun safety reforms and mental health issues that arise following mass shootings, such as those that unfolded recently in Buffalo, N.Y., and Uvalde, Tex., one issue has been notably overlooked: a key red flag warning sign of antisocial behavior which could be a precursor to mass violence is a history of severe animal abuse, cruelty and torture. These warning signs invariably come to light only after the tragedy has occurred and only through diligent investigations by credible news organizations.^{1,2,3,4}

The National Link Coalition has long been concerned that histories of animal abuse among many juvenile and adult school shooters and other mass murderers have been overlooked. These recent tragedies are the latest examples of how acts of animal abuse that are ignored or trivialized can escalate in intensity and severity against human victims. Sadly, unless widespread action is taken, they may not be the last such examples.

Cruelty to animals is a criterion for a diagnosis of conduct disorder and may be one of its earliest manifestations, appearing, on average, at the child's age of 6-1/2 years old.⁵ Unaddressed, it can desensitize youths to violence and cause them to need ever-increasing violent engagement so they can experience greater thrills. Anthropologist Margaret Mead, describing the consequences of failing to catch or punish a child for killing or torturing an animal, said in 1964 that **"It would, therefore, seem wise to include a more carefully planned handling of behavior toward living creatures in our school curriculum on the one hand, and to alert all child therapists to watch for any record of killing or torturing a living thing. It may well be that this could prove a diagnostic sign, and that such children, diagnosed early, could be helped instead of being allowed to embark on a long career of episodic violence and murder."**⁶

Animal cruelty is such a significant red flag that in July, 2018 the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team, a collaboration of the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, described animal cruelty as a possible warning behavior for terrorism. In addition to the more widely-recognized connections to domestic, child and elder abuse, this ["First Responders' Toolbox"](#) declared that **"animal cruelty, particularly when premeditated in nature, is one example of a novel aggression warning behavior"** and a type of "experimental aggression" that may be useful in **"identifying an accelerated and increased risk of violence that should elevate authorities' concern."**

The three agencies emphasized that **"reporting, investigating, and prosecuting animal cruelty may help minimize violent acts toward humans, including terrorism."** They encouraged first responders, animal control, animal shelters, social services, veterinarians, peers, neighbors, and family members to report suspected animal cruelty to authorities for further vetting. **"Their participation becomes a force multiplier and may assist communities and law enforcement with identifying, assessing and managing threats of planned violence while promoting public safety."**

They urged law enforcement to conduct National Crime Information Center (NCIC) checks and to be familiar with aggression warning behaviors, such as animal cruelty which is described in NCIC Code 7201, in order to assess the totality of facts and circumstances that could lead to violent offenses against people.⁷

The U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services, working with the National Sheriffs' Association, in 2018 called animal cruelty a **"gateway crime."** They called on law enforcement agencies nationwide to recognize that **"animal cruelty crimes can serve as a precursor to more violent crimes, as a co-occurring crime to other types of offenses, and as an interrelated crime to such offenses as domestic violence and elder abuse. Armed with this knowledge, law enforcement officers... can take steps both to solve current crimes and to prevent future crimes from occurring."**⁸

The association between animal cruelty and subsequent acts of large-scale interpersonal violence is neither a simple causal nor correlational relationship. Several studies have reported that most animal abusers do not go on to commit mass murder, and not all mass murderers have histories of animal abuse.^{9,10,11} A 2018 study of 259 "affective" and "predatory" animal cruelty offenders by the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit reported that the "graduation hypothesis" (whereby animal abuse precedes interpersonal violence) occurred in 23% of cases; the far greater majority of cases were part of a pattern of general antisocial behaviors in which the animal abuse occurred concurrently with or following the interpersonal violence.¹²

Getting consistent, reliable data on animal cruelty cases is difficult, leading to many preventive and diagnostic challenges. Legal and cultural definitions of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect differ widely by jurisdiction. Enforcement is sporadic, not systematized, conducted solely on a local level, and often under-prioritized by law enforcement agencies or delegated to private organizations or municipal departments outside the realm of public safety. The FBI's inclusion of four types of animal cruelty, abuse and neglect in its National Incident Based Reporting System was an historic first step in estimating the prevalence of animal abuse and its correlation with other crimes, but this database is incomplete due to the inability of many investigative agencies outside the law enforcement sector to submit cases into the system. Further hampering early diagnosis and intervention is that many underlying factors may drive individuals to become mass shooters,^{11, 13} and histories of animal cruelty are only one such warning sign.

Youths' exposure to animal cruelty, promotion of their abusing animals on social media, and the phenomenon of "copycat killers" who emulate well-publicized and spectacular crimes further increase the likelihood of juveniles engaging in violent behavior and fuel pre-existing motivations for someone's willingness to open fire against soft targets in a school, supermarket or church.

Animal cruelty committed by juveniles is also a red flag that they themselves may have suffered physical, psychological or emotional abuse.^{14,15} Some youths who have been subjected to child maltreatment commit animal cruelty because it is a learned behavior or as a way to process their own trauma. By addressing underlying issues like child maltreatment, intervention can help protect the lives of both animals and humans.

Consequently, all acts of animal cruelty, particularly when severe or committed by youths, are real sentinel signs and should be addressed and reported immediately. There should be significant additional support for early and effective therapeutic mental health evaluations, interventions and animal cruelty enforcement against juvenile and adult offenders. Improved response may not stop all future acts of mass violence, but if they can prevent even one more senseless tragedy we will have prevented tremendous suffering, saved animal and human lives and made a difference in progressing toward a more humane country.

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DOMESTIC ABUSE... and THE LINK



Maine Gov. Janet Mills

Expanded Maine Pet Protection Order Law Bans Abusers from Having Weapons

In April 2006, the State of Maine pioneered the concept of specifically allowing pets to be included in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. Today, 38 states have enacted Pet Protection Order legislation.

On April 20, Maine expanded its historic statute 19-A MRSA c.103 §4108 when Gov. Janet Mills signed into law **LD 1696**. The new law, which already allowed courts to direct the care, control and custody of pets in protection orders, further prohibits defendants from possessing any dangerous weapons if the defendant has a history of abuse including killing or threatening to kill any animal in the household. Courts may direct defendants to not possess a firearm, muzzle-loading firearm, bow, crossbow, or other dangerous weapon for the duration of the protection order if the complaint demonstrates abuse involving a weapon or a heightened risk of immediate abuse to the plaintiff or a child based upon numerous types of violence, including killing or threatening animals in the household.

Especially significant in the legislation is its preamble which recognizes “domestic abuse as a serious crime against the individual and society, producing an unhealthy and dangerous family environment, resulting in a pattern of escalating abuse, including violence, that frequently culminates in intrafamily homicide and creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to healthy childhood development.”

The amendment is also designed “to allow family and household members who are victims of domestic abuse to obtain expeditious and effective protection against further abuse so that the lives of the non-abusing family or household members are as secure and uninterrupted as possible.”

Purina Supports Pet-Friendly Shelters with Special Packaging

Purina, whose partnership with RedRover's [Purple Leash Project](#) has already awarded over \$500,000 in grants to domestic violence shelters with a goal of ensuring that 25% of shelters are pet-friendly by 2025 ([See the March 2022 LINK-Letter](#)) commemorated National Pet Month in May by offering specially-marked purple packaging of many of its pet food products promoting the Project.



Flagship brands that carried the special packaging, and that invited consumers to donate to the Project, included Beggin', Tidy Cats, Purina Cat Chow, Beneful, Purina Beyond, and Friskies Party Mix Cat Treats. Pet lovers who donated \$60 or more received a limited-edition purple dog leash or cat collar featuring the Purple Leash Project motto of "Walk. Heal. Together."

"It is only by working together that we will create a long-term shift in the dynamics of domestic abuse survivor services to include protections and accommodations for pets," said Nina Leigh Krueger, Purina CEO and President.

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Judy Johns (1947-2022)

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Judy Johns who, in a 30-year career with the [Latham Foundation](#), was instrumental in expanding public and multi-disciplinary professional awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence.

As editor of *The Latham Letter*, Judy incorporated over 120 articles about The Link since 1987, unleashing a steady stream of information about groundbreaking conferences, key legislation and significant programs.



Judy appeared as an on-screen narrator in Latham's pioneering video, *Breaking the Cycles of Violence*, where she succinctly described The Link in a phrase that quickly became the movement's motto: "When animals are abused, people are at risk. When people are abused, animals are at risk."

She was instrumental in shepherding the production and publication of three editions of Latham's practical guide Link manuals, also titled *Breaking the Cycles of Violence*.

In addition to her long career with Latham, Judy had worked as an Animal Safety Representative for the [American Humane Association's](#) Film & Television Unit monitoring and protecting animal actors. She had also served as President of the [Association of Professional Humane Educators](#).

She passed away from skin cancer on April 19 in Arizona, survived by many, many colleagues and friends who will miss her abundance of wonderful, endearing and delightful traits and her steadfast loving friendship.

Dutch “Animal Cops” Featured on French TV

The Netherlands’ “animal cops” unit (Dierenpolitie), which doubles as both a specialized animal cruelty law enforcement program and a social services agency focused on how animal abuse is linked with human violence (See the [March 2018 LINK-Letter](#)), was the focus of a feature on France 3’s TV program, “Nous les Européens” (We the Europeans).



The [May 22 broadcast](#) followed two officers, Yvonne and Roxanne, on an investigation in an Amsterdam suburb where a neighbor had reported that the residents sometimes fight not only with the dogs but also with each other. They told the neighbor to call the animal cops hotline number 144 whenever they see an animal in danger and emphasized that not only are animals mistreated, but often the whole family as well. “If society is good with animals, it is with humans too,” they said.

Hawai’i Group Promoting Link Awareness

A new group on the Big Island of Hawai’i is raising awareness of how animal abuse hurts people as well as other animals. Domestic Violence Hurts Animals and People is a nonprofit encouraging Big Island residents to “refuse pet abuse” by offering support in three areas:



- Networking and developing alliances with animal and domestic violence groups.
- Community outreach, education and support.
- Advocacy with elected officials for better funding and regulations.

The group’s colorful [website](#) features national and statewide statistics on child maltreatment, domestic violence and animal abuse, and helpful tips to care for pets. President Ilene Cohen Harrington plans to use National Link Coalition statistics in an extensive social media campaign.

“We acknowledge that people who hurt animals don’t stop with animals, and that there is an established link between cruelty to animals and violence toward humans – regularly referred to as ‘The Link’,” reads the website’s introduction. “Therefore, it’s critically important that cruelty toward animals be taken very seriously by law enforcement and by society at large because it will not only help animals, but will also help people who are at risk.”



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

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

VETERINARY MEDICINE... and THE LINK

Louisiana Permits Veterinarians and Technicians To Report Suspected Animal Abuse with Immunity

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards signed **HB 842** into law on May 17, enabling veterinarians and veterinary technicians to report several types of suspected animal abuse and release confidential patient/client information without fear of civil or criminal liability.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

The new law, Act No. 59, becomes effective Aug. 1. It makes Louisiana the 22nd state to explicitly permit veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse; an additional 20 states mandate such reporting. 34 states now grant practitioners immunity for making such reports.

Act. No. 59 creates a new section of the state's civil provisions, R.S. 9:2800.28. Any licensed veterinarian or veterinary technician who reports, in good faith and with reasonable belief that an animal has been abused, to the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, a P.O.S.T. certified animal control officer, a law enforcement agency, or a prosecuting attorney, will be immune from civil liability and criminal prosecution. Immunity also extends to releasing confidential information pursuant to a subpoena or a court-ordered disclosure or upon written consent of the animal's owner or legal representative. It does not apply if the reporter acted with gross negligence, willful misconduct or in bad faith.

The law covers reporting specific criminal acts as defined in statutes: simple and aggravated cruelty to animals; dogfighting and cockfighting; injuring or killing a police animal; hog and canine fighting; sport killing of zoo or circus animals; and unlawful restraint of a dog.

Bills pending in other states include: **Connecticut SB 235** (would require veterinarians to report suspected dogfighting); and **New Jersey S 1789** (would require veterinarians and technicians, among other professionals, to report suspected animal cruelty with good-faith immunity). **Iowa's SF 2135, HF 2429** and **HF 623**, which would have allowed practitioners to report with immunity from administrative, civil and criminal liability and remove confidentiality requirements, died when the legislature adjourned.

At present, veterinary reporting of suspected animal abuse is still not addressed in Delaware, Montana, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

Merck Manual Student Story Features the Domestic Violence Link



Maria Estefania

The Merck Veterinary Manual's website feature of "Student Stories" on March 30 published "[Advocating for Victims of Domestic Violence as a Veterinarian](#)." The author, Maria Estefania, is a recent graduate of Tuskegee University and serves as Client Education Coordinator for the Latinx Veterinary Medical Association.

Estefania describes how her experiences as a forensic extern introduced her to how domestic violence survivors are forced to leave their pets behind and how their animals are often killed or injured and become victims themselves. She

describes efforts by the RedRover [Purple Leash Project](#) and [Don't Forget the Pets](#) that assist survivors with companion animals in crisis and encourages practitioners to raise awareness of domestic violence Link issues in their communities.

Ohio VMA Animal Abuse Reporting Guide Updated with Communication Strategies

The Ohio Veterinary Medical Association has updated its manual, “[Animal Abuse Recognition & Reporting](#)” (See the [March 2021 LINK-Letter](#)). The revised edition includes a special section on communications to help practitioners navigate the potentially contentious challenges of discussing suspected abuse with angry pet owners.



The section encourages veterinarians to be proactive about suspected abuse and neglect cases by developing a plan in advance, taking a team approach for input and responsibilities, role-playing various scenarios, and establishing lines of communication in advance with humane agents and law enforcement officers. It offers suggested communication strategies for when abuse or neglect is suspected and techniques to reduce client defensiveness that can also encourage receiving a more accurate history of the incident.

Taiwan Study Describes Veterinarians' Responses to Suspected Animal and Interpersonal Abuse

What may be the first research study to investigate Taiwanese veterinarians' response to animal abuse found that the incidence of suspected physical animal abuse was 0.16 cases per 100 patients, and that 63.9% of respondents had seen suspected animal physical abuse in the past five years. 10% of animal abuse cases were likely concurrent with human abuse. 80% of respondents agreed that animal and human abuse frequently co-occur, but this did not affect their willingness to assist or report abuse. 88.7% of respondents supported mandatory reporting of animal abuse and 66.5% felt they should be mandated to report human abuse cases. Taiwan's Animal Protection Act does not currently mandate veterinarians to report suspected or confirmed abuse



Wei-Hsiang Huang

Respondents who believed they had received adequate training were more willing to deal with animal abuse, more capable of distinguishing abuse cases, and did not believe that these cases were beyond their ability. But more than 60% of respondents said their animal cruelty awareness training courses were insufficient. The authors call for increased time devoted to animal cruelty issues in veterinary college curricula and postgraduate continuing education to build confidence in reporting animal abuse.

Most practitioners were likely to report only severe cases, but students would report all cases. “These changes in thinking may be related to the veterinarian’s practice environment, the impact of education, policy support, and/or practical considerations,” they wrote.

“There is a strong association between animal abuse and interpersonal violence; therefore, veterinarians may encounter both,” the authors wrote. “Dealing with animal abuse cases is beneficial for advancing animal welfare and the overall public health. Veterinarians play an important professional role in identifying and responding to this relationship. The results of this study underscore the urgent advancement of education and the importance of the crucial veterinary role in both animal and interpersonal abuse cases.”

-- Chen, Y.-H., & Huang, W.-H. (2022, April 28). Pilot study of attitudes of Taiwanese veterinarians and undergraduate veterinary students toward animal abuse and interpersonal violence. *Animals*, 12(9), 1135. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12091135>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE... and THE LINK

New French Law Addresses Animal Abuse and Children and Veterinary Reporting of Suspected Abuse

A new national law in France aimed at combating animal abuse and strengthening the bond between animals and humans includes several new provisions recognizing The Link between animal abuse and human violence.

Law No. 2021-1539, enacted on Nov. 30, reinforces several existing anti-cruelty sanctions and strengthens penalties for abusing domestic animals with an emphasis on the adverse impact of animal abuse on children.



One section of the new law increases the penalties in the Penal Code for various aggravating circumstances of animal cruelty. The penalties for serious acts of animal abuse or animal sexual abuse committed in the presence of a minor now include up to four years imprisonment and a fine of €60,000. Creating images relating to the commission of serious abuse or acts of cruelty or sexual abuse, or complicity in the creation of such images or dissemination of such images on the Internet, is punishable by 2 years and €30,000.

The law creates a new criminal category of “zoocrime” – abuse of a sexual nature which specifies that sexual attacks on a domestic, captive or tamed animal are punishable by three years’ imprisonment and a fine of €45,000. Committing, proposing or soliciting acts of animal sexual abuse in the presence of a minor is an aggravating circumstance.

The new law also appears to lift confidentiality restrictions to allow veterinarians to report to public prosecutors any information relating to serious animal abuse, cruelty, mistreatment, or sexual attack on an animal observed in professional practice. This text protects veterinarians who wish to report mistreatment from possible prosecution, giving them the option of lifting the veil of professional secrecy. It is not clear whether this waiver of confidentiality extends to all acts of animal abuse or only those in which the animal dies.

The law also introduces cross-reporting with a new article addressing the relationship between animals and men.” Article 25 provides that awareness of animal ethics and the relationship between humans and animals under the philosophical and scientific prism be integrated into universal national service. This awareness is most advanced in The Link between animal abuse and minors; in addition to the abovementioned aggravating circumstances, Article 36 provides for the child welfare service to be responsible for ensuring “the identification and orientation of minors convicted of animal abuse, or whose leaders have been convicted of animal abuse.” Animal abuse is thus recognized as a reason for monitoring minors in the same way as cases of sexual violence.

The law also recognizes the cross-reporting by animal protection organizations of potential child abuse or child sexual abuse to child protection agencies, although specific protocols to effect this cross-reporting are not addressed.

Article 40 amends the Criminal Code to include pornographic images involving animals in the offense relating to the dissemination to a minor of a message of a violent nature, incitement to terrorism or pornography. Article 45 provides that criminal procedures applicable to the offense of animal sexual abuse will be the same as those applicable to offenses of a sexual nature and protection of minors.

THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS... and THE LINK

Latham Foundation Announces Grant Opportunities for 2022

The Latham Foundation has announced its 2022 grant cycle which is offering one-year humane education grants of up to \$10,000 to U.S.-based nonprofit organizations. Priority will be



The Latham Foundation for the
Promotion of Humane Education

given to programs that include services to animals and the military, veterans, first responders, and their families. Grant applications can be submitted only online between July 1-8. Proposals must demonstrate four of Latham's principles of humane education: kindness to animals, to each other, to other people, and to our country. Three websites offer details: [general information](#) about the Latham Foundation and the grants; application [details and deadlines](#); and the [application form](#).

THE LINK in the LITERATURE

“Medico-Legal Borderlands” Affect Officers’ Health and Safety

Canada’s Violence Link Coalition and the intersection of child abuse, intimate partner violence and mental illness with animal abuse – particularly animal hoarding – are featured in an extensive discussion of the occupational health and safety risk factors affecting animal protection officers in Alberta. This paper attempts to put the physical dangers, lethality risks, under-resourcing of animal care and control programs, and conflicts over animals’ legal status as property into a category defined as “medico-legal borderlands” – areas where the disciplines of medicine and the law meld to create new structures of knowledge and power. The article explores the work of local law enforcement at the intersection of animal welfare, community nuisances and public health, and emphasizes the need for more Link-based inter-agency coordination to better protect the health and safety of animal protection officers.

Rault, D., Adams, C.L., Springett, J., & Rock, M.J. (2022). Animal protection, law enforcement, and occupational health: Qualitative action research highlights the urgency of relational coordination in a medico-legal borderland. *Animals*, 12, 1282. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12101282>.

Poster Presentations Invited for APA Convention

Students who have completed an empirical or theoretical project on human-animal interactions are invited to submit a proposal for a Human-Animal Interaction Section virtual poster session at the American Psychological Association’s convention, Aug. 4-6. Proposals should include a cover sheet and a 500- to 1000-word summary of the study in APA style. The abstract should describe the nature of the presentation and primary findings. Summaries should include a brief literature review, statement of the problem, participants, procedures, results, and conclusions, with enough detail for reviewers to judge the overall format and contribution of the scholarship. Apply by July 8 to [Dr. Karen Schaefer](#).

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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.

NEWS from LINK COALITIONS



AMAH
Association contre la maltraitance
animale et humaine

French Link Coalition Launches website

Our counterpart Link coalition in France – L'Association contre la Maltraitance Animale et Humaine ([AMAH](#)) (The Association Against Animal and Human Abuse) (*See the [May 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*) has created a website to foster activities and knowledge about “Le Lien” (The Link) in France.

AMAH’s main mission is to study The Link, raise awareness, increase interagency collaboration, and improve regulations. It brings together veterinarians, health professionals, lawyers, animal welfare organizations, shelters, educators, law enforcement, and others and offers information on how they can intervene when animal or human abuse are suspected. The group also encourages research into The Link and informs the public about it.

Based in Lille, AMAH’s board of administrators include veterinarians, jurists, human-animal interaction specialists, professors, and women’s and families’ rights authorities. In September 2021, AMAH provided veterinarians and their teams with a guide to better understand and manage animal and human abuse, through practical and legal advice. The guide is being updated in the wake of [Law 2021-1539](#), which is aimed at combating animal abuse and strengthening The Link between animals and humans.

The website includes handy pull-down sections with resources for victims, veterinarians, healthcare professionals, and people who aren’t sure if a situation affecting a minor, a vulnerable adult or an animal is abusive. The site includes information about domestic, child, elder, and animal abuse, applicable laws affecting them, and national organizations that offer assistance.

Describing “Le Lien” as an ancient concern backed up by recent research, AMAH cites statistics from European and North American researchers. The website resources include guides to help veterinarians, animal welfare advocates, and medical patient advocates recognize animal and human abuse.

Canadian Link Roundtable Expands Partnerships and Collaborations



Humane Canada’s [Violence Link Coalition](#) conducted the first in a series of facilitated roundtables for the ACT Project (Awareness, Collaboration, Tools) designed to address systemic barriers facing women experiencing gender-based violence with companion, farm and service animals. Building on the foundational work of the Coalition, the project seeks to raise awareness, improve cross-sector collaboration, offer practical options, response policies, and improved support systems.

The roundtable attracted several new collaborators to the original nucleus of Violence Link partners. New participants included: Shelter Movers; the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association; Women’s Shelters Canada; PATHS Saskatchewan; WomenatthecentrE; Ending Violence Association of Canada; Paws for Hope; and the Saskatchewan, BC, PEI, and Montreal SPCAs. The roundtable also focused on ways to better center the voices of survivors, Indigenous, Official Language Minority Communities, and rural women, and consider the needs of farmed and service animals in working toward an Adaptable Collaborative Response Model. Additional Roundtable events are being scheduled in June and July.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

As the 2022 legislative season rolls along, growing awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence has already resulted in **143 bills** introduced in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress – **12 of which** have already been signed into law! Here are the ones that we know of so far; please [let us know](#) of any legislation not included in this list:

Current Link Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Arizona HB 2365 would allow victims to petition a court to issue a severe threat order of protection against an individual who committed cruel mistreatment of an animal; such an order would prohibit the respondent from possessing a firearm. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



California SB 344 and **SB 513** 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. Both bills passed the Senate; **SB 513** was sent to the Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development; **SB 344** was sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. (It is not clear whether these bills would cover homeless persons who are fleeing domestic violence.)



Colorado HB 22-1041 was signed into law on March 24. It adds animal control officers and State Bureau of Animal Protection employees to the "protected persons" who, if they are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, can petition to have their personal information removed from official records to reduce an imminent and serious threat to the safety of the person or the immediate family.



Colorado SB 22-183 was signed into law on May 19. The law creates a \$35 million Crime Victim Services Fund and a \$6 million Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services Fund to award grants to non-governmental or Indian tribe domestic violence and sexual assault programs and coalitions that provide services to crime victims, including "attending to the needs of animal companions."



Delaware HB 264 would allow a person who has been the victim of non-consensual sexual conduct or sexual penetration, including with an animal, to apply for a sexual violence protective order if the person has a reasonable fear that the perpetrator will harm the petitioner in the future. A sexual violence protection order would be available only for victims lacking a family or dating relationship with the perpetrator, as they can already request a protection from abuse order. The bill is in the House Appropriations Committee.



District of Columbia B24-0560 would modify the pure property disposition of a pet in a divorce so that the court could assign sole or joint ownership of a pet based upon the care and best interest of the animal. The measure is in the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.



Florida HB 121 died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, aggravated child abuse, or aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and “evincing a depraved mind.”



Hawai’i SB 2396 and HB 2209 died when the legislature adjourned. The bills recognized that children residing in homes marked by domestic violence are also psychologically harmed and more likely to externalize antisocial behaviors. They would have granted children standing to file a petition for an order of protection or temporary restraining order (which includes provisions that protect pets).



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.



Illinois HB 4368 would expand the definition of domestic violence abuse to include “coercive control behavior,” a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a household member’s free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit intimidating cruelty to animals. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.



Indiana HB 1137 was signed into law on March 18. It provides that orders for protection (which include protecting pets from the respondent) will be enforced indefinitely if the respondent is required to register as a lifetime sex or violent offender.



Indiana HB 1370 died when the legislature adjourned. It would have required the state Office of Judicial Administration to establish a domestic violence registry for individuals convicted of domestic violence or who is subject to an order of protection; Indiana already includes acts of cruelty to a family member’s animals as a “crime of domestic violence.”



Iowa HF 825 became law on May 2. The new law amends domestic violence protection orders (which can include pets) and consent agreements to allow courts to approve a consent agreement without a finding that the defendant has engaged in sexual abuse.



Kentucky HB 319 was signed into law on April 8. It includes violence against an animal when used as coercive conduct within the definition of “domestic violence and abuse” and “dating violence and abuse” and allows judges in both types of cases to award possession of a shared domestic animal to the petitioner.



Kentucky HB 709 died in committee. It would have denied offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they had served at least 50% of their sentence if the animal abuse was committed as part of domestic violence or in the presence of a minor child; such acts of animal cruelty would have been classified as Class D felonies.



Maine LD 1696 was signed into law on April 20. It expands Maine’s statutes (the oldest in the U.S.) allowing courts to direct the care, control and custody of pets in protection-from-abuse orders to further prohibit defendants from possessing any dangerous weapons if the defendant’s abuse includes killing or threatening to kill any animal in the household. The recodified statute is based upon the recognition of domestic abuse as a serious crime against the individual and society that produces an unhealthy and dangerous family environment that is not conducive to healthy childhood development.



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 a study order requested by the Senate Rules Committee.



Mississippi SB 2022 died in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It would have allowed courts in issuing protection orders to order respondents to not harm, abuse, transfer, or dispose of any companion animal, and to grant possession of companion animals to the petitioner.



New Jersey S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of domestic violence, child and elder abuse, and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy 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 A3724 would amend existing provisions which allow courts, during a divorce proceeding, to award custody of pets in the animals’ best interests to also allow courts to require the parties to properly care for animals prior to the court’s determination of ownership of the animals. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary 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 A3985 and A10013 (“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 are in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.



New York A8865 would expand provisions in residential programs for domestic violence provisions which allow them to have service animals and therapy dogs to also include companion animals. The bill is in the Assembly Social Services Committee.



Oklahoma SB 1446 would expand the definition of “domestic abuse” to include “coercive control,” defined as unreasonably engaging in numerous acts including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to an animal that intimidates a family or household member The bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.



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.



Pennsylvania HB 1903 would allow courts to issue an Extreme Risk Protection Order barring an individual from possessing a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a substantial risk of suicide or death or serious bodily injury to another person; factors which may be used to determine the individual's risk include a history of domestic violence or animal cruelty. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island H7087 would create a custody procedure for domestic companion animals in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. The bill passed the House and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Rhode Island HB 7573 would allow a person who possessed a pet while cohabiting with another person to seek equitable relief relating to contested ownership of the pet; district courts could consider the well-being of the pet in making a determination of ownership. The court could not award joint ownership, visitation privileges or financial support and could award ownership to an animal welfare organization if the court found that neither of the previously cohabiting parties could provide a safe and appropriate living environment for the pet. The bill House Judiciary Committee requested it be held for further study.



Rhode Island H7088 would expand the existing law, which allows family courts to include household pets in domestic violence protection orders, to allow courts to award custody of the pets to the plaintiff and to order an enforcement remedy of a restraining order or other injunctive relief if necessary. The House Judiciary Committee requested it be held for further study.



Rhode Island H 7360 was withdrawn at the sponsor's request. It would have modified the definition of domestic abuse to include "coercive control" of another person, a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates.



Utah HB 175 was signed into law on March 22. The measure modifies the definition of "emotional distress" related to the offense of stalking to include mental or psychological suffering resulting from harming an animal, and includes pets in dating violence and cohabitant abuse protection orders.



Virginia HB 713 was deferred until 2023 when the General Assembly adjourned. It would have defined "coercive control" for the purpose of issuing family abuse protective orders as a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates the other party.



Washington HB 1901 was signed into law on March 31. The new law adds “coercive control,” including harm to someone’s pets, including by physical violence, to the definition of domestic violence. It takes effect July 1, 2022.



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 Committee on Education and Labor.



H.R. 4159/S.2121, the Courtroom Dogs Act, would develop best practice guidelines for the use of dogs in federal courts and grand jury rooms to provide support for defendants, complainants and witnesses. The bills are in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.



Arizona HB 2324 was signed into law on April 14. It makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor to allow a minor to attend an animal fight or cockfight or any facility where preparations are being made for an animal fight or cockfight.



California AB 2274 would change provisions regarding mandated reporters, which include animal control and humane society officers and veterinarians. Current law makes the intentional failure to report suspected child abuse or severe neglect a misdemeanor. The bill would allow a case involving the failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect to be filed within one year, and not later than four years, after the offense. The bill passed the Assembly and was sent to the Senate Rules Committee for assignment.



California AB 2085 would change existing law, which requires professionals, including animal control and humane society officers, who are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect, to report only suspected child abuse and “severe” neglect. “Severe neglect” would be defined as willfully causing or permitting harm or injury to a child or putting the child in imminent danger. The bill was approved by the Committee on Public Safety and referred to the Appropriations Committee.



Florida HB 121 died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating aggravated child abuse, sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, or aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and “evinced a depraved mind.”



Florida HB 435 died in the House. It would have made it a 3rd-degree felony to cause or allow a minor under age 18 to attend an animal fight.



Kentucky HB 709 died in committee. It would have denied offenders convicted of first-degree abuse of a dog or cat from being released on probation until they had served at least 50% of their sentence if the animal abuse was committed as part of domestic violence or in the presence of a minor child; such acts of animal cruelty would have been classified as Class D felonies.



Massachusetts H.1716/S. 2672 would expand the ability of Department of Children & Families employees and contractors to report suspected animal abuse. Current law allows them to report “during any investigation or evaluation.” These bills would allow them to cross-report at any time. The bills are in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



Massachusetts S.2846 would expand the list of individuals mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect to include all adult employees, volunteers and contractors in animal control. Currently, only animal control officers are mandated to report. The bill is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



New Jersey S 1789 would expand the statutory definitions of child and elder abuse, domestic violence and abuse of persons with a disability to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.



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 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have made it a felony to permit a person under age 18 to attend or participate in any dog- or cock-fighting.




Oklahoma SB 1713 would expand existing domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders to also include petitions filed by or on behalf of victims of child abuse. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.


 **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.


 **Pennsylvania HB 1836** would add to the Crimes Code a new crime of “child torture,” which would include physical or sexual abuse, unreasonable confinement or restraint, starvation, and “terrorizing or threatening death or harm to the child, a loved one of the child or a pet or loved object of the child for the purpose of causing significant emotional distress.” It was laid on the table in the House Judiciary Committee.


 **Washington HB 1292** died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have created a new crime of “providing harmful material to a minor” which would include bestiality, excretory functions, or sexual acts that are violent or destructive, including but not limited to human or animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture.

Animal Abuse and Elder/Disabled Abuse

 **Florida HB 121** died in the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. It would have defined the 3rd-degree felony crime of aggravated animal cruelty to include causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or death to an animal while perpetrating aggravated abuse of an elderly or disabled person, sexual battery, domestic violence, aggravated stalking, or aggravated child abuse. Aggravated animal cruelty would also pertain to the unlawful killing an animal belonging to another family or household member and “evincing a depraved mind.”

 **Illinois HB 4368** would expand the definition of abuse of a disabled adult to include “coercive control behavior,” a pattern of behavior that unreasonably interferes with a household member’s free will and personal liberty, including committing or threatening to commit intimidating cruelty to animals. The bill is in the House Rules Committee.

 **New Jersey S 1789** would expand the statutory definitions of elder abuse, abuse of persons with a disability, domestic violence, and child abuse to include acts of animal cruelty against those persons’ animals. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.

 **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.



District of Columbia B24-0560 would close a loophole in the law and would prohibit sexual contact between a person and an animal, including the advertisement, offer of sale, or dissemination of photographs or video footage of bestiality. The bill is in the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety.



Florida SB 692 would amend the definition of “sexual bestiality” to replace “vagina” with “genitals” when describing illegal sexual contact with an animal. The bill has passed the House and the Senate. **SB 878 died in the Criminal Justice Committee.** It would have replaced “vagina” with “female genitals”; **SB 420 died in the Judiciary Committee.** It would have increased the penalty for sexual activities involving animals from a 1st-degree misdemeanor to a 3rd-degree felony and clarify that oral sex with an animal is prohibited. **HB 435 died in the House.** It would have further expanded the definition of “sexual contact with an animal” to include actions for the purpose of abuse or financial gain as well as sexual gratification and prohibit the filming, distribution or possession of pornography with an animal; convicted offenders could have been barred from being around animals for 5 years following conviction.



Idaho SB 1325 became law on March 22. It replaces the archaic law against “the infamous crime against nature committed with mankind or with any animal” with a more contemporary crime of “sexual abuse of an animal,” punishable by up to 5 years in prison and registry as a sexual offender. No convicted offenders can be released on parole without a psychiatric or psychological examination and risk assessment. Offenders can be barred from operating a child day care facility.



Kansas HB 2009 and HB 2223 would continue to define sex with animals as “sodomy,” but remove sex with an adult member of the same sex from the definition of sodomy. The bills are in the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice.



Kentucky HB 709 and SB 125 died in committee. They would have allowed peace officers and animal control officers to seize victims of animal sexual abuse.



Louisiana HB 142 would allow individuals to sue for damages commercial entities that publish or distribute pornographic materials harmful to minors, including depictions of bestiality. The bill is in the House Committee on Civil Law and Procedure.



Maryland SB 22 died in committee. It would have repealed duplicative Criminal Law statute §3-322, a prohibition against having sex with animals, as similar prohibitions exist in §10-606 as Aggravated Cruelty to Animals.



Missouri SB 980/HB 2446 would add causing injury or suffering to a female dog, causing injury to the sexual organs of a female dog, and needlessly causing pain during artificial insemination of a female dog to the definition of animal abuse. The Senate bill is in the Senate Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee; the House bill is in the House Emerging Issues Committee.



New York A614 would make sexual contact with animals a felony if serious injury or death to 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.



Pennsylvania SB 354 would add “sexual intercourse with animals” to the definition of “sexual violence” awareness programs that institutions of higher education and private licensed schools must teach. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee.



Virginia SB 249 was signed into law on April 11. The new law modernizes the prohibition against a person who “carnally knows any brute animal” into a more contemporary prohibition of “sexual abuse of animals,” a Class 6 felony, and prohibits convicted offenders from owning any animals for up to five years. Offenders could be ordered to obtain psychiatric or psychological counseling and treatment.



Animal Hoarding



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 referred for interim study.



New Jersey S 1144 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.



West Virginia HB 2095 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. It would have defined animal hoarding as the possession of a large number of companion animals, the failure to provide adequate food, water, shelter, veterinary care and humane care, and the inability to understand the conditions of the animals and the deleterious impact on the animals and the owner’s health and well-being. Animals found living under these conditions would be confiscated and turned over to an animal shelter for proper care and relocation.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



Mississippi SB 2261 died in the Judiciary Committee. “Buddy’s Law”) would have required youths who have been adjudicated as delinquent for committing cruelty against a domesticated dog or cat to receive psychiatric evaluation and counseling or treatment.



New Jersey S 1144 would establish the crime of animal hoarding and require mental health counseling for all adult and juvenile animal cruelty and hoarder offenders. It is in the Senate Energy & Environment Committee. **S 1153 (“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** and **A 1558** would require courts to impose psychiatric evaluations for defendants convicted of aggravated animal cruelty. **A 8443** would require courts to order a mental health evaluation for persons convicted of animal fighting or aggravated cruelty to animals. The bills are in the respective Agriculture Committees.



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.

Cross-Reporting



Connecticut SB 235 would require veterinarians to report to local law enforcement agencies when they treat dogs that they believe have been used in animal fighting. The bill was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee



Iowa SF 2135, HF 2429 and HF 623 died in committee when the legislature adjourned. The bills would have granted veterinarians immunity from administrative, civil and criminal liability, and remove the normal confidentiality requirements, for making good-faith reports or assisting in the investigation of suspected animal maltreatment or rescuing a threatened animal.



Louisiana HB 842 was signed into law and becomes effective Aug. 1. The new law grants veterinarians and veterinary technicians immunity from civil and criminal liability for reporting, in good faith and with reasonable cause, suspected animal cruelty or neglect and for releasing confidential information pursuant to a subpoena, court-ordered disclosure, or with written consent of the animal’s owner or legal representative.



Massachusetts S.2672 would permit child protection workers and personnel protecting elders and the disabled to report suspected animal abuse at any time, rather than just during the course of their investigations and evaluations. The bill is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.



Missouri SB 1182 would mandate veterinarians, animal control officers and animal humane investigators to report abuse and neglect of children, the elderly and other vulnerable persons. Certain mental health, educational, protective services, and law enforcement personnel would be mandated to report companion animal abuse or neglect to a hotline established by the Missouri Animal Control Association. Newly-mandated reporters would receive one hour of training within the first 60 days of employment to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect. The bill is in the Senate Seniors, Families, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee.



New Jersey A 2709, citing Link research, would require DCF child abuse and neglect investigators to report suspected neglect or cruelty of livestock and non-livestock animals, with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability and administrative sanctions. The bill is in the Assembly Human Services Committee.



New Jersey S 1789 would require veterinarians, veterinary technicians, domestic violence investigators, employees of the Department of Children & Families, employees of the Department of Human Services, Division of Aging, police officers, and caregivers at residential health care facilities to report suspected animal cruelty to an appropriate law enforcement officer with civil and criminal immunity for reporting in good faith. The bill is in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee.



New York A 5780 and S 7401 would permit mandated reporters of child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, with immunity from civil and criminal liability for good-faith reports. The bills are in the respective Children and Families Committees.



New York A 5642 would require the Attorney General to establish a 24-hour toll-free animal abuse hotline and make reasonable efforts to inform the public about the hotline, which would then refer reportable incidents to the appropriate state or local law enforcement or SPCA agency. The bill is in the Assembly Governmental Operations 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.



Alaska HB 51 would allow criminal courts to impose a sentence above the presumptive range if various aggravating factors are present. Existing law includes a history of repeated instances of cruelty to animals as an aggravating factor; the bill would add the defendant's targeting the victim due to that person's sexual orientation, gender identity or citizenship. The bill is in the House State Affairs Committee.



Georgia SB 512 died when the legislative session ended. It would have added cockfighting to provisions of the law outlawing gambling on dog fights and create a "misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature" to allow a minor child to attend an animal fight.



Illinois HB 3531 would expand 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 450 died in committee. It would have required peace officers to receive law enforcement training on the identification, investigation, response, and reporting of animal abuse violations and on The Link between animal abuse and offenses against people, including: abuse, neglect and sex crimes against a minor; child pornography; abuse, neglect and exploitation of a vulnerable adult; and domestic and dating violence and abuse.



Louisiana SB 327 would allow a district attorney to obtain a court warrant to search for and seize any firearms belonging to a person who recently committed acts of animal cruelty where there is probable cause to believe that the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or to another person. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Minnesota HF 208 would establish a Minnesota Companion Animal Board to protect and promote the welfare, social well-being, and physical and mental health of companion animals; one member would “represent public human health and welfare issues and the relationship between companion animal and human health and welfare.” It is in the Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee.



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



New York A999/S7876 would prohibit the release of or failure to control an animal with the intent of preventing a police officer or peace officer from performing his or her lawful duties, as assault on a police officer in the second degree, a Class C felony. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Codes Committees.



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.



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 2328 would expand the state’s annual grants to local law enforcement agencies to enforce illegal gambling to include investigations of animal fighting and possession of animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Committee on Gaming Oversight.



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.



Pennsylvania SB628 would make it a Second Degree felony to seriously injure or kill a police animal while perpetrating or being an accomplice to a felony crime. The bill is in the senate Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania SB 814 would make it a felony to harm or kill a police animal while evading arrest or attempting to escape detention for an underlying felony or misdemeanor. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



South Carolina S378 died when the legislature adjourned. It would have required offenders who harm or injure a police dog or horse in the performance of its duties to make full-cost restitution to the law enforcement agency for the replacement of the animal and be subject to increased fine and imprisonment penalties and/or 500 hours of community service with an animal-related organization.



Utah HB 112 died when the legislature adjourned. It would have changed “dog” to “animal” in statutes prohibiting the training or exhibition of animals for fighting other animals, and repeal the cock fighting statute.



Wisconsin SB 536/AB 540 died. The bills would have prohibited offenders convicted of homicide, felony battery, sexual assault, and controlled substance felonies from possessing, controlling or residing with a dangerous dog.

Court-Appointed Advocates for Animals



Florida S 172 died in the Judiciary Committee. It would have allowed the appointment of an advocate, upon the court’s initiative or request, from a list of attorneys and certified legal interns provided by the Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar Association, for “the interests of an animal” in civil and criminal court proceedings regarding welfare, care or custody.



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 passed the Senate and is in the House Rules Committee.



New Jersey A 1965/S 2211 would create a two-year pilot program to allow courts to appoint a pro bono attorney or law student special advocate to represent the best interests of, and justice for, animals in cruelty cases. It was reported out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee and is in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



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



Rhode Island S 2227/HB 7678 would authorize the potential appointment of pro bono attorneys and supervised law students to act as animal advocates in cruelty and abuse cases, at the court's discretion, to serve the interests of justice. The respective Judiciary Committees each recommended the bills be held for further study.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Felon Charged with Rape, Assault, Attempted Murder, and Killing Woman's Dog



Kevin Jara-Sanchez

Pennsylvania State Police arrested Kevin Jara-Sanchez, 26, of Towanda, Pa., on nine felony charges of rape, attempted murder, assault, and animal cruelty for allegedly sending a woman to a hospital with serious injuries and shooting her dog and then burning its body in a woodstove. [WETM-TV](#) reported that Jara-Sanchez allegedly beat the woman with a gun and a rolling pin, shot at her, threw a knife at her, raped her, and threatened to kill her multiple times; one of the shots reportedly missed her but penetrated a door and killed her dog, "Ozzy." The woman was sent to the hospital with eight broken ribs, a collapsed lung, internal abdominal bleeding, bruises, and a broken wrist. The victim had asked him to put Ozzy's body outside so she could see him when she was discharged from the hospital, but he refused and instead put Ozzy's remains in the stove and burned him. Jara-Sanchez had previously been convicted of aggravated assault and was legally designated as not allowed to possess a firearm.

Las Vegas Felon Charged with Using Stun Gun on Cat, Threatening Neighbor

Carlos Plummer, 55, of Las Vegas, Nev., was arrested and charged with five counts of animal torture, harassment and illegal use of a weapon by a felon for allegedly using a stun gun on a cat and then threatening a neighbor who attempted to stop him. The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) reported that a neighbor told police that he heard a cat screaming outside and saw Plummer holding the cat upside-down by its hind legs before throwing it into a vehicle. The police report said that when the cat tried to leave the vehicle, Plummer started tasing the cat with the stun gun. When the neighbor tried to intervene, police said Plummer began striking the neighbor's window and threatened to "blow his head off." Police also reportedly found a BB gun in the car.



Carlos Plummer

Brothers Charged with Killing Father Who Killed Dog that Ate Chicken Eggs

Two South African brothers were arrested and charged with murder for allegedly killing their elderly father after he killed the family's dog for eating chicken eggs and biting other animals. [News24](#) reported that police said the brothers, aged 27 and 29, assaulted their 74-year-old father in Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape Province. The brothers were not named under South African Police Service and press protocols.



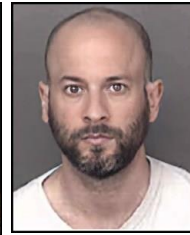
Erik Pederson

Suspected Bomb Maker Charged with Felony Animal Cruelty

Police in Grants Pass, Ore. investigating a man for allegedly making bomb threats arrested Erik Rohan Pederson, Jr., 19, and charged him with four counts of first-degree aggravated animal abuse and misdemeanor counts of menacing and attempting to produce a destructive device. The [Medford Mail Tribune](#) reported that police found evidence of animal abuse, chemicals, and recipes and equipment for making destructive devices. The felony charges stemmed from Pederson allegedly killing and cutting up a juvenile relative's pet mice, placing some of their heads in a refrigerator and smearing blood in the kitchen. The police's probable cause affidavit also said he had sent photos of the mutilated mice to family members as part of a dispute with the younger relative. The police statement said the police "like to encourage the reporting of concerning behaviors, such as animal abuse and violence, as they can be indicators of escalating dangers."

Parents, Grandparents Charged with Felony Murder and Child Abuse in Rottweiler Mauling of Their Daughter/Granddaughter

The parents and grandparents of a Waynesboro, Va. 7-year-old girl who was mauled to death by the family's rottweiler were charged with murder, harboring a dangerous animal and child abuse. Penny Lee Bashlor, 64, and her husband Stephen



From left: Stephen Kachmar, Penny Bashlor, and Brooks and Alicia Floyd

Christopher Kachmar, 60, were indicted in the Jan. 29 death of their granddaughter, Olivia Grace Floyd. The girl's parents, Brooks Floyd, 39, and Alicia Floyd, 37, were also charged with felony child endangerment. The dog, named "Ranger," who reportedly had a prior history of attacking people, was seized as a dangerous dog and later euthanized, according to the Waynesboro [News Virginian](#).

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Click on the underlined hyperlinks for more detailed information.

June 14 – Pittsfield, Mass. (online): [HAVEN](#) will conduct its regular meeting.

June 16 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (online): Don Ferguson of Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan will present "Animal Abuse and the Violence Link" in a [webinar](#) for the Saskatchewan SPCA.

June 16 – Chicago, Ill.: Linda Fielder, Emily Lewis and Kris Otteman will present "Animal Shelters and Veterinarians as Collaborative Partners in Animal Cruelty Response and Prevention", and Leslie Irvine will present "Lessons Learned from Homeless Pet Owners," at the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement's [Spring Conference](#).

June 22 – (online): Pennsylvania's [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

June 27 – Harrisburg, Pa. (online): Andrew Campbell and Vicki Deisner will conduct a webinar, "Confronting the Dangerous Link: A Holistic Approach to Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence" for the [Keystone LINK Coalition](#) and the Pennsylvania General Assembly's Animal Protection Caucus.

June 28 (online): Adam Leath will present “Rescuing the ‘Rescuer’: The Challenging World of Rescue Hoarders” in a [webinar](#) for the Justice Clearinghouse.

July 4 – Lisbon, Portugal: Laurentina Pedroso will present “The Connection between Domestic and Animal Violence” at the [Zoobiquity Conference](#): Female Health Across the Tree of Life.”

July 5 – Kansas City, Mo. (online): BestyBnB will host a [webinar](#) on “Bridging the Gap: Establishing Relationships Between Social Services and Animal Welfare.”

July 13 – Alexandria, Va. (online): The [Small & Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association](#) will offer a virtual training event that includes “Animal Abuse: The ‘Missing Link’ to Preventing Mass Shooters Incidents,” “Animal Forensics: Clues for Law Enforcement,” and “Creating a Multidisciplinary Community Team on Animal Abuse.”

July 18-19 – Reno, Nev.: JudgeS Jennifer Ranji AND Rosa Figarola will present “The Obvious LINK: Judicial Leadership at the Nexus of Animal Abuse and Family Violence,” and Sue Skinner and Linda Fielder will present “Intersection of Animal and Child Abuse,” at the [85th Annual Conference](#) of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Skinner, Fielder and Emily Lewis will present “Intersection of Animal and Child Abuse: A Case Study.”

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

July 25 (online): RedRover and Greater Good Charities will host a free one-day [training workshop](#), “Don’t Forget the Pets: Housing People and Pets,” exploring ways to create and sustain pet co-housing programs for people and pets in crisis.

July 27 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

July 30 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Nicole Forsyth and Amanda Landis-Harris will present “The ‘Link’, One Welfare and Trauma-Informed Care at the [AVMA Convention](#).

Aug. 2 – Kansas City, Mo. (online): BestyBnB will host a [webinar](#) on “Safety Planning with Survivors of Domestic Violence and Their Pets.”

Aug. 3 – Denver, Colo.: Phil Arkow will present “The Animal-Human Violence Link: How Pet-Inclusive Victim Assistance Can Better Protect Vulnerable Family Members” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [48th Annual Training Event](#).

August 7-10 – Oxford, U.K.: The 7th Annual [Oxford Animal Ethics Summer School](#)’s 60 programs will include: Amy Fitzgerald presenting “Improving Human and Non-Human Animal Well-Being in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence: An Analysis of Recent Legislative and Policy Developments in Canada and the U.S.”; Barbara Cartwright presenting “The Vulnerability of Animals and People: Making the Invisible Visible”; Jodi Lazare presenting “Companion Animals and Family Breakdown: A Call for Reform”; and Cini Bretzlaff-Holstein presenting “Animals in Social Work Practice and Education: Moving Toward Inclusivity and Normalization versus Specialization.”

August 24 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Sept. 18 – Lincoln, U.K. (online): Allie Phillips will present on Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T) at the [Society for Companion Animal Studies](#)’ annual conference.

Sept. 28 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Oct. 14-16 – Knoxville, Tenn. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Nine Career opportunities where Pet-Inclusive Social Work Can Improve Delivery of Family Violence Victim Services” for the 7th International [Veterinary Social Work Summit](#).

Oct. 16 – Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will present “All in This Together: Pooling Limited Shelter Resources to Help People and Animals” at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

Oct. 18 – New Britain, Conn. (online): Phil Arkow will present “Connecting the Dots in Civil and Criminal Justice: Protecting People by Focusing on Animal Abuse” in a webinar for the [Animal Law Section](#) of the Connecticut Bar Association.

Oct. 26 – Indianapolis, Ind. (online): Phil Arkow and Andrew Campbell will present at a [training](#) for the Indiana chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Oct. 26 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Nov. 4 – Virginia Beach, Va.: Phil Arkow will present at a statewide [conference on domestic violence](#) for Virginia judges.

Nov. 10 (online): David Rosengard of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will present “Courtroom Animal Advocate Programs: Approaching Animals as Quasi-Party Crime Victims” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar series.

Nov. 23 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.

Nov. 24-25 – Quebec City, Que., Canada: The Link will be featured prominently at Humane Canada’s 2022 [Prosecution of Animal Abuse Conference](#).

Dec. 28 – (online): Pennsylvania’s [Keystone Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular monthly meeting.



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.*



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
Boone, N. Car.

Diane Balkin, J.D.

Retired Chief Deputy District Attorney, Denver, Colo.
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

Kristin Burki, M.S., AP.S.W.

Director, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life
Madison, Wis.

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, Professional Development & Outreach
National Sheriffs' Association
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.

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.