



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



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

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THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Cat Mutilation Prompts Formation of Louisiana Anti-Cruelty Task Force

Recognition of how animal abuse is frequently a precursor to interpersonal violence, and utilization of the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office to uncover forensic evidence in a case of cat mutilation, is prompting law enforcement and humane officials in Louisiana to initiate an animal cruelty task force. The incident, involving a cat named "Charley," caused county coroner Dr. Charles Preston to conduct a necropsy to determine that the injuries were caused by a person. An \$1,800 reward was posted in mid-August for information leading to an arrest.



"Charley"

"We recognize, like the community was saying, that often times these types of crimes are just the first step to a growing pattern of behavior," Sheriff Jack Strain told [WWL-TV](#). The task force will include experts, veterinarians, humane societies, animal control, and law enforcement, said Jeff Dorson with the Humane Society of Louisiana. Charley, 2, had been adopted from a shelter and treasured by a family with an 8-year-old child with special needs.

Residents in Covington were horrified when a golfer found the cat on a local golf course, its body cut in half. Dorson said there are extensive cases of what are being called half-cat mutilations across the U.S. and Canada. He feared that juveniles may have committed this crime in imitation of what they have seen online. "It's always an indication that more crimes will follow and usually very violent crimes," he said. "If a kid can do this to a cat, clearly nothing is stopping them from continuing."

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Link Training in South Bend, Ind., Prompts Vigorous Law Enforcement Response

Prosecutors in South Bend, Ind., have charged Joshua T. Prior, 31, of Mishawaka with felony-level killing a domestic animal and domestic violence animal cruelty, and misdemeanor animal cruelty, following an incident in which he allegedly bashed the head and body of his father's small terrier with a boat oar. [WNDU-TV](#) reported that police responded to a domestic dispute where the father, George Prior, said his son was taking pills and had asked him for money for heroin. When the father refused to give him money, Joshua reportedly became upset and started screaming at him. When George's dog "Minnie" started barking, Joshua allegedly threatened to kill the dog if it didn't shut up, then grabbed the oar and started beating it. George told police that Joshua looked up and said, "You wanna see how irate I can get?" Joshua Prior has previous convictions for battery, resisting arrest and drug charges.



Joshua T. Prior

Seven states define animal abuse intended to intimidate another family member as an act of domestic violence: Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Nebraska, Nevada, Maine, and Tennessee.

The National Link Coalition has conducted several trainings for law enforcement and prosecution officials in South Bend over the past few years that have apparently helped get the Link message across. "This case in particular, there is a history of violence with this individual as well," Matt Harmon, Shelter Manager at South Bend Animal Care and Control said. "Often times we do see correlation. We see drug issues correlated with dog fighting, or animal abuse and neglect. We see domestic violence often correlated with animal abuse, neglect, or animal welfare issues. So it all correlates together and this is very much a case where it really shows."

Capt. Phil Trent said the South Bend Police Department is not taking animal abuse lightly. "Obviously we take these things very seriously, as everyone should, only because when you have something like this occur it's only a very short trip to something like this happening to a person," Trent said.

New Jersey Can Prosecute Dogfighting as RICO

After languishing for more than a year, [New Jersey SB 736](#) passed the Senate by a unanimous 35-0 vote and the Assembly by 75-0 and was signed into law, effective immediately, on Aug. 10 by Gov. Chris Christie. The law, introduced after several high-profile dogfighting raids, creates a new crime of the 2nd degree of "leader of a dog fighting network," added to offenses considered "racketeering activities" under New Jersey's anti-racketeering (RICO) law. Other racketeering crimes include prostitution, gambling, kidnapping, murder, bribery, extortion, securities fraud, and numerous others.



The law defines a leader of a dogfighting network as anyone who conspires with others to unlawfully engage in dogfights. RICO – the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act of 1970 – is a federal law providing for extended criminal penalties and civil causes of action for acts committed as part of an ongoing criminal organization. It allows the leaders of a syndicate to be tried for the crimes which they ordered others to do or assisted them.

New Jersey joins Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Oregon, Utah, and Virginia as states where animal fighting can also be prosecuted under racketeering laws, thereby giving prosecutors additional leverage.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Pet-Friendly Shelter About to Open in Minnesota



Domestic violence officials in St. Cloud, Minn., are eagerly awaiting September 17 when the long-awaited Pet Safe Home facility will be dedicated at [Anna Marie's Alliance](#). The Alliance, also known as the Central Minnesota Task Force on Battered Women, has sheltered more than 5,000 battered women and 8,000 children since 1979.

Several years ago, the organization began planning to add an adjoining pet shelter to house cats, dogs and other small family pets. Sheltered families will be able to visit and play with their pets and relax, knowing their furry friends are safer than if they had been left behind. The pet facility will also double as an education center for the children to learn about caring for their pets and kindness toward all living things.

To attend the dedication, please [RSVP by e-mail](#) or call 320-251-7293.

New Mexico Domestic Violence Advocates to be Recognized for Link Activities

Two leaders of the Link community in New Mexico will be honored on Oct. 3 for their pioneering work to advance the collaboration between animal welfare and domestic violence, when Animal Protection of New Mexico recognizes them with its prestigious [2015 Milagro Awards](#). Selected from nominees across the state, APNM's Milagro Awards recognize individual and collaborative humanitarian acts on behalf of animals.

The Executive Director's Award for outstanding support of APNM's mission and programs will be presented to Pam Wiseman, Executive Director of the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence. NMCADV has been an outspoken advocate for human and animal victims of domestic violence for over 20 years. Wiseman reached out to APNM to initiate a critical partnership between the two organizations that led to state funding for the Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) that provides shelter and other services to the animals of domestic violence survivors.



Pam Wiseman



Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

The Lawmaking Advocacy Award for efforts resulting in the passage of animal protection legislation will be presented to state Sen. Nancy Rodriguez who introduced SB 187 in 2014. The measure appropriated \$500,000 to the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department for programs aimed at helping survivors of domestic violence escape abusive homes by providing secure, temporary safe havens for their animals. Rodriguez was able to expand these provisions in 2015 by securing funding as a recurring expenditure in the CYFD budget.

Eight other animal welfare advocates will also be recognized at the ceremony, named for the Spanish word for miracle. The awards are offered every four years by APNM, a statewide nonprofit founded in 1979 to challenge animal cruelty. Winners will receive handcrafted sterling silver medallions.

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Summary of Cross-Reporting Laws

Now Available



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*Working together to stop violence
against people and animals*

The status of who has to report suspected child maltreatment, animal cruelty and neglect, or elder abuse varies widely from state to state in a confusing patchwork of requirements. In some states, cross-reporting of these various forms of family violence is mandatory; in others it's permitted.

In order to try to make some sense of these systems, the National Link Coalition has published two resource charts on our website. One lists cross-reporting requirements by [Reporter](#): child protection/DCF/Social Workers, animal care and control officers, adult protective services personnel, and veterinarians. The second lists state requirements by [Type of Abuse](#). Check out these great resources, and if we've left your state out, please let us know!

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Animal Hoarding as a “Noah Syndrome”

The authors define “Noah syndrome” as a variant of Diogenes syndrome that presents as hoarding a large number of animals. Predisposing factors for developing this disorder are situations of psychosocial stress and loneliness. However, the medical conditions of the sufferer, which can represent the organic substrate for the development of this psychopathology, should be considered.

-- Saldarriaga-Cantillo, A., & Nieto, C. (2015). Noah Syndrome: a variant of diogenes syndrome accompanied by animal hoarding practices. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 27, 270–275.

Criminalizing Animal Abuse as a Domestic Violence Offense

This article presents an extensive review of intentional abuse of animals as a method of domestic violence. Often, abusers exploit the close, emotional bond shared by a victim and her companion animal to inflict harm upon the human victim. The abuser may harm or kill the animal in order to emotionally harm the human, use threats against the animal to gain compliance or control over the human, or use these methods to abuse the human or coerce her return after she leaves the household. These forms of abuse constitute one aspect of the broader pattern of control that characterizes an abusive relationship. The author argues that domestic violence statutes must treat animal cruelty as a domestic violence offense when committed with the purpose of harming or coercing the human victim. The law's failure to do so leaves a powerful method of harm under-regulated, and thus leaves the significant abuse of both humans and animals under-punished. Designating animal abuse as a domestic violence offense would plug a prominent gap in the criminal approach to domestic violence and make available a large number of specialized protective and rehabilitative measures currently available to domestic violence victims, such as protective orders and mandatory therapy for the abuser.

-- Upadhy, V. (2014). The abuse of animals as a method of domestic violence. *Emory Law Journal*, 63(5), 1163-1209.

NEWS from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Natalie Martinez named to NLC

The National Link Coalition is pleased to welcome Natalie Martinez to our Steering Committee. Natalie joined the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in August as Programs Manager. Her responsibilities include NCADV's financial education and cosmetic reconstructive surgery programs, national Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities, the NCADV newsletter, and organizing a national speakers' bureau. Natalie was previously the Executive Director of the Jefferson County, Colo. Library Foundation, where she had worked for 5-¹/₂ years. She has a 25-year background in Colorado nonprofits including work with youth homes, Catholic charities and children's campaigns. A Denver native, she has an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and a master's degree from the University of Colorado – Denver.



Natalie Martinez

HAVEN Coalition Conducts Multiple Trainings

HAVEN

HUMAN/ANIMAL VIOLENCE EDUCATION NETWORK

Making Berkshire County Safer
For People and Animals

Members of western Massachusetts' HAVEN ([Human/Animal Violence Education Network](#)) Link coalition got an opportunity to head east to the coast on June 19 to present information about the connection between animal cruelty and domestic violence at a statewide training of Massachusetts' Office of Victim Assistance SafePlan

Advocates. SafePlan is a court-based program that trains advocates to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

HAVEN Coordinator Lorna Grande, DVM, and Deb Parkington, Program Director for the Elizabeth Freeman Center, discussed the importance of recognizing pets as family members, as victims, and as pawns used in the control of victims. HAVEN provided practical resources to help the group understand what questions to ask and who to contact for help. They also shared details about HAVEN's SafePet program, a foster care program with the Berkshire Humane Society for pets belonging to women at the Center.

Earlier this summer, HAVEN conducted a Link training for DCF social workers in Pittsfield. Grande was joined by retired Judge Martha Grace and social worker June Stewart to instruct social workers in identifying animal abuse and neglect as one of many indicators they can use to access and assess families. In April, HAVEN members presented at the 4th annual Child Abuse Prevention Conference, at Norwalk Community College, at Pittsfield High School, and at Holyoke Community College. HAVEN has also been invited to participate in the Governor's Task Force to review animal-related legislation.



Animal Cruelty Task Force Launched in Vermont



Gov. Peter Shumlin

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin signed into law **Senate Bill 102** on June 5, which in addition to expanding the state's animal fighting law and enabling the seizure of property associated with the crime, establishes a statewide task force to evaluate the state of animal cruelty investigation and response in Vermont. The task force is charged with exploring the resources devoted to cruelty investigations and response services and with recommending ways to collaborate, consolidate or reorganize for more effective use of limited resources and for improved response.

The statewide task force is comprised of representatives from five state agencies: the governor's office, state police, Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, Department for Children and Families, and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Eight members represent the state's police chiefs, animal control officers, humane organizations, veterinarians, constables, town clerks, sportsmen's clubs, and dog club associations. Two humane officers with expertise in domestic animals and livestock will also serve.

By Jan. 15, 2016, the task force will issue a report with recommendations including: training for humane agents, animal control and law enforcement officers and prosecutors; developing uniform response protocols for receiving, investigating, following up and sentencing of cases; developing a centralized data collection system on substantiated complaints of animal cruelty and outcomes; funding issues; and identifying which state agencies should be responsible for state-level authority and oversight.



Links Group UK Continues to Make Progress

Our British counterpart – The Links Group UK – tells The LINK-Letter that they have been very busy and hope to raise funds to support a part-time paid position. The group has created a new logo and is busily updating its [website](#) to keep up with the rapidly growing multidisciplinary interest. Coordinator Freda Scott-Park tells us that the organization recently conducted a domestic violence veterinary awareness training course in the north of England, part of a plan to conduct such trainings biannually. An online version of the curriculum

is being prepared so that all may access the training. “Abuse champions” – individuals in the field with enhanced knowledge about animal and domestic abuse – will be able to use the materials to train their constituents.

The Links Group's groundbreaking [Guidance](#) to help veterinarians deal with the difficult practice management issues involved with recognizing and responding to suspected family violence continues to enjoy widespread readership. A shorter leaflet version is being produced, she says. The Links Group UK is also collaborating with a Scottish charity, Medics Against Violence. “There is much increased awareness of domestic abuse in this country and many police forces operate a zero tolerance policy,” reports Scott-Park.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Cited as Basis for California Humane Education Measure

A bill introduced on July 15 in the California State Assembly cites academic studies establishing a correlation between animal cruelty during childhood and interpersonal violence in adulthood as a rationale for teaching principles of kindness and respect for animals within state Education Code requirements. **HR 28** is also based upon the premise that law enforcement agencies in major cities, including Los Angeles, have acknowledged this correlation and have formed special enforcement units to combat animal cruelty. The measure notes that humane education “can disrupt the cycle of animal and human abuse by decreasing a child’s potential to be abusive or neglectful toward animals and, consequently, to promote prosocial behavior toward humans.”



Matthew Dababneh

HR 28, introduced by Reps. Matthew Dababneh (D – Van Nuys) and Ian Calderon (D – City of Industry), has been referred to the Committee on Education. The bill also encourages educators to include local nonprofit organizations in humane education activities and to accept those programs as meeting state compliance standards. The measure calls on the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum.

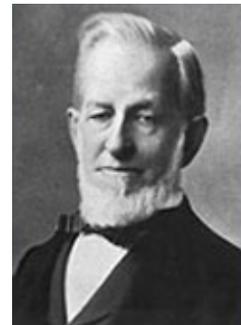


Ian Calderon

Mandatory humane education was initiated in 1905 in Oklahoma and Pennsylvania. By the 1930s, as many as 20 states are believed to have mandated humane education in schools, and the National Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations endorsed the concept as a way to reduce crime. However, provisions were rarely enforced and only three states had sanctions for non-compliance. Many states dropped the requirements in recent years as education budgets tightened and as core standards and “No Child Left Behind” mandates dictated more specific curricula that left little room for what was perceived as a nonessential topic. Today, humane education is mandated only in a handful of states including Florida, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. The degree to which this requirement is enforced is not known.

The potential for humane education to divert youths from childhood desensitization to violence and thus reduce adult crime has been a keystone since George T. Angell, founder of the Massachusetts SPCA, introduced the concept in the 1880s. In 1884 he wrote:

“Just so soon and so far as we pour into all our schools the songs, the poems and literature of mercy toward these lower creatures, just so soon and so far shall we reach the roots not only of cruelty, but of crime.”



George T. Angell

Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258/S. 1559 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and 91 bi-partisan co-sponsors. The bill would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter. The bill has been assigned to the Judiciary and Agriculture Committees. **S. 1559** – has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. *See Calendar on Page 14 for news about a Congressional Briefing scheduled for Sept. 17.*



Alaska HB 147 would allow victims to petition the court for a protective order that the abuser may not remove, harm or dispose of any animals in the household, and to grant her exclusive care and custody of them. Peace officers investigating domestic violence cases must inform victims of this provision. The bill would also declare pets to be marital property and give courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. The bill was held over in the House Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned and will be revisited in January 2016.



California AB 494 would amend Sec. 527.6 of the Code of Civil Procedure and Secs. 213.5 and 15657.03 of the Welfare and Institutions Code to allow courts to issue restraining orders of protective orders to enjoin a person from harming, threatening or disposing of an animal and to grant a petitioner’s request for the exclusive care, possession or control of an animal. Similar provisions currently exist in Sec. 6320 of the California Family Code. The measure passed the Assembly 79-0, was sent to the Senate which passed it with amendments, and is back in the Assembly awaiting concurrence with Senate amendments.



Michigan SB 28 would make it a crime to knowingly kill, torture, mutilate, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal, or threaten to do so, with the intent of causing mental suffering or distress to a person or to exert control over a person. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole.



Michigan HB 4478 would allow courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders preventing respondents from injuring, torturing, neglecting, threatening, or removing the petitioner’s animals. It would apply to current or former spouses, individuals with whom the petitioner has a child in common or where has been a dating relationship, or an individual presently or formerly residing in the same household. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Criminal Justice.



New Jersey A 494 would provide specific statutory authority to allow courts to include animals in domestic violence restraining orders. The bill affects animals belonging to either party or a minor child in the household. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.



New Mexico S 178 was approved. It will appropriate \$50,000 per year over six years) to provide temporary safe havens for the animals of domestic violence survivors.



Oregon HB 3468 was signed into law on July 21 and will take effect next Jan. 1. The new law makes it a Felony C crime of coercion to compel or induce another person to engage in certain conduct by instilling in that person the fear of physical injury being done to an animal.



Pennsylvania SB 594 would increase penalties for killing, torturing, maiming or poisoning an animal belonging to someone who is protected by a protection-from-abuse order to a \$2,000 - \$15,000 fine and/or two years' imprisonment. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Wisconsin companion bills **AB 141** and **SB 97** would add household pets under the provisions of temporary restraining orders or longer-lasting injunctions that can be issued by courts to protect victims of abuse, harassment or threats. The bills would also allow the petitioner or a designee to retrieve household pets. **SB 97** passed the Senate on May 6. **AB 141** was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee on Aug. 20 and is scheduled for a full Assembly vote the week of Sept. 22.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



Connecticut HB6725 will cause the Dept. of Children & Families to develop and implement training for employees and mental health care providers on animal-assisted therapy and develop a protocol to use such programs to aid children and youth living with trauma and loss. **The bill passed the House and Senate and signed by Gov. Dannel Malloy on July 6.**



New Jersey A2155 would establish a three-year pilot program within DCF to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence, trauma, or children with behavioral healthcare needs. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



California HR 28 calls on the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum as a means to reduce adult crime. The bill is in the Committee on Education.



Massachusetts H3446 would criminalize animal abuse in the presence of a child under age 14 and would increase penalties for such cruelty to up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New York A534 defines "aggravated" animal cruelty as causing extreme physical pain or done in an especially depraved or sadistic manner, a Class E felony. It would make the commission of aggravated cruelty in the presence of a child a Class D felony. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



New York A944 and **S1795** would criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. The bills are in the Codes Committee.

"CASA for Animals"



Connecticut HB 6187 would establish a process for appointing an advocate to investigate and advocate for the welfare or custody of animals that are subjects of civil or criminal court proceedings. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary and had a public hearing on April 1.

 **Massachusetts SB 851** would authorize actions to recover non-economic damages for the injury or death of companion animals and authorize a guardian ad litem to recover damages. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

 **New York AB 3443** would authorize a guardian ad litem to be appointed by a court in tort causes of action for wrongful injury or death of a companion animal. It would also allow restraining orders and other injunctive relief for the wrongful injury or killing of a companion animal. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

 **Rhode Island H 5414** would require a court of competent jurisdiction to order the appointment of an animal advocate where the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders

 **New York A1445** and **S1174** would increase penalties for animal fighting and aggravated cruelty to animals and would require a psychiatric evaluation for defendants convicted of aggravated cruelty. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

 **New York A1673** and **S814** would require unsealing of court records that juvenile offenders convicted of animal cruelty offenses and require them to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes

 **Michigan HB 4353** would allow animal shelters to consider an individual's criminal history when determining whether or not to allow that individual to adopt an animal. Convicted animal abusers could not adopt for at least 5 years following conviction. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee. **Senate Bill 219** would prohibit offenders convicted of animal fighting or bestiality from owning animals other than livestock for 5 years. The bill was referred to the Committee of the Whole.

 After languishing for over a year, **New Jersey SB 736 was signed into law on Aug. 10**. The measure creates a new crime of "leader of a dog fighting network" added to the list of offenses considered "racketeering activities" under New Jersey's anti-racketeering (RICO) law, cleared the Senate on May 18 by a 35-0 vote and the Assembly on June 25 by a 75-0 vote after a series of high-profile dogfighting raids brought the issue's urgency to lawmakers.

 **New York A346** would create a statewide task force to study how to improve investigations of animal abuse and enforcement of anti-cruelty laws. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

 **New York A1596** and **S2936** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

 **Ohio SB 195** was introduced on July 16. It would prohibit a person from engaging in sexual conduct with an animal and related acts, provide for the seizure and impoundment of animals, and authorize psychological counseling or evaluation for convicted offenders.

 The **Oregon** Veterinary Medical Examination Board has proposed Rule No. [875-030-1101](#) which would provide for a screening of applicants and licensees to determine if they have a history of criminal behavior that would preclude their fitness to practice as a veterinarian or certified veterinary technician.

Cross Reporting

 **Massachusetts S863** and **H132** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. **H132** was referred to the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and **S863** is in the Judiciary Committee and a public hearing was held on July 14.

 **New York A5082** would require anyone mandated to report suspected child abuse who also encounters suspected animal abuse in the course of their duties to make an immediate report to local police or SPCA agencies. Failure to report would be a Class A misdemeanor and civilly liable. An extensive list of medical, social work, therapy, education, camp, day care, counseling and law enforcement professionals are mandated reporters of child abuse. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.

 **Oregon HB 2694 was signed into law on May 28.** It allows Department of Human Services regulated social workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect, with immunity for good-faith reporting. The bill is in the Human Services & Housing Committee.

 **Rhode Island HR 5194** would initiate a mandatory child abuse/domestic violence and animal abuse cross-reporting system. The bill has been held for further study in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Hoarding

 **New York A1265** would create the crime of companion animal hoarding. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Animal Sexual Assault

 **Oregon HB 2693 was signed into law on June 10.** It creates a new misdemeanor crime of encouraging sexual assault of an animal, defined as possessing or controlling a visual recording of a person engaged in sexual conduct with an animal. The crime is punishable by one year's imprisonment and/or \$6,250 in fines. The new law also increases the penalties for sexual assault of an animal, up to five years' imprisonment and/or \$125,000 fine.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Virginia TV Shooter Said to Have Killed Cats

Vester Lee Flanagan II, the former WDBJ TV reporter who executed two former colleagues on live TV and subsequently shot himself in the head as police in Roanoke, Va. closed in, was said to have sacrificed his two cats among a series of other incidents in a life marked by grief, turmoil and grievances. [The New York Times](#) reported that Flanagan, who had left three separate suicide notes, was a black man who saw racism in every workplace, a gay man who felt demeaned, and a man whose life was consumed with grievances.



Vester Lee Flanagan

“There were arguments and confrontations at work, periodic eruptions, including a road rage episode captured on video and a sacrifice of his two pet cats, killings that Mr. Flanagan said he carried out because of anger at his firing,” the Times wrote. After he was fired from the Roanoke station in February 2013, he filed a harassment lawsuit; one day later, after what he called “an awful chain of events,” he wrote that he had killed his two cats and driven to a forest where he dug a grave and covered the bodies with leaves and a flower.



Charged with Homicide and Animal Cruelty in Triple Decapitation, Suspect Cuts Off His Arm and Gouges Out His Eye

A woman and her two dogs were apparently decapitated by her husband, who then severed his own left arm and gouged out his right eye. Prosecutors in Phoenix, Ariz. arrested Kenneth Dale Wakefield, 43, on charges of felony murder and two counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty. The decapitated bodies of Trina Heisch, 49, and the dogs were discovered on July 25 by a neighbor who saw her apartment’s walls and floor covered in blood, [UPI reported](#). Police said the couple, who had married after meeting in a mental health facility, had had domestic violence issues: Wakefield had been arrested in 2003 for attempting to kill a family member; Heisch had been accused last March of attempting to stab Wakefield, according to court records. The [Arizona Republic](#) reported that Wakefield admitted to police that he had “killed three family members” and was “trying to get the evil out” of Heisch after smoking the synthetic drug spice and marijuana.

Man Facing Child Sexual Assault Charges Held for Ransoming Pet Tortoise



Joseph Urbino

Sheriff’s deputies investigating the strange case of a woman’s pet tortoise being held hostage for \$1,000 in ransom money wound up arresting the alleged perpetrator on theft charges – and learned that he had two outstanding warrants for aggravated sexual assault against a child. [KPRC-TV](#) reported that “Gracie,” a 5-year-old African spurred tortoise, had escaped when Stacey Swayze-Krampota moved from Rosharon to Manvel, Texas, several weeks prior. She posted dozens of fliers around Brazoria County pleading for information, which apparently attracted the interest of Joseph Urbino, 34, who allegedly demanded \$1,000 for Gracie’s safe return. Deputies ran Urbino’s license plate during the handover of Gracie and discovered the warrants and arrested him on multiple charges. Gracie, who had been stuffed inside a duffel bag in a closet, was said to be perking up and feeling better.

Man Charged in Grisly Animal Cruelty Case Arrested for Child Rape

A man who was arrested in February on 12 animal cruelty charges after animal control officers reportedly found animal carcasses, starving dogs, rats, chickens and rabbits, and blood smeared on the walls and floors of his home near Olympia, Wash. was charged on Aug. 7 with nine counts of child rape and molestation. While David C. Williford, 27, was in custody on the animal abuse charges, an acquaintance told Thurston County prosecutors that Williford had raped two minor girls, the [Tacoma News-Tribune](#) reported. The girls, who are now adults, told investigators that Williford had sexually assaulted them for years beginning when they were about 5 and 8 years old. **David C. Williford** Prosecutors allege that Williford tortured and slaughtered pets he had purchased on Craigslist. Officers reportedly found coolers full of rabbit carcasses, severed rabbit heads floating in a water bath, and several bags of guinea pig carcasses. At a February court hearing on the animal cruelty charges, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Christen A. Peters said the allegations signaled a propensity for other types of violence.



Couple Face Animal Abuse, Child Welfare and Cover-up Charges

A couple charged with multiple animal cruelty, child abuse and other offenses appeared in Batavia, N.Y. City Court on Aug. 10 on a number of issues, including surrendering the injured dog to authorities so it could be placed for adoption. Brandon Maldonado, 26, accused of scalding a pit bull named “Rocky” with hot water last July 20, was charged with aggravated animal cruelty and offering a false written statement. His girlfriend, Melissa Broadbent, 36, is charged with facilitating the crime and trying to cover it up. She has been charged with torturing and injuring an animal, endangering the welfare of a child, first-degree coercion, offering a false written statement, intimidating a witness or victim, and owning an unlicensed dog. Maldonado is currently on parole for six felony and misdemeanor convictions and five previous failures to appear. The Department of Social Services will be investigating the case against her children, who are in protective custody, [The Batavian](#) reported.



Brandon Maldonado & Melissa Broadbent

Man Accused of Murdering His Boyfriend, Animal Cruelty

Bryan Canchola, 20, of Austin, Tex., has been charged with murder in the death of his boyfriend, Stephen Sylvester, 18, and with animal cruelty for allegedly strangling Sylvester’s 5-year-old Yorkshire terrier named “Harlow.” The [Austin American-Statesman](#) reported that the couple’s roommate heard them fighting loudly in their bedroom, Harlow crying out in pain, and Sylvester yelling at Canchola to “let the dog go.” When the roommate took Sylvester, who was bleeding from a head wound, to a hospital, where he later died, he heard Canchola yell, “When you’re gone you better hope I don’t find your dog – I’m going to kill it.” Harlow was reported to be recovering from bloodshot eyes, hemorrhaging and difficulty swallowing, indicative of strangulation, according to the arrest affidavit. Canchola was being held in the Travis County Jail under \$500,000 bail for murder and \$10,000 bail for animal cruelty.



Stephen Sylvester & Harlow

Mother Charged with Child Abuse, Animal Cruelty in Revenge Shooting

Maria Furtado, 40, of Pahrump, Nev., is facing charges of animal cruelty, child abuse and petty larceny after Nye County sheriff's deputies arrested her for allegedly forcing her 15-year-old son to shoot and kill a neighbor's puppy in retaliation for the dog's having previously killed her two ducklings. [KVVU-TV](#) reported Furtado took the puppy "Duke" from her neighbor's property and drove it to a desert area with her sons, aged 3 and 15. Evidence reportedly showed that Furtado shot the dog at least once. She was being held under \$25,000 bail.



Maria Furtado

Man Charged with Attacking Ex-girlfriend, Violating PFA Order, and Shooting Her Dog

A man who allegedly violated his ex-girlfriend's protection-from-abuse order and attacked her and shot her dog in her Brooklyn, N.Y. apartment, was being held on multiple charges including aggravated cruelty to animals, assault, strangulation, criminal contempt, and possession of a weapon.



Honey

The [New York Daily News](#) reported that Kenneth White went to Asha Stringfield's apartment on Aug. 23 and repeatedly punched her in the face, choked her and threatened to shoot her. When Stringfield held her pit bull, "Honey," by the collar to stop her from biting White, he reportedly put the gun in the dog's mouth and pulled the trigger. The bullet remains lodged near Honey's spine and cannot be removed. White, first arrested for attacking Stringfield in 2011, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 75 days and ordered to stay away from her until May 19, 2016.



Asha Stringfield

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Sept. 14 – Albuquerque, N. M.: "Positive Links" -- the New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence – will hold an [all-day conference](#) featuring many Link authorities, including Phil Arkow, Patricia Norris, Chris Risley-Curtiss, Jared Rounsville, Pam Wiseman, and Esperanza Zúñiga.

Sept. 17 – Washington, D.C. – The ASPCA, Animal Welfare Institute, Humane Society of the US, and Humane Society Legislative Fund will meet with U.S. Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), and Michael Fitzpatrick (R – Penna.) for a Congressional Briefing on the Pets and Women's Safety (PAWS) Act (HR 1258/S1559). For details contact [Alli Hays](#).

Sept. 19 – Irving, Texas: Phil Arkow will speak on "Breaking the Chain of Violence" at the [Texas Humane Legislation Network's](#) Animal Advocacy Conference.

Sept. 21 – (online): [Allie Phillips](#) and Scott Heiser of the Animal Legal Defense Fund will conduct a webinar exclusively for South Dakota prosecutors on achieving the best outcomes in animal abuse cases.

Sept. 22 – Fort Wayne, Ind.: Phil Arkow will conduct a Link training on behalf of [Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control](#).

Sept. 22-25 – Malgrat de Mar, Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol, Sònia Pujol and Judge Eva Diaz will present on The Link at the [II Conference on Police Intervention with Canines](#).

Sept. 24 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Maya Gupta will speak on “Examining the Cruelty Link between Humans and Animals and Finding Solutions for Effective Intervention” at the HAV (Human-Animal Vulnerability) Coalition of Kitchener-Waterloo Region’s 2nd [Link Conference](#).

Sept. 26 – Blacksburg, Va.: Phil Arkow will discuss animal abuse as the “dark side” of the human-animal bond at the [CENTAUR Human-Animal Bond Symposium](#).

Sept. 29 – Paramus, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

Sept. 30 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a [webinar](#) on “The Dark Side of the Human-Animal Bond: Animal Abuse as an Indicator and Predictor of Abuse of Vulnerable Populations” for the Humane Society of the U.S.

Sept. 30 – Albany, N.Y.: Christine Mott, Libby Post, and Brad Shear will lead a [CLE training](#) on “The Connection between Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty” to kick off Domestic Violence Awareness Month at the New York State Bar Association.

Oct. 1 – Baltimore, Md.: Randy Lockwood and Sharon Miller will present on building community task force responses to animal cruelty at the [National Animal Care & Control Association](#) conference.

Oct. 2 – Hammonton, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

Oct. 7-8 – Atlanta, Ga.: Jessica Rock from Animal Law Source and Myra Rasnick from Ahimsa House will present on “The Link between Family Violence and Animal Abuse” at the [Animal Law Enforcement – Animal Shelter Symposium](#) at the Georgia State Bar Conference Center. Other speakers include Gary Patronek discussing animal hoarding, Allie Phillips presenting on “Handling Community Reaction to Animal Abuse,” and a panel outlining how to create a community animal cruelty task force.

Oct. 8 – Hamden, Conn.: Phil Arkow, Rep. Diana Urban, Anne McIntyre-Lahner, and Nicoletta Caferra will participate in “The Violence Gateway: From Animal Abuse to Domestic Abuse and Beyond” for the [Connecticut Bar Association’s Animal Law Section](#).

Oct. 12 – (online): [Allie Phillips](#) will present a webinar for Illinois CASA on “When the Abuse of Animals Harms Children.”

Oct. 13-14 – Millersville, Pa.: [Barbara Boat](#) will conduct several Link trainings at Millersville University.

Oct. 14 – New York City, N.Y.: The [Urban Resource Institute](#) will convene a roundtable discussion on the intersection of domestic violence and animal welfare. Panelists will include Allie Phillips discussing Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T).

Oct. 15 – Charlottesville, Va.: Randy Lockwood and Sharon Miller will present on building community responses to animal cruelty at the [Virginia Animal Control Association](#) annual conference.

Oct. 15 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will hold its regular meeting.

Oct. 16-18 – Los Alcazares, Murcia, Spain: Núria Querol will present a workshop on The Link at the PAES (Protección Animales España) [National Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Oct. 22 – (Online): Laura Dunn from the Animal Legal Defense Fund will discuss using pre-conviction forfeiture to save seized animals from re-victimization in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Oct. 26-28 – Honolulu, Hawai’i: Phil Arkow will conduct Link trainings for board and staff members of the [Hawaiian Humane Society](#) and community leaders.

Oct. 30 – Phoenix, Ariz.: [Allie Phillips](#) will give a presentation on Therapy Animals Supporting Kids in courtrooms and children’s advocacy centers to a meeting of Arizona Superior Court Judges.

Nov. 3-6 – The Hague, The Netherlands: Yvonne Matser van-’t Oever will present on “Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse as Emotional Blackmail” at the [World Conference of Women’s Shelters](#).

Nov. 4-5 – Knoxville, Tenn.: A post-conference workshop on The Link between Human and Animal Violence will be held following the [Veterinary Social Work/Veterinary Health and Wellness Summits](#) at the University of Tennessee. Speakers will include Maya Gupta discussing “Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adults Who Have Engaged In or Witnessed Animal Abuse” and Jenny Edwards speaking on “Bestiality: The Best Kept Secret in America.”

Nov. 4-6 – Pittsburgh, Pa.: The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Animal Legal Defense Fund will present the [5th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#) to bring multidisciplinary professionals together to enhance their efforts in combating animal cruelty and related violent crimes.

Nov. 4-6 – Barcelona, Spain: The First International Congress of Profiling and Criminal Behavior Analysis in Violent Crimes will be held at the University of Barcelona. Núria Querol will present a plenary session on “CSI Techniques in Crimes against Animals.” A [Call for Papers](#) is posted online.

Nov. 6 – Phoenix, Md.: The Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office Animal Abuse Unit will hold an [Animal Abuse Leadership Summit](#).

Nov. 11 – (online): Phil Arkow will present a webinar on Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

Nov. 12 – South Padre Is., Texas: Phil Arkow will train on “Animal Abuse, Elder Abuse, and Hoarding: Challenges and Strategies for Adult Protective Services” at the [32nd Annual APS Conference](#).

Nov. 17– Somerville, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

Nov. 23-24 – Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol and Sònia Pujol will present a workshop on “The Link and Policing” at the ii Interuniversity Seminar of Criminology, organized by the [Spanish Society of Criminology](#).

Dec. 1 – Port St. Lucie, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the Violence Connection conference sponsored by the Pegasus Foundation and the [Spay/Neuter Alliance of the Treasure Coast](#).

Dec. 4 – San Bernardino, Calif.: Phil Arkow will speak to the [San Bernardino Animal Cruelty Task Force](#).

Feb. 21, 2016 – Davis, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present a lunchtime plenary session on The Link at the UC-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine’s annual [Winter Conference](#).

May 9, 2016 – Manahawkin, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency staff on the implications of animal abuse in child welfare through the [Child Welfare Training Partnership](#).

July 11-13, 2016 – Paris, France: Phil Arkow will participate in a global exchange examining research and practice aspects of animal abuse and domestic violence at the [International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations’](#) Triennial conference.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and 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, multi-disciplinary 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

Consultant, ASPCA
Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
Stratford, N.J.

Lesley Ashworth

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund
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