



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



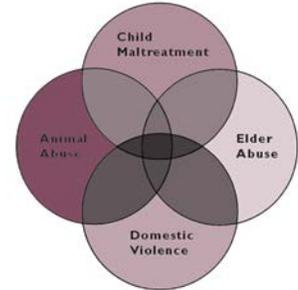
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Groundbreaking Federal Anti-Cruelty Bill Introduced

A potentially groundbreaking federal bill that would empower the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Attorneys to prosecute animal abuse cases that cross state lines has been introduced into Congress in a rare bipartisan effort. **HR 2293 – the PACT Act** (*Prevent Animal Cruelty and Torture*) would close serious gaps in existing federal law.

Currently, federal laws prohibit animal fighting and trade in obscene “crush” videos. But there has never been a national law prohibiting malicious cruelty to animals, such as exists in all 50 states. The PACT Act would close this gap and provide an additional tool for law enforcement when malicious cruelty occurs on federal property or in interstate commerce. The Act would give federal prosecutors the power to intervene when animal cruelty extends beyond the reach, ability, or will of state prosecutors to stop it.

HR 2293 follows other recent activity on the federal level. Within the past year, the FBI agreed to include cases of animal abuse in the Uniform Crime Reports used by thousands of local law enforcement agencies, giving the animal protection and law enforcement fields the first statistical data of animal cruelty crimes and prosecution outcomes. Another bipartisan bill, **HR 1258 – the PAWS Act** (*Pets And Women’s Safety*) – would extend pet protection orders to domestic violence and stalking cases that cross interstate lines and provide federal dollars to help domestic violence shelters to become pet-friendly.



Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX)

HR2293 was introduced on May 13 by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) with eight co-sponsors: Republicans Tom Marino (PA), Steve Chabot (OH), Patrick Meehan (PA) and Trent Franks (AZ); and Democrats Theodore Deutch (FL), Earl Blumenauer (OR), Steve Cohen (TN), and Jerrold Nadler (NY).

National Sheriffs' Association Hosts "Pause for Paws"

Nationally recognized Link speakers including Phil Arkow and [Martha Smith-Blackmore](#) were on hand on June 30 in Baltimore, Md., for the National Sheriffs' Association's National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse "Pause for Paws" symposium. The event took place as a part of the 2015 NSA Annual Conference and Exhibition.

With the anticipated inclusion of animal cruelty crimes in the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and increased attention on fatal officer-animal encounters, understanding animal cruelty and animal behavior is more important than ever, said John Thompson, National Link Coalition Steering Committee member and Deputy Director of the NSA.

Smith-Blackmore, a forensic veterinarian from Massachusetts, conducted a workshop on "Crimes Against Canines: Animal Cruelty from a NIBRS Perspective." She used graphic case studies to elucidate the four types of animal cruelty that will be defined data elements under Offense Code 720 in the NIBRS Uniform Crime Reports:

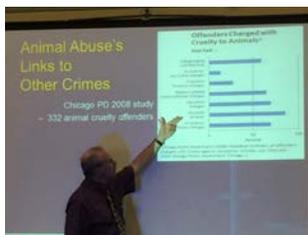
- Simple or gross neglect or abuse
- Intentional abuse and torture
- Animal fighting and organized abuse
- Animal sexual abuse



Martha Smith-Blackmore

Including animal abuse data through the NIBRS system will allow for the analysis of incidence and prevalence of animal cruelty, she told the audience. This will, in turn, aid in the development of legal theory, and help plan criminal investigations, charging decisions, prosecution tactics, and risk-based offender management strategies.

In describing telltale indicators of non-accidental injury and sexual abuse of animals, she emphasized the need for close, ongoing coordination between law enforcement officers and veterinarians. "Law enforcement can guide veterinarians in the forensic examination. Asking the right questions will help support elements of the criminal investigation. Mutual trust and respect between veterinarians and law enforcement are essential for successful collaboration," she said.



National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow conducted a workshop on The Link called "What You Don't Know Can Hurt You," describing animal abuse as a potential indicator and predictor crime. Holding animal abusers accountable prevents other crimes and changes community attitudes toward violence and safety, he told participants.

Phil Arkow

The conference also featured a board meeting of the [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#), which is working on developing a standardized training curriculum on animal abuse for state law enforcement training academies (*see article below*).

Attendees also met with organizations that work with animals on a daily basis and their animals. They learned about available resources to help prevent animal cruelty in communities and the nuts and bolts of having a law enforcement working dog program.

HELP WANTED –

Animal Cruelty Training Curricula for Peace Officers

With the planned inclusion in 2016 of animal cruelty crimes in the National Incident-Based Reporting System's Uniform Crime Reports, it will become more important than ever to provide police, sheriffs and other law enforcement officers with training on animal-related issues. Topics such as the recognition of animal cruelty and neglect, appropriate responses to dangerous dogs, animal fighting, animal hoarding, and the intricacies of animal cruelty investigations will be of paramount importance.

The National Coalition on Violence Against Animals (NCOVAA) is working to develop a standardized curriculum for use in Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) programs. The curriculum could be modified to account for differences in each state's animal cruelty laws. NCOVAA is seeking examples of existing training curricula that could serve as working models.

The National Link Coalition and NCOVAA believe that three states – Colorado, Illinois and Tennessee – already use such trainings in their POST programs; we believe localized training curricula are in use in New York City, Chicago, and Fort Wayne, Ind. We are trying to identify other such resources and obtain copies of these curricula.

We encourage LINK-Letter readers to share these curricula with us. Please contact Coordinator Phil Arkow at arkowpets@snip.net with any materials you can offer. Thanks!

Animal Cruelty Task Force Educates and Helps Pets and People – While Writing Cruelty Citations

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office in Albuquerque, N. Mex., introduced a unique concept in animal cruelty law enforcement by creating a special Animal Cruelty Task Force to conduct concentrated neighborhood sweeps. The outreach, conducted at random through neighborhoods where animal issues have been observed, serves to let residents know that animal abuse is taken seriously. [KOAT-TV](#) followed the officers during a recent sweep.



On this sweep through the South Valley area, the Task Force issued 55 citations, seized three dogs and arrested five people for more than 40 assorted misdemeanor violations of neglect or cruelty. Most animals were chained up without adequate food or water, but some were severely malnourished or infested with fleas and ticks.

But the sweep isn't just about cracking down on offenders and writing tickets: it's also about educating the public and helping pet owners resolve problems. By describing the encounters as checks on animals' welfare, deputies are able to prevent abuse by handing out resources to residents and providing them with bags of pet food – and, when necessary, issue citations.



Animal Cruelty Case Linked to Serial Killings

In an unprecedented verdict, a Brazilian court on June 18 sentenced a woman to 12 years in prison for killing 37 cats, citing Link evidence and describing the crimes as akin to the U.S. definition of serial killings. Prosecutor Vania Maria Tuglio of the São Paulo Public Ministry argued that the number and manner of the killings were similar to ritual killings that often mark human serial murders, defined by the FBI as three or more homicides having common characteristics committed by the same individual on separate occasions over more than a month's time with a significant time lapse between the events. (A later definition reduced this to two murders with no specified time frames.)

Tuglio also referenced Link research indicating that animal cruelty is often a behavioral history component of serial killers. Judge Patricia Alvarez Cruz in the Criminal Court of the State of São Paulo agreed in imposing the [sentence](#) on Dalva Lina da Silva.

The case rocked Brazil when it came to light in 2012. The defendant, who had been known in her neighborhood for caring for abandoned animals, had been detained by police who suspected her of killing animals, but released her because they felt the crime was not severe. Angry protesters smashed the gate of her house and scrawled graffiti on her property. The case was revisited after an animal welfare NGO hired a private investigator who spent 20 days photographing animals being taken in garbage bags to the curb. A veterinary forensics team performed 37 necropsies to document the cruelty.

This is believed to be the first case in Brazilian jurisprudence where a defendant has been sentenced to prison for animal cruelty. "I made the argument that defending animals is a matter of public safety. I believe that this decision will help to raise awareness of police chiefs," wrote Tuglio.

Oregon Increases Penalties for Animal Sexual Assault

Oregon Governor Kate Brown signed into law **HB 2693** on June 10 to create a new misdemeanor crime of encouraging sexual assault of an animal. The new crime is 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 actual sexual assault of an animal, with sentences of up to five years' imprisonment and/or \$125,000 fine. The new law also increases the length of time that a convicted offender can be barred from possessing certain animals.

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

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Oregon Child Social Workers Get OK to Report Animal Abuse

Oregon has become the latest state to enact legislation that permits Department of Human Services social workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect. In many states, children and family services workers have been reluctant to cross-report suspected animal abuse for fear of violating client confidentiality restrictions. Legislation such as Oregon's **HB 2694** removes that concern and also grants social workers immunity from civil or criminal liability for making a good-faith report to a law enforcement agency.

The bill was signed into law on May 28 by Gov. Kate Brown. Oregon previously allowed public and private officials to cross-report; Oregon veterinarians are permitted to report non-aggravated animal cruelty.

Oregon joins California, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Tennessee as states where social workers or child protective services personnel are permitted to report suspected animal abuse. Social workers and child protective services employees are mandated to report suspected animal abuse in Connecticut, District of Columbia, Illinois, and West Virginia.



How Should Parents and Teachers Respond to Childhood Animal Cruelty?

Interest in this critical topic has spread to Japan, where the [Maharo Rainbow Peace Project](#) is publishing a series of English-language articles on The Link. One recent four-page article, written by National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow, describes how parents and teachers should respond to disclosures of acts of animal abuse committed by children and adolescents. Future articles will include Chris Risley-Curtiss describing therapeutic interventions for juvenile cruelty offenders.



Maharo editor Yuki Miyazaki publishes English-language columns for foreign residents and students in Japan. The online publication addresses activities related to the harmonious coexistence of people, nature and animals from comprehensive, multilateral and international perspectives. Regular topics include animal welfare, child development, environmental conservation, international cooperation, and healthcare. The article is available in the Resources section of the [National Link Coalition's website](#).

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mississippi Safe Havens Program Receives AKC Grant

The Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine's Safe Haven for Pets program has received a grant from the American Kennel Club Humane Fund to help cover expenses in providing care to the pets of women escaping domestic violence, the [Jackson Clarion-Ledger](#) reported.



Dr. Sharon Fooshee Grace, the MSU-CVM clinical professor who applied for the competitive grant, administers Safe Haven for Pets along with MSU-CVM assistant clinical professor Dr. Christine Bryan. The program works with the Care Lodge Domestic Violence Shelter in Meridian, Miss. to provide foster care for animal survivors of domestic violence (See [LINK-Letter, January 2013](#)).

The college provides shelter and health care to the pets until the owners are able to retrieve them. While in the program's care, animals receive needed treatments, vaccinations, socialization, heartworm medication, and spay or neuter surgeries.

"In a house with domestic violence, animals are often the first victims as the violence escalates," Grace said. "Concern for pets also can keep human victims in the house too long. Having a safe place for their pets may help victims escape their situations sooner."

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Bullying and Link Themes in Humane Education: A Follow-Up

In our [June LINK-Letter](#), we began compiling a list of humane education programs that use The Link and bullying as keystones upon which curricula are built. In response to our request for additions to this list, the following have come to our attention:

The RedRover Readers program: The [RedRover Readers](#) program is a social and emotional learning program designed to foster empathy and critical thinking. The program discusses anti-bullying themes as they come up in critical thinking discussions about the humane-themed books being read. The program is national and targets grade 3 and 4, but the program has been implemented in pre-K through sixth grades.

Animal Humane Association of New Mexico: [Allyn Harad](#), a counselor at the East San Jose Elementary School in Albuquerque, collaborated with the AHANM in 2013 to develop 12 anti-bullying lessons for each grade 3rd through 5th to teach elementary school children empathy through understanding the needs of animals and their unique presence in our lives and the world. The Department of Sociology Research Development Class at the University of New Mexico analyzed the curriculum and completion of the initial pilot program. In 2014-2015, school counselors in the Albuquerque Public School system received new researched-based curricula to teach anti-bullying without using the word "bullying". Harad is planning to go back to the 2013 lessons and combine the information about animals and empathy with the new research-based curriculum. She hopes to develop a strong program to track students from 3rd through 12th grades and analyze their attitudes, beliefs and skills.

If you can add your program to this list, please e-mail arkowpets@snip.net.

Massachusetts Newspaper Spotlights The Link and Law Enforcement

The National Link Coalition was featured prominently in a feature article on June 27 in the [Worcester, Mass. Telegram](#). Focusing on the planned inclusion of animal abuse cases in the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System, reporter Paula Owen interviewed numerous local, state and national authorities on the implications of animal abuse upon public safety.

"With a specific designation we can better track the extent, breadth and who the people are committing them," said Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evandelidis. "It is a sick sort of behavior that we should be tracking. There is a clear link between violence against people that often starts with violence against animals," he said, noting the tracking will allow law enforcement agencies to evaluate such crimes better and allocate resources.

"We always talk about the correlation between animal abuse and crimes against people, and now we'll have the numbers to actually show it," said Massachusetts SPCA law enforcement chief Richard LeBlond. "It is going to show animal cruelty is a major issue. I have eight officers on the street in my department or the entire state. If half the police departments take an interest in animal cruelty, I would have that many more people out there working for animals."

Worcester County District Attorney spokesman Timothy Connolly said his office plans to designate an assistant district attorney and victim advocate to handle animal cruelty cases. "We want to make sure these cases are prosecuted with some sensitivity," he said.

Enhanced data will also draw attention to how animal abuse is often a form of emotional abuse in domestic violence, said Karen Riley-McNary, director of community intervention for the Leominster YWCA. Additional awareness about animal abuse "is a wonderful entry point for someone not seeking support or assistance for themselves," she said. "If a neighbor calls who witnessed egregious animal cruelty and police investigate, they could find a similar situation inside the home. I'm willing to wager, anyone that is abusing an animal is abusing others in some form or fashion."

National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow reviewed research from Massachusetts describing animal abusers as 3¹/₂ times more likely to have committed other crimes than non-abusers, and that these other crimes may both precede or follow the animal abuse.

"Tracking the data is one of the most important changes in humane law enforcement that we've ever seen," he added. "When we're trying to get legislators on the state or local level or the general public to understand the importance of animal cruelty, we need to have numbers to show them. We've been doing humane law enforcement for 150 years, but we haven't had any statistics on the state, local or national levels to document the extent of these crimes.

"The second benefit is that in many communities around the country, there are not SPCAs or humane societies with authority to investigate animal cruelty," he said. "And so it usually falls to police or sheriffs to investigate these crimes. Unfortunately, human nature is such that if something is out of sight, it's out of mind. If the crime doesn't show up on their checklist, they don't see it as a priority. This new procedure will change all that."

We're Getting the Word Out...



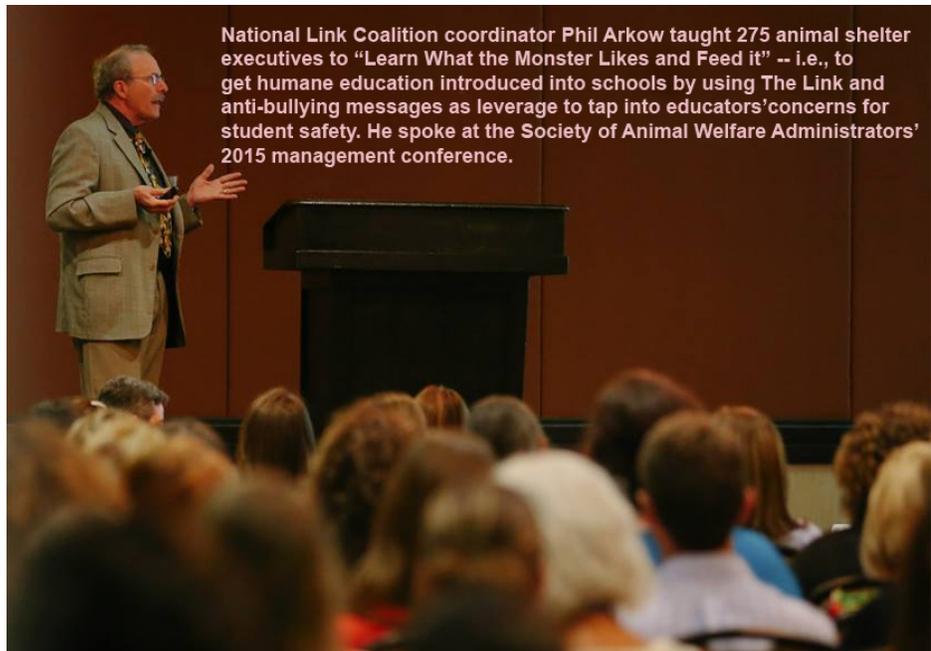
National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow (standing, far right) was a featured speaker at a three-day humane education symposium for 65 teachers in the Weber County, Utah, School District. The annual event was sponsored by the Ogden-Weber Humane Society

Three Link Reports Now Available in Spanish



Multilingual resources describing how animal abuse is Linked with human violence have gotten a boost this month with the addition of three new Spanish-language documents. The reports are posted in the [foreign language resources](#) section of the National Link Coalition website.

Marillanos Reolid Rodenas, President and founder of the Spanish Society Against Violence (SECVI), has provided us with three new reports. *Criminalidad hacia animals como factor criminológico de seguridad y relación entre conductas violentas* is an international statistical analysis of animal abuse as a criminological safety factor and a marker for violent behavior. The study was presented at the 9th Spanish Criminology Congress. *El maltrato animal a manos de menores* examines animal abuse committed by juveniles. *El maltrato animal y las personas mayores* reviews animal abuse and the elderly.



NEWS from LOCAL LINK COALITIONS



California Link Group Wins National Award

San Bernardino County's [Animal Cruelty Task Force](#) (ACT), a program of the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office, has won a 2015 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in the category of Criminal Justice and Public Safety. The NACo Achievement Award Program, now in its 44th year, recognizes groundbreaking programs and innovative county government programs across the nation.

ACT is a unique multi-disciplinary collaboration to promote community awareness, education, investigation, and prosecution of animal fighting and abuse. Created in 2012, ACT is comprised of over 40 agencies from counties throughout Southern California.

District Attorney Mike Ramos has noted that in recent months ACT has started focusing more on the Link between animal violence and human violence. "We're starting to see a strong connection between domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and animal abuse," he said in a [YouTube video](#). "A batterer's first victim is usually an animal followed by a child or partner."



D. A. Michael Ramos

Ramos added that this overlap in crime shows the overwhelming need for collaborative efforts between social services, law enforcement and the community.

The award is scheduled to be presented at NACo's 2015 Annual Conference and Exposition July 10–13 in Mecklenburg County, N.C.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258 – the Pets And Women's Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and 48 co-sponsors (12 Republican, 36 Democrat). 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. Supporters are seeking a few more Republican co-sponsors to help keep sponsorship bipartisan.



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.



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.



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.



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. The Senate bill has passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety and the full Senate and is scheduled for a hearing in the Assembly.

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 was sent to the Governor on June 22 for signature.**



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



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 Agriculture 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.

 **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 Judiciary 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 Jersey S2449**, “Shyanne’s Law,” would require convicted adult animal abusers to receive mental health evaluations. Currently, only juvenile offenders receive mental health screenings. The bill has been withdrawn from further consideration.

 **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. **A1673** and **S814** would require that juvenile offenders convicted of animal cruelty undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes

 **Arizona SB 1105** would define animal fighting and cockfighting as racketeering in the state’s organized crime, fraud and terrorism statutes. The bill is in the Judiciary and Rules Committees.

 **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. **Senate Bill 219** would prohibit offenders convicted of animal fighting or bestiality from owning animals other than livestock for 5 years. The bills are in the Judiciary Committee.

 After languishing in the Senate for over a year, **New Jersey SB 736** was approved by the Senate on May 18 by a 35-0 vote after a series of high-profile dogfighting raids brought the issue’s urgency to lawmakers. The bill would create a new crime of “leader of a dog fighting network” which would be added to the list of offenses considered “racketeering activities” under New Jersey’s anti-racketeering (RICO) law. The bill passed the Assembly on June 25 by a vote of 75-0.

 **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.



Oregon HB 3468 would add threats to cause physical injury to an animal as a means to induce another person to commit unwanted acts to the definition of coercion, a Class C felony. The bill has passed both houses and is awaiting enrollment.



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



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



Arizona HB 2429 and **SB 1265** would have made it illegal to intentionally, knowingly or recklessly hoard animals. The bills would have also allowed courts to require offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and counseling. Both bills were held in committee. A third, similar bill, **HB2150**, passed both chambers but was vetoed by the Governor on March 30.



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

Man Charged with Sexually Abusing Dog to Get Back at His Wife

A man who reportedly wanted to get back at his wife because he felt she cared more about her dog than him was arrested and charged with animal cruelty for allegedly having sex with the dog. Jonathan Medley, 39, of Geneva, Ala., was charged in the incident which involved the family's two-year-old pet Shih Tzu named "Buster." Law enforcement officers told WTVY-TV the case was one of the most disturbing ones they have ever investigated. "We've dealt with hungry dogs, abandoned dogs, but never with a dog that was sexually abused. Speaking to her and him, he was upset because she paid more attention to the dog than him, and this was her baby," said Geneva Police Lt. Ricky Morgan. "His way of causing her the pain was to mess with the dog." Buster was examined by a veterinarian and was reportedly doing well.



Jonathan Medley

Dog Shot in Domestic Murder-Suicide Expected to Survive with Massive Outpouring of Support

Animal lovers rushed to the aid of "Sophie," a 6-year-old Labrador-shepherd mix, who was shot in the head during an apparent domestic-related murder-suicide in Chicago on June 3. Chicago police officers took her to an animal hospital in Skokie, where veterinarians saved her life. Following [extensive media coverage](#), the hospital was flooded with offers to help and a charitable pet foundation called Frankie's Friends set up an online fundraiser that collected more than \$14,600 in contributions in its first week. Veterinarians said the wound affected Sophie's balance and left neurological injuries and bullet fragments in her neck, but were optimistic she would have a good quality of life and a new home. The details of the domestic dispute were not immediately clear.



Veterinarian David Wilson tends to Sophie" during her recovery

FOLLOW-UP:

Jail and Probation for Puppy Torturer/Girlfriend Strangler

Duanying Chen, the Chinese student living in the U.S. who was arrested in 2014 (See [LINK-Letter June 2014](#)) for strangling his girlfriend during an argument and later torturing their puppy to the point where it had to be euthanized, was [sentenced on June 30](#) to one year in Santa Barbara, Calif., County Jail and five years probation. Chen, who pled guilty in May to felony charges of animal cruelty, personal use of a deadly weapon, dissuading a witness and violating a court order, must also attend a batterer's intervention program, undergo mental health treatment, pay \$24,355.70 in restitution, and not own an animal for 10 years.

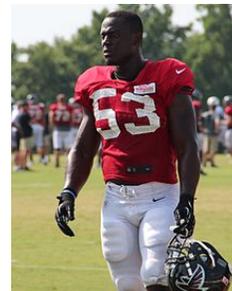


Duanying Chen

Prosecuting attorney Kevin Weichbrod presented jurors with a gruesome slideshow of injuries to the Doberman pinscher puppy named "Davey" and cited Link evidence connecting crimes of violence against people and animals. Chen's mother had earlier [pleaded with the court](#) for leniency for her son, arguing that he was unfamiliar with animal welfare laws in the U.S. Santa Barbara District Attorney Joyce Dudley remarked, "This was an outrageous act of a coward who brutalized a vulnerable woman and a helpless animal. I can only hope his time in jail will help him understand just how despicable his criminal actions were."

Football Player Suspected in Sexual Assault Charged with Aggravated Animal Cruelty

Prince Shembo, a star football linebacker who had been investigated but never charged in the alleged sexual assault of his then-girlfriend in his Notre Dame dorm room in 2010, was released from the Atlanta Falcons on May 29 following aggravated animal cruelty charges that he kicked his girlfriend's pet Yorkshire terrier to death. Gwinnett, Ga. police reports said Denicia Williams had left her dog, "Dior," at Shembo's apartment on April 15. When she later found the dog it was unresponsive and died at a veterinary hospital the next day. Police received necropsy results on May 28 and filed charges, punishable under Georgia law by a maximum five years in prison and a \$15,000 fine.



"Dior" and Prince Shembo

The 253-pound linebacker was a fourth-round draft pick last season for the Falcons. While he was playing for Notre Dame, Shembo was investigated in the alleged sexual assault of Lizzy Seeberg, 19, a Saint Mary's College freshman. Shembo was never charged in the incident; 10 days later she committed suicide by taking an overdose of an antidepressant, the [Associated Press](#) reported. The [Gwinnett Daily Post](#) reported that Shembo has admitted to kicking his girlfriend's tiny dog multiple times after having been bitten by it and considered fleeing the country to avoid prison.

The Atlanta Falcons are the same team that lost star quarterback Michael Vick after he was convicted and served time in federal prison for running a dogfighting ring.



Sean Cottrell

Convicted Dog Beater Convicted in Shaken-Baby Case

Shortly after being released from prison where he served a 14-week sentence for beating a puppy, Sean Cottrell, 22, found himself convicted again for deliberately causing his six-week-old son to suffer brain injuries, a broken leg and broken ribs by shaking him. Cottrell, of the Wirral Metropolitan District near Liverpool, U.K., was convicted in November 2014 of causing grievous bodily harm with intent after a week-long trial. Cottrell had been incarcerated in August 2014 for beating a Staffordshire bull terrier puppy named "Dexter" so severely that the dog suffered brain damage and had to be euthanized: veterinarians said the dog looked like he had been in a car crash, the [Liverpool Echo](#) reported. The animal cruelty conviction also carried a lifetime ban from owning any animals. Following the shaken-baby conviction, Cottrell was remanded to immediate custody pending a psychiatric assessment to determine his danger to society, but it was not clear what sentence was subsequently imposed.

Dog Fighter Convicted on Federal Weapons and Narcotics Charges

U.S. Attorney for Delaware Charles M. Oberly III [announced on June 30](#) that he had obtained a conviction against Dawan Nelson, 33, of Houston, Del., who pled guilty to dog fighting, being a felon in possession of a firearm, and possessing 33 kilograms of cocaine with intent to distribute. Nelson will serve 88 months in prison for the incident, stemming from a 2013 raid by Delaware State Police and animal control officers who found the drugs, weapons, 67 pit bulls and dog fighting paraphernalia at his residence.



LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

July 23-24 – Orlando, Fla.: Allie Phillips will present at the [Florida Crimes Against Kids Conference](#) on “When Animal Abuse Co-occurs with Family Violence: Strategies & Policies for Keeping Families Safe” and co-present with Danielle Hughes of the Sarasota Child Protection Center on “Therapy Animals Supporting Children: Policy, Practice & Cases Supporting Your New Comfort Team Member.”

July 24 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: Dr. Lesa Staubus and Deb Stanaland will present on “Animal Abuse, Elder Abuse and Hoarding: Challenges and Strategies for Adult Protective Services” at the 25th Annual [Summer Geriatric Institute](#).

Aug. 18 – Addison, Texas: Phil Arkow and Esperanza Zúñiga will present on “The Link Across the Lifespan” at the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [41st NOVA Conference](#).

Aug. 20 – (Online): Belinda Lewis and Matt Lewis will discuss “Animal Cruelty Crime Scene Forensic Photography” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

Aug. 25 – Nashville, Tenn.: Paul Needham will present on “The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Forms of Family Violence” at the [American Association of Service Coordinators](#) conference.

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

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

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. 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.

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. 8 – Hamden, Conn.: Phil Arkow will participate in a panel discussion for the [Connecticut Bar Association’s Animal Law Section](#).

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.

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, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will present the 5th [National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

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

Dec. 1 – Martin County, Fla.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at a meeting of 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](#).

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

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
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