



The Connection between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence

Research indicates that without strict intervention, people who abuse and kill animals are more likely to similarly abuse humans. Many of society's most infamous mass murderers, serial killers, and a significant percentage of spousal abusers initially target animals with their violent conduct. It is critical to interrupt the cycle of violence before it escalates. Passage of a felony-level animal cruelty law is a critical initial step in halting the progression of violent crime.

Animal cruelty is a predictor and indicator of other violent crimes.

- Acts of animal cruelty are linked to a variety of other crimes, including crimes of violence against humans, property crimes, and the commission of drug or disorderly conduct offenses (Arluke & Luke, 1997)

Animal abuse is associated with both domestic violence and child abuse.

- Pet abuse is a significant predictor of partners who will become batterers (Campbell, 2006).
- State and national surveys of domestic violence victims consistently find that as many as 71% of battered women report their partners threatened, or killed, the family pet (Ascione, 1995).
- The threat of animal abuse to silence child sex abuse victims has been a factor in a number of criminal convictions (Davidson, 1998).
- An early study found that there was animal abuse in 88% of families who were under State supervision due to the physical abuse of their children (DeViney, Dickert & Lockwood, 1983).

Animal cruelty often is an indicator that a child poses a risk to himself and or others.

- A U.S. Department of Justice supported longitudinal study beginning in 1987 found that animal abuse predicted which children would exhibit anti-social and aggressive behavior later childhood, adolescence, and then adulthood (Broidy, 2003).
- Animal cruelty is a warning sign for at-risk youth, according to the National School Safety Council, U. S. Department of Education, the American Psychological Association, and the National Crime Prevention Council.

Serial killers and school shooters have histories of abusing animals.

- Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, Albert DeSalvo (the "Boston Strangler") and many others committed heinous acts of animal cruelty before brutally maiming and killing their human victims.
- Of 36 convicted multiple murderers questioned in an often-cited study, 46% admitted committing acts of animal torture as adolescents (Congressional Register, 1996).
- Over half of the school shooters were known to persistently abuse animals (Miner, 1999).

People want animal cruelty to be prosecuted.

- In a survey of over 1,000 representative U.S. households, 85% of those responding thought it was either "very important" or "important" to protect animals from cruelty (2006).

*Forty-three states and the District of Columbia have enacted felony level penalties for egregious acts of animal cruelty. **Please help strengthen the animal cruelty laws in your state.***