

CROSS REPORTING KEEPS THEM BOTH SAFE



It was mere minutes before Missouri’s 2026 legislative session concluded for the year, and the Alliance’s cross-reporting bill had just one

more step before it could finally pass. As it drew nearer to 6 pm, we feared yet another year could go by, and this bill would not become law.

Advocates had worked tirelessly for five years in a row to pass cross-reporting. Why were we so desperate? Because vulnerable animals, children, and elders were so desperate.

Heartbreaking stories across Missouri show the connection between animal, child, and elder abuse. We knew human service professionals were seeing animal abuse in their work, but they were unsure whether confidentiality laws allowed them to report it. They also often did not know where to report concerns about animals. At the same time, animal control officers and humane investigators were seeing signs of child and elder abuse. Because they were not mandated reporters, they sometimes spent hours on hold with hotlines. They were forced to choose between helping vulnerable animals and maintaining public safety or reporting suspected violence against vulnerable people. By making both groups mandated reporters, the bill solves that problem: they can now submit reports online instead of waiting on hold. With all this

information, the Alliance sprang into action. In 2022, we drafted the cross-reporting bill that would mandate the reporting of suspected animal abuse and neglect by thousands of human service professionals in Missouri. The Missouri Animal Control Association (MACA) generously agreed to have MACA-certified professionals work the animal abuse/neglect hotline that was to be created. We included language in the bill to make animal control officers and humane investigators mandated reporters of child and elder abuse.

You might be thinking, “This is a no-brainer. It must have sailed through the legislature.” On the contrary, we had to fight every step of the way. Powerful forces worked to kill the legislation, including multiple organizations tied to the puppy mill industry, the Missouri

Cattlemen’s Association, and the Missouri Farm Bureau. These well-funded industries offered a range of baseless excuses for why the bill should not become law. But to us, the real reason was clear: they could not bear to have more eyes on abused and neglected animals because it threatened their often cruel industries.



Governor Kehoe signed HB 2292 into law in the presence of Rep. Holly Jones, the House sponsor.

Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation

MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate for the welfare of animals and to protect companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife from abuse, neglect, and inhumane exploitation.

We accomplish this by enacting animal welfare laws and by working towards the effective enforcement of all existing animal protection laws and regulations.

FUNDING

The Alliance is a 501 (c) (4) nonprofit animal advocacy organization.

The organization depends solely on donations from concerned and compassionate individuals to fund its animal welfare advocacy and legislative efforts. Because of our extensive advocacy work on behalf of animals, we are considered a lobbying organization. Therefore, gifts to the Alliance are not tax-deductible.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Bob Baker
Executive Director

Over the years, the Alliance and the animals have benefited greatly from having exceptional staff members who brought their unique skills and talent, and most importantly, a strong dedication to the cause. We have accomplished so much for the animals since the Alliance was founded in 1990. We have truly changed the environment for the animals in Missouri over the past 36 years. And we continue to do so, as evidenced by the passage of the cross-reporting bill this legislative session.

The Alliance is now in a major transitional stage as we start from scratch to build a strong team to ensure the future of the organization and the future for the animals in Missouri. I am delighted to report that we have fortunately found such an outstanding team to continue our mission into the future. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce them to you and let you learn more about them.

Eric Crinnian has been a lifelong advocate for animals and has used his skills as an attorney to aggressively fight for animals and their owners. Over the past twelve

years, he has successfully litigated numerous animal cases, including obtaining a record civil rights settlement against a Missouri city and its police officer that killed a deaf, blind Shih Tzu; a trial win and substantial open records settlement against the University of Missouri for trying to hide records of its treatment of research animals; and numerous successful defenses of animal owners in municipal settings. Eric and his wife have been heavily involved in rescue and welfare, fostering or adopting dozens of dogs and directly helping hundreds more through fundraising events, working in shelter operations, and bringing care to neglected animals through community outreach. In 2014, Eric helped found and served as the board president for a Kansas City-based rescue and community outreach program, which is still serving the metro to this day.



Eric Crinnian
Deputy Executive
Director

Eric has a bachelor's degree in Speech Communication from Missouri Southern State University and received his Juris

Doctor from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. He lives in Kansas City with his wife, who is an entrepreneur, and daughter.

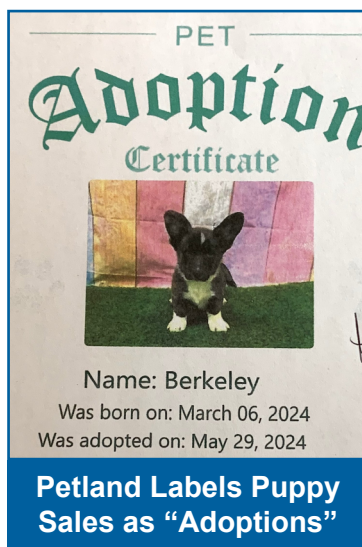
Continued on page 7...

PETLAND'S DECEPTIVE SALES PRACTICES CONTINUE

Last year, The Alliance exposed Petland's troubling practice of selling sick puppies, many from puppy mills and inhumane breeders with serious, chronic violations of state and federal standards of care. Petland also persuades customers to place nonrefundable deposits to hold puppies, without disclosing that they may still be required to buy the puppy even if it is found to be sick at pickup. In effect, customers must either purchase a sick puppy or lose the \$799 deposit they paid to reserve it. Shockingly, Petland refuses to let customers apply that deposit toward a healthy puppy instead.

Most disturbing, Petland describes these sales as "adoptions," despite charging up to \$5,000 for purebred puppies. Many naïve customers believe they are actually rescuing a puppy from a cruel puppy mill since purchasers are even handed an "Adoption Certificate" when purchasing their puppy. In spite of the fact that the misrepresentation of a "sale" of a dog as an "adoption" is strictly prohibited by state law. Incredibly, Petland continues these despicable sales practices to this day, including dubious lending practices where customers unknowingly sign a contract to pay exorbitant high interest rates when taking out a loan to purchase a puppy.

A recent example of Petland's unethical conduct involved a customer who unknowingly bought a sick puppy from the Lake St. Louis store. When she took the puppy to Petland's veterinarian, she was told the dog was not seriously ill. As the puppy's condition worsened, she sought a second opinion from her



own veterinarian, who confirmed the puppy was very sick. She then returned to Petland and, under the warranty, requested a healthy puppy in exchange. Petland refused, saying the warranty required her to only use the store's veterinarian. She responded that regardless of whether Petland provided her with a new puppy, she is leaving the sick dog at the store rather than continuing paying veterinary bills. Petland then threatened to call the police and have her arrested for animal abandonment if she did so. The store ultimately agreed to take the puppy back, but only after she signed documents stating that Petland had done nothing wrong by selling a sick dog to her, effectively blocking any future legal claims. This is another example of the intimidation Petland often uses to avoid accountability. Not surprisingly, it was recently revealed that Petland stores acquired puppies from some of the worst breeders on HWA's Horrible Hundred list.

The Alliance will shortly submit a complaint to the Missouri Attorney General's office requesting that they take the necessary legal action to preclude Petland from continuing these deceptive, unethical, and contemptible practices. Remarkably, a new lawsuit has recently been filed to finally hold the company accountable. (See Missouri Petland Faces Lawsuit.) Fortunately, the timing of our complaint is excellent, as the Attorney General's office often desires that a lawsuit be filed on a particular issue before the Agency becomes involved in such matters.

The Alliance will keep our supporters advised of the result of the Alliance's complaint and of the progress of the recent lawsuit against Petland. It's no surprise that Petland has been attempting to pass a state law in Missouri and numerous other states over the past few years, preventing counties and municipalities from regulating pet stores for public health reasons, consumer protection, and animal welfare concerns.

CROSS REPORTING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The cross-reporting bill faced enormous hurdles, but the Child and Animal Neglect/Abuse (CANA) Coalition, led by the Alliance, refused to give up.

Year after year, advocates woke before dawn to travel to Jefferson City and provide early morning testimony. Other times, afternoon hearings ran late, and advocates did not get home until after nightfall. They carried stories of children who had watched horrible cruelty befall their beloved pets, children abused alongside their treasured companions, and much more. These advocates knew they had to remain steadfast for the sake of the vulnerable. **They were strengthened by the most dedicated bill sponsors we could have hoped for: Representative Holly Jones and Senator Tracy McCreery.** Both had carried the cross-reporting bill for years, and neither wavered in their determination to pass it.

One major hurdle was a nearly six-hour filibuster on the Senate floor the night before the final day of session. One senator appeared intent on killing the legislation. A filibuster that long, so close to the end of session, is exceptionally rare. At that point, every moment counts, and Senate leadership often gives up on a bill. But in apparent recognition of the legislation's life-saving potential, Senate leadership allowed the senator to filibuster until she was ready to negotiate. The Alliance, the bill sponsors, and the senator reached a compromise. Under that compromise, the bill has three years to prove its worth before it must be renewed.

When the bill was brought up again in the Senate on the final day of session, it started to be filibustered again, this time by a different senator. Our hearts dropped. We had worked so hard, and we feared we were about to listen to this bill die again, and with it, the hopes of animals, children,



Senator McCreery, the Senate sponsor, was relentless in her efforts to pass the cross-reporting legislation.

and elders all over the state who want nothing but to be safe in their homes. **But Senator McCreery had other plans. She cut off the debate, negotiated shrewdly, and got the bill out of the Senate.** The challenge was that the amended bill had to return to the House, and we could not imagine there would be enough time. **But Representative Jones refused to accept defeat. She pushed, advocated, and fought.** With minutes left in the session, the bill made it through the House. It was, as we say at the Capitol, "Truly Agreed and Finally Passed."

We wept tears of joy because, for the first time in Missouri's history, the state's most vulnerable people and animals finally had a safety net. Gone were the days when a child could be removed from a ruthless tormentor while a pet was left to endure violence until its final tortured moments. Gone were the days when an animal control officer had to choose between responding to a public health crisis and reporting concerns about an elderly person. Now professionals will be educated on how to spot abuse and neglect, what to do about it, and where to report it. They will know whom to call, and they will be required to act.

Thanks to our coalition, our bill sponsors, and you, cross-reporting is now the law of the land in Missouri.



Supporting testimony for the cross-reporting bill came not only from animal welfare groups but from prosecutors, law enforcement and advocates from child welfare and senior organizations.



OPEN YOUR HEART GALA 2026

The Alliance concluded another fun-filled and inspiring Open Your Heart Gala in 2026. Animal advocates from all corners of Missouri came together to celebrate the Alliance's invaluable work for the past 35 years in greatly enhancing our laws to protect the animals. Most importantly, they gathered to help raise funds for the Alliance and help the organization continue its efforts to protect the most vulnerable of our society.

We had the pleasure of publicly acknowledging our thanks and presenting an award to Ella Frank, Director of the Humane Society of Missouri's Anti-Cruelty Task Force. Ella performs amazing work in her hands-on rescue of abused and neglected animals. It is very difficult work and is extremely emotional, having to witness so much cruelty on an ongoing basis. We are so impressed and greatly appreciative of her work in saving many hundreds of animals over the years.

This annual event continues to uphold its importance as our most critical fundraiser. We hope to see you in 2027!



FEDERAL ANTI-CRUELTY TASK FORCE

The Administration has recently announced the creation of an Anti-Cruelty Task Force in an effort to crack down on animal abuse. The Task Force consists of Todd Blanche, the U. S. Attorney General; Brooke Rollins, the Secretary of Agriculture; and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The Task Force has shared that it intends to target dogfighting, puppy mills, and the use of animals in testing and research. The Alliance is hopeful that such a task force will make a significant difference for the animals, as many of our federal laws protecting vulnerable animals have been inadequately enforced or completely ignored. While it remains to be seen how effective the Task Force will be, we are encouraged by its initial steps.

The Task Force plans to have designated U.S. attorneys in every state to prosecute animal abuse cases. In addition, the USDA is promising to take a tougher approach to shutting down abusive puppy mills. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins has stated that the Department was “moving away from issuing warnings and towards stricter enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act.” She has expressed her concerns over the poor conditions that dogs experience in mass-breeding operations, and in particular, about the stacking of dogs and puppies in cages on top of one another and the inhumane way in which unwanted puppies and older breed stock are often killed. During a recent interview on a national news/talk show, **Secretary Rollins promised, “No more puppy mills.”** Recently, the Department of Agriculture filed legal action against nine horrific, inhumane puppy mills. If the Task Force is effective, there will be many more dog breeders facing consequences for the inadequate care of their animals.

Most promising, the Task Force has reached out to the Alliance for our input on addressing the puppy mill problem and requested our advice on what measures would be necessary to eventually implement effective enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, especially with respect to commercial dog breeders.

We subsequently submitted over ten pages of recommendations, along with documentation justifying the need to enact such measures.

Meanwhile, Secretary Kennedy has affirmed that he is committed to

finding alternatives to animal experimentation. He shared that all the major sub-agency heads at Health and Human Services are “all deeply committed to ending animal experimentation.” He said new studies on animal testing show “that the predictivity of animal models is very, very poor for human health outcomes. There are much more efficient ways of predicting human health outcomes.” True to his word, just recently, Secretary Kennedy and Secretary Rollins jointly announced the creation of a new National Institute of Health office - ORIVA (Office of Research, Innovation, Validation, and Application) **which will be dedicated to accelerating the shift away from animal testing and toward modern, human-based science.** Secretary Kennedy framed animal welfare as a measure of the country’s character, stating, **“The badge of a really humane nation is the way that it takes care of its animals.”**

We hope the Task Force will live up to its creed and follow through on its commitment towards improving the welfare of animals. It could truly make a difference for so many vulnerable animals. The Alliance remains encouraged, as our recommendations were very well received. Be assured, we will keep you advised in future e-newsletters and Action Alerts if any significant changes to improve animal welfare are finally enacted.



Brooke Rollins and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

MISSOURI PETLAND FACES LAWSUIT

The lawsuit was filed by a Missouri resident who bought a sick puppy from Petland in Lake St. Louis. Within days, the puppy required veterinary treatment for giardia, an intestinal parasite he should not have had when leaving the store. Within a few years, he developed physical and neurological problems and was ultimately diagnosed with Chiari-like malformations, an intensely painful issue that affects 95% of the breed - something Petland never informed her of. He continued to get worse, and the owner realized she could no longer provide the level of care he needed, so she made the difficult decision to place him with a rescue equipped to care for him.

The lawsuit challenges Petland's marketing claims about the health of its dogs and the quality of its breeders. In addition to alleging that

Petland concealed potential health issues, the suit claims Petland's breeder standards are not "above and beyond" typical care standards, as advertised. Instead, it alleges, Petland requires breeders only to meet minimum standards under the federal Animal Welfare Act, while falling short of the protections required by Missouri's Animal Care Facilities Act and Canine Cruelty Prevention Act, both of which The Alliance helped pass.

The suit asks the court to declare that Petland has violated the law, to enjoin and restrain them from making such representations and concealments, and to award damages to the Plaintiff and her attorneys for her losses. The case is *Hutson v. Pet Garden, Inc and Petland, Inc*, 2611-CC01119 (St. Charles County).

DIRECTOR'S CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



Mary Kate Wright
Executive Assistant

Mary Kate Wright is a recent graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design, where she earned her B.F.A. in Advertising and Branding. A Saint Louis native, Mary Kate returns home with a lifelong passion for animal welfare, a value instilled in her early on through her family's decision to adopt a rescue dog. Today, she is proud to join our team and

continue advocating for animals, inspired daily by her two rescue dogs, Apollo and Iris.

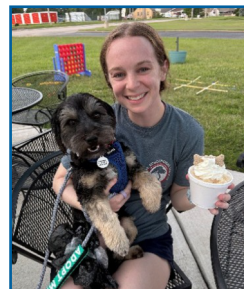
We trust Mary Kate will be a great addition to our team, especially with her advertising experience, which, no doubt, will help spread the word about the Alliance and enhance our presence with our state legislators and public officials.

Dr. Amanda Manera is a Doctor of Physical Therapy by training, but her career took a different turn when she realized her real passion was working with and advocating for animals. Additionally, with a background in helping small businesses and

nonprofits grow their online presence, Amanda now gets to bring those skills to her work with The Alliance. She is excited to use her experience to help make a difference for animals of all kinds.

Amanda is a longtime rescue supporter and foster, having fostered dogs and cats through rescues based in both St. Louis and Springfield. She also uses her photography skills to help adoptable dogs get noticed, volunteering her time to photograph dogs waiting for their adoptive families. In her free time, Amanda can usually be found traveling, browsing a thrift store, or catching up on reality TV.

As you can see from the above, I sincerely believe that we have assembled an awesome team. I am very confident that the Alliance will have a promising future, and we can look forward to many more achievements for the animals in Missouri for countless years to come.



Dr. Amanda Manera
Marketing &
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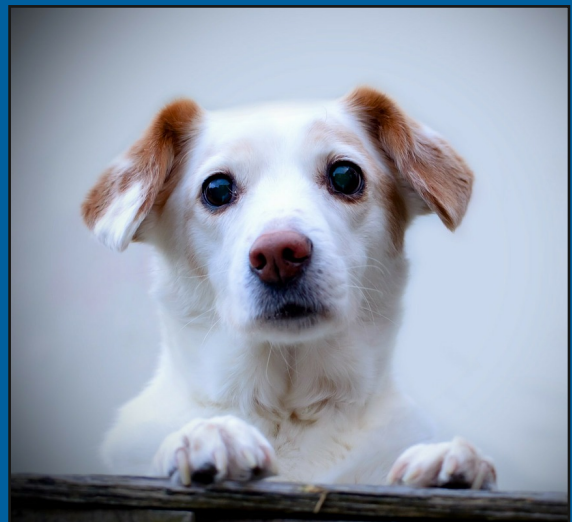
We need your financial support to enable the Alliance to continue our fight on behalf of the animals not only at our state capitol but also with our elected officials in Washington, D.C.

Your contribution is a powerful tool that will help us make a real difference for our vulnerable friends.

While we have made significant progress in protecting the welfare of animals in Missouri over the past 36 years, there is still much more that we can do to vastly improve the state's animal welfare laws. Thanks to your past financial support, we finally passed the cross-reporting bill this year, which will help not only animals but also vulnerable children and elderly people. But we can do so much more with your continual help!

Your assistance is needed more than ever as we expand our advocacy staff and lobbying team to more effectively help the Alliance speak for those who have no voice!

HELP US TO CONTINUE TO BE THE VOICE OF THE ANIMALS!



Please send your donation today using the enclosed envelope, make a generous online contribution at maal.org, or scan the QR code.

