



MISSOURI ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION  
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*Please help us!*

We need your financial support to enable the Alliance to continue our fight in the halls of the State Capitol and with our state and federal officials on behalf of the animals. **We need your help more than ever as we extend our efforts to the U.S. Capitol and into the courtroom to advocate for the effective enforcement of our federal animal welfare laws.**



Please send your donation today using the enclosed envelope or make a generous contribution online at [maal.org](http://maal.org) or use the QR code.

**YOUR CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE ALLIANCE  
ALLOWS US TO  
ENACT LAWS TO  
PROTECT ANIMALS  
LIKE THIS PUPPY  
RESCUED  
FROM A CRUEL  
PUPPY MILL**



**With your generous support, we  
can continue our vital work of  
defending the animals.**



FALL 2022

## ALLIANCE ACHIEVES MAJOR VICTORY FOR THE ANIMALS



**USDA finally complies with the Alliance's demand that the Agency cites all violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act**

We are thrilled to report that the Alliance has finally succeeded in our tireless efforts to halt the USDA's use of the "teachable moments" rule. The Alliance's federal lobbyist worked non-stop in urging Congress to prohibit the USDA from ignoring Animal Welfare Act (AWA) violations by calling them "teachable moments" and failing to document the violations on the official inspection reports for public viewing. In late March, the House Appropriations Committee finally agreed to our request and ordered the USDA to cease its "teachable moments" rule.

Regrettably, the USDA attempted to continue to use "teachable moments," but due to continuing pressure from the Alliance, the USDA has finally acquiesced to Congressional demands. At its annual meeting with commercial dog breeders in late July, the USDA announced that **"as of August 1st, all noncompliances...even very minor noncompliances will now be cited on inspection reports."**

In various states and local municipalities around the country, there are laws that prohibit pet stores in their jurisdiction from acquiring puppies from breeders that have a certain number of violations documented on their inspection reports. The USDA adopted the "teachable moments" rule specifically to thwart these state and local laws protecting consumers from purchasing puppies from egregious puppy mills. By referring to the violations as "teachable moments" and not citing the deficiencies on the inspection report, the USDA was, in effect,

assisting disreputable breeders in circumventing state and local humane/consumer protection laws and ordinances. Fortunately, the Alliance convincingly argued to Congress that it is scandalous that the USDA implemented the "teachable moments" rule **solely to aid and abet disreputable breeders.**

At about the same time that the USDA implemented "teachable moments," they also adopted a "self-reporting" rule which allowed breeders to self-report violations to the inspector before the inspection. The inspector would then be prohibited from citing the breeder for any such self-reported violation. Shockingly, the "teachable moments" rule and the "self-reporting rule" were implemented by the USDA illegally as they were adopted without going through the federal rule-making process. **These illegal rules not only helped breeders circumvent state and local laws but also greatly hindered the animals' welfare. The number of violations cited at USDA licensed facilities declined by 60% and law enforcement activity against disreputable puppy mills declined by 90%.**

Fortunately, the Alliance eliminated the "self-reporting" rule by successfully filing a lawsuit against the USDA. The Alliance then sought to eliminate the "teachable moments" rule by lobbying Congress to halt funding of the Agency unless the USDA discontinued its practice of ignoring animal welfare violations. We are pleased to report that the USDA has finally consented to Congress' demands and that all violations will now be cited and documented on the official inspection report. **This will help protect all animals covered under the federal Animal Welfare Act, including not only dogs in puppy mills and cats in commercial breeding facilities but all animals used in research, used for exhibition purposes, animals in zoos, and other various animal industries.**

*Thank you for your generous support that has enabled the Alliance to have the resources to maintain representation in Washington DC with Congress as well as at the state capitol. You have truly made a difference for the animals.*



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 and therefore gifts to the Alliance are not tax-deductible.

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Bob Baker, Executive Director

**This past year has been a busy and tumultuous time advocating for Missouri's animals.** We are thrilled at our successes, especially in forcing the USDA to effectively enforce the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) for the first time in many years. This has been a long-fought victory and the USDA has not taken kindly to the Alliance's efforts to hold them accountable. They have not only attempted to silence the Alliance but have also made it clear that we are not welcome at USDA meetings.

Our advocacy work at the state capitol was also very contentious this year. The efforts to undermine our animal welfare laws in the Legislature consisted of outright lies by those seeking to overturn our animal

protection laws and even included personal and slanderous attacks against Alliance staff for our unwavering efforts in advocating for the welfare of the animals. These personal attacks and dishonest efforts to erode our animal welfare laws were made at the behest of the puppy mill industry, agricultural trade groups, and even the Missouri Veterinary Medical Association. One state representative even caused a scene in the capitol rotunda by yelling at me for my audacity in criticizing a professor of veterinary medicine regardless of the inhumane actions and improper conduct of the veterinarian in question.

**We are delighted, therefore, to proclaim that the animals have prevailed against these continuing assaults on their welfare and the malicious attacks against those who advocate for them at the capitol.**

These spiteful attacks only reveal the frustration that these individuals and industry groups are encountering in their failed efforts to undermine our animal welfare laws. The good news is that the Alliance would not be generating such hostility if it were not for our success in advocating for the animals.

**YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE ALLIANCE WILL REMAIN UNYIELDING IN OUR EFFORTS**

## MISSOURI ALLIANCE PRESENTS AT NATIONAL CONVENTION OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS



Alliance's Executive  
Director, Bob Baker

In December, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys invited the Alliance's Executive Director, Bob Baker, to talk to prosecutors from across the country about puppy mills and pet stores during their annual convention in Baton Rouge. Bob not only described the

horrors of inhumane puppy mills, he also explained the connection between the puppy mills and the pet stores that sell the puppies from such cruel breeders. Bob emphasized that not only do anti-cruelty laws apply to pet stores selling sick puppies, but consumer laws are also effective in prosecuting pet stores for marketing sick puppies. Bob pointed out that many pet stores are simply outlet stores for puppy mills.

It was further explained to the attendees that simply because a puppy originated from a USDA licensed breeder, that did not ensure that the puppy was raised in a humane environment. Bob detailed the gross malfeasance of the USDA regarding the Agency's lack of enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

The presentation and specifically the encouragement to prosecute cruel puppy mills and disreputable pet stores was exceptionally well received, not only by the prosecutors in attendance but also by numerous law enforcement officials, including detectives from large metropolitan areas who later confided in Bob about their ongoing investigations of pet stores for the sale of sick animals.



**THE ALLIANCE URGED PROSECUTORS  
"DO YOUR RESEARCH" WHEN  
CONFRONTED WITH DISREPUTABLE PET STORES!**



# MVMA CONTINUES ITS ATTACKS UPON THE WELFARE OF THE ANIMALS



*Members of the MVMA surround Rep. Murphy at the Capitol in support of his legislation to prohibit local government from protecting animals from abusive veterinary practices.*

The Missouri Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) has long been in opposition to the welfare of the animals, as evidenced as far back as 2010 when the MVMA vigorously opposed The Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act, also known as Prop B. This opposition occurred **even though many more individual veterinarians and veterinary clinics openly endorsed Prop B than those who opposed it**. Regrettably, representatives of the MVMA not only opposed Prop B but spread considerable misinformation about the ballot initiative, alleging that it covered farm animals and falsely claiming that Prop B would weaken protections for dogs in puppy mills.

Shockingly, for the past ten years, including during the 2022 legislative session, the MVMA has supported legislation that would eliminate the existing disposition process for abused and neglected animals. Such legislation would often result in abused and neglected animals being left in the hands of their abusers until the conclusion of a criminal trial.

**It is important to note that veterinarians are currently exempt from Missouri's anti-cruelty statutes within their practice of veterinary medicine.** Instead, any cruelty complaints are reviewed by a board of which five of the six members are veterinarians. Recently, this Board refused to address a complaint by the Alliance against a professor of veterinary medicine who was teaching dog breeders to commit inhumane acts while artificially

inseminating dogs, as well as dismissing a complaint against a veterinarian who misrepresented the condition of malnourished dogs in an effort to defend an inhumane dog breeder. **Interestingly, the MVMA this year informed the students at the College of Veterinary Medicine that responsibility for enforcement of ethics rests “most importantly with each individual member of the association” as “We are primarily a self-disciplined profession.”** *The MVMA has now set its goal of even less oversight by seeking exemption from the authority and supervision of counties and municipalities.* During this legislative session, the MVMA strongly advocated for a bill prohibiting local government from banning any veterinary practices regardless of how inhumane such practices might be.

**The MVMA, in an attempt to pass such legislation, presented false testimony to legislators concerning the local ordinances in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County that prohibit the declawing of cats.** The MVMA told state legislators that these local governing bodies passed such ordinances without input from veterinarians.



*Dr. Cliff Miller, MVMA's past president, and current legislative chair, wrongly testified that the MVMA did not know about the proposed declawing ordinance in St. Louis City until after it was enacted.*

The MVMA also alleged that they had no opportunity to submit feedback on the proposed ordinances as the MVMA was unaware of such proposals until after the ordinances had passed.

In fact, the MVMA had sent out emails to its members inquiring about their opinion on the proposed ordinances **before the passage of the ordinances**. Two months prior to the enactment of the ordinance in the City of St. Louis, the executive director of the MVMA was even quoted in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch stating that the MVMA “hasn’t taken a position” on the proposed cat declawing ordinance. **So, the MVMA was clearly aware of such proposed ordinances and only chose to oppose them after they had passed.**

It should also be emphasized that contrary to the MVMA's assertion, veterinarian input was considered in the passing of these ordinances, including a strong statement in opposition to declawing by the American Association of Feline Practitioners.

Equally disturbing was the MVMA's dubious allegation before the Senate Committee that its office was so overwhelmed with angry phone calls that it had to stop answering its telephones. The MVMA alleged that these harassing phone calls were due to its support of the legislation to overturn the ordinances prohibiting the declawing of cats. This was surprising news as, to our knowledge, no animal welfare organization or animal rights group had yet reported on the MVMA's position on such legislation.

**The MVMA finally admitted in their testimony that this legislation was not about the declawing of cats.** Dr. Miller explained to the Committee that the MVMA is not advocating for declawing and, in fact, strongly discourages the procedure; rather, the MVMA is hoping to preclude any other possible restrictions being placed on veterinarians by local government.

Dr. Miller explained that if we do not pass this, what happens next? **Thus, the MVMA is willing to be dismissive of the welfare of cats and is only using the declawing issue as an excuse to pass legislation that will eliminate all regulatory oversight of the practice of veterinary medicine – except for a Board that is controlled by fellow veterinarians.**

Most disappointing, Dr. Ed Migneco, president of the MVMA, refuses to meet with the Alliance despite our numerous requests to discuss our concerns with him on this matter and on other animal welfare issues.

**It must be emphasized that the vast majority of veterinarians are compassionate and excellent caregivers who fully support the animals' welfare.** Unfortunately, the MVMA often ignores the interests of its many compassionate practitioners and instead frequently represents the interests of the worst in its profession. One need only review the mission statement of the MVMA and compare it with other veterinary associations' mission statements, such as the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP).

## MVMA MISSION STATEMENT:

The MVMA's **mission is to serve the members**, promote the veterinary medical profession, and enhance the veterinarians' ability to advance animal and human health.

## AAFP MISSION STATEMENT:

The AAFP **supports its members in improving the health and welfare of cats** through high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine.

Which organization do you believe has the welfare of animals as its priority?

**PLEASE DISCUSS THIS ISSUE AT YOUR NEXT ROUTINE VETERINARY VISIT AND ENCOURAGE YOUR VETERINARIAN TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS TO LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE MVMA AND TO REQUEST THAT THE MVMA GIVE GREATER CONSIDERATION TO ANIMAL WELFARE.**





# THE ALLIANCE LEADS THE PACK ON ADDRESSING THE “LINK” BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE

“The link” is the term used to describe the significant relationships between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse, and other forms of violence. A vast amount of research supports the link, as documented in countless studies and reports. For example, in a survey of families with pets in which there was substantiated child abuse, it was discovered that **animals were abused in 88% of homes where child physical abuse was present.** Another study revealed that **71% of pet owners entering domestic violence shelters reported that their batterer had threatened, injured, or killed family pets.**

While it is extremely difficult to pass legislation to protect animals in Missouri, the Alliance has very effectively made the case to our state legislators that if they care about humans, they must also consider the animal family members of those humans. In 2021 the Alliance extensively lobbied and provided testimony on the Pet Protection Bill, aimed at offering new protections to humans and animals trapped in domestic violence situations. We successfully argued that in order to protect children and adults terrorized by violence in their homes, the legislature must also consider the animals who are treasured members of the family.

**The Alliance successfully passed the Pet Protection Bill, which now allows animals to be placed on orders of protection, grants ownership of the animal to the victim of the violence, and orders the perpetrator to pay for the veterinary bills of any pet they injured.** The national organization dedicated to exposing the link between animal abuse and human violence has affirmed the **Alliance’s Pet Protection Act as the strongest such legislation in the country.**

The Alliance is continuing our work to pass additional “link” legislation with plans to introduce two new bills in 2023. The first bill would require anyone guilty of animal abuse or animal hoarding to undergo a comprehensive psychological evaluation. If recommended, psychological treatment would be required in addition to any other sentencing. We are confident that this will lead to crimes against animals being taken more seriously and that appropriate sentences and treatment will effectively halt further

violence against vulnerable animals and humans.

The Alliance has secured a bill sponsor and will be filing cross-reporting legislation in 2023. This bill would create, for the first time in Missouri’s history, a list of professionals who would be mandated to report animal abuse if they have cause to suspect it. An example of cross-reporting would be if a social worker investigated a child abuse allegation and discovered an animal being abused or neglected. This bill would require the child abuse investigator to make a timely report of suspected animal abuse/neglect, which could save the animal from immense suffering and possibly death.



**This July, the Alliance’s Associate Executive Director Aislinn McCarthy-Sinclair, spoke at the National Sheriffs’ Association conference and secured their support for both of our proposed bills. Further, the President of the Association for Prosecuting Attorneys was present in the audience and stated that his national prosecutor’s organization would also support the Alliance’s proposed legislation.**

*The Alliance conducted a powerful day long seminar in Saint Louis on the “link” last year, and we will be hosting another such symposium in Kansas City this year.*

We are thrilled to pass legislation to protect animals living in some of the most terrifying situations imaginable. Additionally, we believe these bills will go a long way in stopping cycles of violence against animals. We look forward to having this new proposed legislation be the strongest in the country.



## OPEN YOUR HEART GALA 2022 – A GREAT SUCCESS!

Open Your Heart is the Alliance’s annual gala and our most important fundraiser. In 2021 during our virtual live-stream gala due to COVID, we promised that our 2022 gala would be back in person and bigger and better than ever – and we delivered thanks to your generosity and participation!

We were delighted to have so many Alliance supporters from across the state join us at Meadowbrook Country Club in February to celebrate the accomplishments of the Alliance. Attendees enjoyed fine dining, inspirational videos from Jefferson County’s Sheriff Dave Marshak and State Representative Tracy McCreery, a fast-paced fund-a-need and gift card frenzy, and terrific silent and live auction items.

**You don’t want to miss our next Open Your Heart gala at Meadowbrook on February 4, 2023!** Tickets will be available in the coming months. You can ensure you are signed up to receive our email reminders by reaching out to [admin@maal.org](mailto:admin@maal.org).

***We are looking forward to seeing you in 2023!***