

New Coalition to Support Legislation Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence and Their Pets

Nestle Purina PetCare, Bayer Corporation, Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), Noah's Animal House, Pet Partners and Urban Resource Institute rally around supporting abuse victims' needs, including health and safety of their pets



A domestic violence survivor hugs her beloved dog outside Noah's Animal House.

A group of nonprofit and for-profit organizations have joined forces to better protect domestic violence survivors by establishing, validating and promoting the criticality of protecting their pets, too. This coalition is urging passage of the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act (H.R. 909, S.322), a bill that is adamant about removing a roadblock that is essential to the safety of these survivors with pets, enabling them to live healthy, safe lives, together. Organizations in the coalition include:

- Nestle Purina PetCare
- Bayer Corporation
- Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)
- Noah's Animal House
- Pet Partners
- Urban Resource Institute

Two of these organizations, Noah's Animal House and Urban Resource Institute are just a couple of the only 3% of domestic violence shelters across the country who are working to keep both pets and their owners away from the dangers of domestic abuse. Together these two incredible organizations have saved more than 1,500 pets from abusive conditions, so that no domestic violence survivor is forced to choose between staying in an abusive relationship and leaving their pet with their abuser.

"Up to 65% of domestic violence victims remain in abusive homes out of fear for their pet's safety, and even more women residing in domestic violence shelters reported that a pet was harmed by their abuser," said URI President and CEO Nathaniel Fields. "Through the Urban Resource Institute's innovative People and Animals Living Safely (PALS) program, domestic violence survivors in New York City are able to find safe harbor with their pets in one of our dedicated shelters. PALS is the largest and only model of its kind in New York State, and this new coalition will help extend that life-saving, pet-inclusive approach to domestic violence shelters across America."

Did you know?

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According to the Centers for Disease Control, 4,774,000 women in the United States experience physical intimate partner violence.

- According to the Centers for Disease Control, 4,774,000 women in the United States experience physical violence by an intimate partner every year.
- The majority of domestic violence situations include pets in the household, and 85% of women residing in domestic violence shelters reported a pet was harmed by their abuser .
- A growing body of science has demonstrated a link between domestic violence and animal cruelty . An outlet of emotional support for victims, the family pet often becomes a target for physical abuse .

The PAWS Act Coalition members have been working to promote awareness and encourage support for the legislation, with [247 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House of Representatives](#) and [37 in the Senate](#). There is now new momentum with the bill's language included in the recently-passed Senate Farm Bill.

The PAWS Act Coalition is especially grateful for the efforts of Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) for their leadership and commitment to pass the Pet and Women Safety Act.

"I was proud to work with my colleague Senator Gary Peters and several advocacy groups to introduce the PAWS Act, bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would ensure victims are not forced to choose between their personal safety and the safety of their pet," said U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV). "As the 5th most bipartisan senator in the U.S. Senate, I'll continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to see that domestic violence survivors in Nevada and around the country have access to critical, life-saving services and programs that meet their needs and allow them to escape abuse and find safe haven."

"For most pet owners, the bond with their pet is incredibly strong, and for people in abusive relationships, their pet can be an important source of comfort," said Dr. Kurt Venator, DVM, PhD, Chief Veterinary Officer at Purina. "Purina is very proud to support efforts to keep families and their pets together during this time of healing."

"Since 2007, Noah's Animal House has cared for and protected over 1,400 pets of domestic violence survivors for 90,000 boarding nights," said Staci Columbo-Alonso, Founder, Noah's Animal House. "The need to provide safety and protection for the pets of these women and children is on the rise, and we are hopeful that in joining this important group of like-minded organizations, we can help more shelters across the country care for these families together."

"Bayer recognizes the great need to support domestic violence shelters that care for both survivors and their beloved pets," said Lauren Dorsch, Deputy Director, Communications, Bayer Animal Health. "Survivors of domestic violence should not have to choose between their safety and a loved one, and these shelters make it possible for them to heal in a safe place, without saying goodbye to their pets."

"Pet Partners therapy animal team handlers and advocates all across the country are using their grassroots power to support the PAWS Act Coalition, so that pets and people can stick together in traumatic situations - when they need each other most," said Annie Peters, CEO of Pet Partners.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

Nestlé Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness.

About Bayer Animal Health

Science For a Better Life: the Bayer business unit Animal Health is a global leader in animal health, supporting the health of animals, as well as the farmers, veterinarians and pet owners that care for them through its offering of innovative therapies and solutions. Responsible relationships between humans, companion animals, as well as farm animals mean taking care of their health and well-being. Bayer has secured a leadership position in researching and developing products for animal health and pest control since 1919, and is constantly developing new, better products and improved forms of administration for the benefit of the animals in our lives.

About Pet Partners

Pet Partners is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting animal-assisted therapy, activities and education. Forty-one years since the organization's inception, the science that proves these benefits has become indisputable. Today, Pet Partners is the nation's largest and most prestigious nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams providing animal-assisted interventions. Therapy animals, such as those who participate in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, provide affection and comfort to members of the public, typically in facility settings such as hospitals, assisted living, and schools. These pets have a special aptitude for interacting with members of the public and enjoy doing so. Therapy animal handlers volunteer their time to visit with their animals in the community. For more information about Pet Partners, visit <http://www.petpartners.org>.

About the Urban Resource Institute

Urban Resource Institute (URI) is a leading non-profit organization that provides comprehensive, holistic, and supportive social services that aid and empower New Yorkers in times of crisis. URI's programs provide care for survivors of domestic violence, individuals with developmental disabilities, homeless families, and other at-risk populations, allowing them to live in safety and recover from trauma in both residential and non-residential settings. With deep community relationships and a flexible, innovative approach to program development and service delivery, URI is uniquely equipped to provide solutions to the challenges affecting New York City's most vulnerable populations. URI is merging with the Center Against Domestic Violence, the first licensed provider of domestic violence shelter in New York. With nearly 80 years of combined experience, the organization will be the largest provider of domestic violence residential services in the country, with the ability to shelter over 1,000 individuals, including survivors and their families, on any given day.

About Noah's Animal House

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Noah's Animal House was the first stand-alone full service pet boarding facility in the country built on the grounds of and in partnership with The Shade Tree Shelter in 2007 to provide safety, shelter and support for the pets of the clients of the shelter. A second location serving up to 36 animals in Reno, Nevada opened February 2018 in partnership with the Domestic Violence Resource Center. In a national survey, 71 percent of women seeking safety in a domestic violence shelter reported pet abuse in their home and more than 25 percent delayed leaving because they did not have an escape plan that could include their pets. To learn more about Noah's Animal House, visit <http://www.noahsanimalhouse.org>.

About HABRI

HABRI is a not-for-profit organization that maintains the world's largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; funds innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information, please visit <http://www.habri.org>.

<https://www.drmartybecker.com/healing-power-of-pets/people-pets-caught-domestic-violence-personal-story/>

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