



Agenda – ALC 2026

Friday October 16, 2026

6:00 – 8:30 p.m. ET

Welcome Reception

Join us as we kick off the conference with an evening reception in the Grand Foyer at the Grand Hyatt Washington hotel, in Washington, DC. Conference attendees will receive their event badge before being treated to a fun evening of networking with fellow attendees while enjoying plant-based appetizers and drinks. The welcome reception will not be livestreamed.

Welcome remarks by:

Megan Senatori, Executive Director, *Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School*

Chris Green, Executive Director, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*

Saturday October 17, 2026

All plenary sessions on Saturday will take place in the Constitution Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt Washington hotel in Washington, DC, and will be livestreamed via the virtual event platform.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. ET

Registration, Light Breakfast & Coffee

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. ET

Beyond the Law? Challenging Common Farming Exemptions

Some of the greatest barriers to animal protection are built into the law itself. This panel examines legal exemptions that purport to shield harmful practices from accountability, including common farming exemptions in state animal cruelty laws and emerging climate-related exemptions to industrial animal agriculture. Panelists will use real life examples to demonstrate that common exemptions do not, in fact, put farmed animals outside of legal protection.



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Carrie Apfel, Deputy Managing Attorney, Sustainable Food and Farming Program, *EarthJustice*
Will Lowrey, Founder and Legal Counsel, *Animal Partisan*
Active Moderator: Delcianna Winders, Professor of Law & Animal Law and Policy Institute Director,
Vermont Law and Graduate School

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. ET

Break

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET

Consumer Protection as a Tool for Animal Advocacy

Laws aimed at consumer protection and removing inhumane products from state marketplaces laws are increasingly effective avenues for advancing animal protection. Panelists will discuss litigation strategies, government enforcement, and recent cases—including an antitrust class action lawsuit against beef processors and cases since the Supreme Court upheld Proposition 12 in California.

Rebecca Cary, Managing Attorney, Animal Protection Law, *Humane World for Animals*

Asher Smith, General Counsel for Litigation, *PETA Foundation*

Moderator: Robyn Pekala, Professor of Practice, *Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School*

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. ET

Lunch

1:00 – 2:15 p.m. ET

Emerging Issues in Companion Animal Law

This session explores emerging issues at the intersection of companion animal law, advocacy, and practice. Panelists will discuss groundbreaking new Colorado law that codifies the human-animal bond as a social determinant of health, expanding legal services to advocate for companion animals in private practice, and the complicated legal status of horses.

Karin Bump, Chief Operating Officer, *EQUUS Foundation*

Jeremy Cohen, Founder, *Boston Dog Lawyers*

Rajesh Reddy, Assistant Professor of Law & Animal Law Program Director, *Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School*

Moderator: Emily Lewis, Managing Attorney, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*



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2:15 – 2:45 p.m. ET

Break

2:45 – 4:00 p.m. ET

The Law is only as Effective as Its Enforcement

This panel examines recent federal and state enforcement efforts and whether they are likely to result in concrete improvements for animals. Panelists will discuss contemporary enforcement efforts, including litigation under the Animal Welfare Act, and strategies for improving compliance and expanding protections through government action and legal advocacy.

Elisabeth Custalow, Deputy General Counsel, *Animal Welfare Institute*

Mary Hollingsworth, Director, Animal Law & Policy Clinic; Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, *Harvard Law School*

Rebecca Niemiec, Associate Professor and Co-Director, Animal Human Policy Center, Colorado State University

Moderator: David Rosengard, Managing Attorney, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*

4:00 – 4:15 p.m. ET

Break

4:15 – 5:30 p.m. ET

Legal and Practical Responses to Animal Hoarding

Animal hoarding cases present unique legal, practical, and animal welfare challenges. Panelists will discuss innovative judicial approaches, prosecution strategies, and long-term solutions that prioritize both animal welfare, avoiding offender recidivism, and community safety.

Randy Lockwood, Vice President and Board Chair, *National Link Coalition*

Emily McCormak, Animal Curator and Intern Coordinator, *Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge*

Hon. Gale Rasin, Presiding Judge, Mental Health Court, *Baltimore City Circuit Court*

Moderator: Linda Fielder, Animal Cruelty Investigations Manager, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. ET

Break



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6:30 – 7:00 p.m. ET

Pre-banquet Reception

Constitution Foyer

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. ET

Banquet Dinner, Awards Ceremony, and Keynote Address

Join us Saturday evening for the banquet dinner, awards ceremony, and a special program. We'll honor Bruce Wagman, Pamela Frasch, and Sonia Waisman with Lifetime Achievement Awards, and present the Animals in Focus Media Award to Melanie Kaplan, who will share remarks from her new book, *Lab Dog*. We'll also present the Leadership in Animal Protection Award to Senator Cory Booker, followed by a special pre-recorded keynote address from Senator Booker. Copies of *Lab Dog* will be available for purchase and signing.

Sunday October 18, 2026

All plenary sessions on Sunday will take place in the Constitution Ballroom at the Grand Hyatt Washington hotel in Washington, DC, and will be livestreamed via the virtual event platform. The conference concludes today at 1:30 p.m. ET.

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. ET

Light Breakfast & Coffee

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. ET

Ethics at the Forefront of Animal Protection

Animal protection professionals regularly confront difficult ethical questions alongside their legal obligations. This session explores the ethical tensions that may arise within animal welfare institutions and considers how these challenges shape policy, practice, and decision-making.

Sam Wolbert, President and CEO, *Toledo Humane Society*

Moderator: Pamela Frasch, Professor of Law, *Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School*

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. ET

Break



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10:30 – 11:45 a.m. ET

Has the AWA Fulfilled Its Promise?

2026 marks sixty years since passage of the Animal Welfare Act. As we celebrate this milestone, speakers from diverse perspectives will discuss the law's achievements to date, critique its shortcomings, and consider whether the AWA is fulfilling its promise. Panelists will combine a retrospective view with a forward-looking vision for what AWA reforms are needed to better protect animals today.

James Gesualdi, Animal Law Attorney and Author

Aaron Rhyner, Former Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, *United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*

Ashley Ridgeway, Staff Attorney, *Animal Welfare Institute*

Moderator: Brittany Peet, Director, Transparency and Regulatory Affairs Program, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*

11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. ET

Break

12:15 – 1:30 p.m. ET

Expanding Opportunities for Laboratory Animal Rehoming

As more animals used in laboratory settings are given the opportunity for life beyond the lab, legal and practical questions continue to emerge. This panel moves beyond the conversation about getting animals out of laboratories to delve into what happens after the victory of liberation. Panelists will explore trends in the use of animals in experimentation, successful rehoming programs, the unique needs of former laboratory animals, the legal mechanics inherent in building a coalition of rescue partners for large rehoming operations and best practices that support their transition into permanent homes.

Mallory Cormier, Founder and Executive Director, *Save The Buns, Inc.*

Stacy Lopresti-Goodman, Director, Animal Law Education and Scholarship Program, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*

Moderator: Alyssa Crowell, Senior Staff Attorney, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*



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Pre-recorded virtual panels:

Global Perspectives in Animal Law

This pre-recorded session brings together a diverse panel of international experts to examine emerging issues and innovations in global animal law. Topics include responding to global animal trafficking, safeguarding animals rescued from fighting rings, and opportunities for advancing animal protection across jurisdictions.

Dr. Lipsa Dash, *Center for Animal Law Studies, Lewis & Clark Law School*

Frederica Faiella, Founder and President, *Fondazione Cave Canem*

María Celeste Jiménez Riveros, *Centro Carbonell MX*

Moderator: Hira Jaleel, Visiting Assistant Professor, *Vermont Law and Graduate School*

Shelter PALS: Expanding Access to Legal Services for Animals

Join Bruce Wagman, one of the nation's leading animal law attorneys with decades of experience advancing legal protections for animals, in this pre-recorded session to learn about the San Francisco SPCA Shelter PALS (Policy and Legal Services) program and how legal services can support animal shelters, advocates, and caregivers while improving outcomes for animals.

Bruce Wagman, Attorney, *Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP*

Moderator: Caitlin Hawks, Chief Programs Officer, *Animal Legal Defense Fund*