

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

www.guncontrol.ca

Stand up to Save Canada's Gun Control Law

Government Vows to Introduce Another Bill to Abolish the Long Gun Registry

In the June 2011 Speech from the Throne, the government announced that it plans to "act on its promise to introduce legislation to end the wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry". **We will continue our fight to defend the integrity of our gun control laws, and to save the long gun registry.** We know that the gun lobby will not be satisfied until gun control is dismantled. Conservative politicians and gun lobby groups are already in the media mentioning plans to dismantle the registry, and even more.

Urgent Action is Needed

During the election, it became clear many candidates were ill-informed about this issue. We need your urgent aid in:

- **Contacting your newly elected or returning MP** to share your support for the gun registry, and for gun control. The list of MPs and their contact information can be found at www.parl.gc.ca or 1-800-O-Canada.
- **Helping to educate your network, your friends and family, your MP, etc.** The gun registry is an important public safety tool, and should be maintained. If dismantled, there will be no turning back.

"The cost of maintaining the registry on an annual basis has been vastly reduced to approximately \$4 million annually. This equates to less than 15 cents per Canadian per year - cost effective by any person's standards."

—Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police

Mothers of Gun Violence Victims Call for Help

"In response to the recent election, we, the mothers of victims of gun violence, are calling on politicians to stand up for public safety. During the election it became clear that many candidates were ill-informed about how important the gun registry is as a tool for police. We are concerned that abolishing the registry will be pushed through the House of Commons based on misinformation. (...)

*We are mothers who know the agony of losing a child. **We are calling on Canadians to help us stand up for gun control and to tell all newly elected Members of Parliament that the gun lobby does not speak for us.***

Visit www.guncontrol.ca to read the open letter issued on Mother's Day.

About Gun Registration

- Registration is a one-time-only procedure, and it is free. The system is in place, and 6.9 million rifles and shotguns are already registered. **Once the registry is scrapped and the data erased, there will be no turning back.**
- While licensing and screening gun owners reduces the risks that dangerous people will have access to weapons, registration is essential to enforcing licensing, as it holds gun owners accountable for their firearms, and reduces the chances that their guns will be diverted to unlicensed owners.
- All illegal firearms begin as legal firearms. Controls over legal guns are essential to preventing diversion and choking off the illegal supply.
- The gun registry aids police investigations:
 - In March 2011, it assisted police in laying charges against a man accused of arming street gangs in Laval, Quebec.
 - In January 2011, a recovered registered shotgun helped police apprehend a suspect in a bank robbery in Thunder Bay, Ontario.
 - Two men were identified and convicted as accessories to the 2005 murder of four RCMP officers in Mayerthorpe, Alberta, in part because a registered gun was left at the scene of the crime.

"Women have told us that the guns used here [in the North] predominantly for hunting – that is, long guns – are also used to intimidate, subdue and control them. We hear this over and over again, in small communities without RCMP and in larger communities with RCMP. Women do not want these guns to be unregistered, but do not feel safe expressing this opinion other than in whispers to people who may be able to voice these 'unpopular' opinions and who may be heard. [...] **Please make it clear that it is not city-born, city living folks who are asking for this registry to continue; it is the voices of northern women who fear for their lives and their mental health who are asking for protection.** We see women who have experienced years of brutal intimidation. These women cannot safely express their need for protection themselves, and it is up to Canada to understand this and respond in an appropriate way."

— Lyda Fuller, YWCA Yellowknife, NWT

Just the Facts

The 1995 Firearms Act required all gun owners to obtain a renewable license by 2001, and to register all firearms once by 2003. Canada's gun laws have been heralded worldwide as a model for addressing armed violence against women. The United Nations has gone so far as to suggest that states that do not adequately regulate firearms fail to meet their obligations under international law, particularly with respect to the safety of women and children.

The evidence is clear, the gun registry is effective, efficient both in cost and function, and most importantly, saves lives.

- Most firearm-related deaths in Canada are caused by rifles or shotguns, and these are the guns most commonly used to threaten and injure. All guns are lethal, and any gun in the wrong hands is dangerous. **We need controls on ALL guns.**
- The rate of death involving guns is the lowest it has been in over 40 years. In fact, **400 fewer Canadians died of gunshots** in 2007 than in 1995, the year the Firearms Act was introduced. Public health experts continue to support our gun control law.
- **Murders with rifles and shotguns have decreased dramatically**, from 61 in 1995 (0.21 per 100,000) to 29 in 2009 (0.08 per 100,000).
- The number of **women murdered with firearms decreased by 70%** since controls on all firearms were first introduced, from 85 in 1991 to 26 in 2007. Women's groups and front-line shelter workers maintain that the interests of all women, rural and urban, are not being served by abolishing the gun registry.
- Gun violence is not just a big city issue, it affects Canadians everywhere. Although there is more opposition to gun control in rural areas and in the Western provinces, **there are also higher rates of gun death in those areas.**
- There are currently **7 million registered "non-restricted guns"**. This category of guns includes rifles and shotguns, such as the powerful semi-automatic Ruger Mini 14 used in the Montreal Massacre, and sniper rifles, including .50 caliber sniper rifles.
- A recent poll has shown that **two thirds of Canadians support the gun registry**.¹ Even in rural areas, supporters equal opponents.² Although they are less vocal, the vast **majority of people living with gun owners, and the majority of rural women, support the registry.**
- According to the Auditor General, it cost \$1 billion over 10 years to set up the entire Firearms Program. According to the RCMP, **abolishing the long gun registry would save less than \$4 million per year.**³ These costs are dwarfed by those incurred as a result of firearm death and injury (estimated at \$6.6 billion per year in 1995).⁴
- Police have ready access to information on firearms owned, and **consult the database an average of 14,000 times a day.** They are also better equipped to combat the illegal gun trade, and their safety on the job is enhanced.

¹Two-thirds of Canadians back long-gun registry: poll," National Post, October 5, 2010.

²Leger and Leger, December 2009.

³Peter Hall consultant for the RCMP "Risks and Benefits of Proposed Firearms Legislation," 2009.

⁴Miller, T. and Cohen, M. "Costs of Gunshot and Cut/Stab Wounds in the United States, with some Canadian Comparisons." *Accid Anal Prev* 1997; 29 (3): 329-41

⁵<http://www.guncontrol.ca/English/Home/Supporters/Supporters.htm>

Expert Support for the Law

Canada's gun control law is **supported** by police, women's safety, public safety and crime prevention experts, public health groups, and victims.⁵

"In addition to using guns to control and inflict terror on women in their homes through threats on their lives, threats on their children's lives and physical torture, abusive spouses use guns for domestic homicides and homicide-suicides. [...] **The registry saves lives by alerting police when there are guns involved in domestic violence cases, allowing these weapons to be removed before the situation escalates.** [...] Alberta has among the highest cases of domestic violence homicides in the country. And in both rural and urban instances, throughout various cultural and economic subcultures, long guns are a key tool in many of these murders throughout the province."

-Alberta Council of Women Shelters

"While it is difficult to demonstrate whether the gun registry can prevent crime it is analogous to the Criminal Code which includes thousands of offences and yet does not inhibit everyone from violating it. This however is no sound reason for abolishing the Criminal Code of Canada. **The registry is a valuable tool that assists law enforcement with investigation, prevention, tracing, accountability and provided at the national level is cost effective and consistent across the country.**"

-Canadian Police Association

"As emergency physicians, we confirm the registry's benefit in saving lives. We treat patients on a regular basis who are suicidal and who are victims of domestic assault. We know that a long gun in the home puts both types of patients at a significantly higher risk of being killed. Since many of these patients come to the hospital accompanied by police, **we work with the police, who use the registry regularly to determine if the patient has a gun registered in the home. This knowledge, together with information as to whether the police then removed the firearm, helps us to assess the patient's safety plan and to ensure that these impulsive potential methods of injury or death are removed.**"

-Canadian Assoc. of Emergency Physicians

Founded in the wake of the Montreal massacre, the Coalition for Gun Control is the only national non-profit organization working to reduce gun injury, death and crime in Canada. We are endorsed by more than 300 crime and injury prevention, policing, health, child safety, victims' rights, grassroots and community organizations. These include: the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Dawson College Gun Control Committee, the YWCA of Canada, just to name a few. CGC was recipient of the Canadian Labour Congress 2011 Making a Difference in People's Lives Award.

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