

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

www.guncontrol.ca

PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHT TO SAFETY FIGHT THE WEAKENING OF OUR GUN CONTROL LAWS

"Hunting rifles and shotguns are the weapons used most often to threaten women and children. Threats made with firearms are not counted in the statistics, but the damage they do is very real. How many women in shelters have told us that the simple fact of there being a hunting rifle beside the door was a constant threat to their safety!"

— Quebec Federation of Women's Shelters

5 ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY!

The campaign to weaken gun control is built on misinformation. Please help us get the real facts out there.

1. **Write and call your local MP, MPP or MLA and your Premier's office asking them to do everything in their power to stop the further weakening of gun control and fight to protect the gun registry data.**
2. **Become involved in the online campaign**, follow us on Twitter: @CGCguncontrol.
3. **Write a letter to the editor to your newspaper** to ensure that the real facts on gun control get covered too. Contact us if you'd like us to let you know of opportunities to send letters or provide tips on how to respond.
4. **Encourage others to get involved and raise awareness of the risks associated with firearm misuse.**
5. **Donate to the Coalition and support the continued fight for sensible gun laws in Canada.** We accept Paypal donations at www.guncontrol.ca.

SPRING 2012 UPDATE

Last April, Parliament passed Bill C-19, ending the long gun registration requirements which allowed the enforcement of prohibition orders and the effective removal of all guns from dangerous people, reinforced licensing and safe storage rules by holding gun owners accountable for their firearms, and reduced the chances that guns be diverted to unlicensed owners. Bill C-19 also repealed tracing measures in place since 1977 by eliminating the requirement to record gun sales, and severely compromised the rules around licence checks when buying firearms.

While Public Safety Minister Vic Toews announced that he planned to destroy the records of 7.1 million guns the day the law passed, **he has been prevented from doing this by an injunction and constitutional challenge filed by the Government of Quebec, who maintains that the data is useful, that it has contributed to collecting it and that it is in the interests of public safety to maintain it.**

While licensing remains in place for now, there will no longer be any information about what rifles or shotguns a licensed gun owner acquires, nor any way to trace these guns when they are found or recovered in crime. Without any records of who owns these guns, there is also less incentive for gun owners to report thefts or store their guns responsibly. Over the years, the registry data has provided a useful tool to help bring criminals to justice and to support the prosecution of gun-related crime.

Women's safety experts and front line women's organizations were given only limited opportunities to provide input when the Bill was studied, and even then, **their recommendations were completely disregarded.** Status of Women Minister Rona Ambrose admitted that **no gender based analysis of the Bill had been done.**

The Schlifer Clinic that serves abused women **has filed a challenge against Bill C-19**, based on the violation of the life, liberty and security of women under section 7 and on the violation of women's equality rights under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

Meanwhile, some MPs and the gun lobby have already said that C-19 is just a first step and they will now push for further weakening of licensing rules.

Canada's gun laws were heralded worldwide as a model for addressing armed violence against women. UN Special Rapporteur have emphasized that countries which do not adequately regulate firearms are failing to meet their obligations under international law, particularly with respect to the safety of women and children.

WHAT BILL C-19 REALLY MEANS FOR WOMEN

Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in domestic violence because of their accessibility. Frontline shelter workers, particularly those working in rural areas, argue that registering firearms helps police **enforce prohibition orders and remove guns from dangerous people**, thereby enhancing the safety of women and children living with violence.

The **registry told police exactly how many guns were in a home**. Without it, it is now impossible to effectively remove all guns from dangerous individuals as there will be **no way of knowing whether they own one gun, ten, or many more**.

Without mandatory licence checks, it is now much easier for the over 15,000 Canadians who have had their **licence revoked or application refused** since 2005 **to purchase a gun**, including those charged with domestic violence. In 1998, the Coroner's Inquest into the shooting of Arlene May by her former partner identified the lack of mandatory licence validation as a major loophole in the former system. We must learn from the experiences of the past.

"The elimination of the registry may give rise to an increase in the fear experienced by abused rural women and it most certainly will undermine the ability of the police to identify and remove long guns when they are dealing with domestic violence situations. We fear that this could contribute to an increase in firearms homicides of a domestic nature, particularly in rural homes and small towns where long guns are commonplace"

– Researchers D. Doherty and J. Hornosty

"Service providers working to end violence against women unanimously oppose ending the long-gun registry. Our shelter workers, including those working in rural and northern communities, tell us that registering firearms helps police enforce prohibition orders and to remove guns when needed. Verifying the validity of licences is key to women's safety. The 1998 coroner's inquest into the killing of Arlene May, shot by her former partner with a rifle, identified not checking licences for validity at gun stores as a major flaw in the previous system."

— Paulette Senior, YWCA Canada

RURAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE MOST AT RISK

Every year in Canada, more than 100,000 women and children leave their homes to seek safety in a shelter. Gun violence is present in many of these cases, taking such forms as intimidation, control and homicide. **Studies have shown that rates of homicide in domestic violence situations increase significantly when there is a firearm in the home**. "Long guns" — rifles and shotguns — are the guns most likely to be used in domestic violence situations.

While the long-gun registry is often portrayed as a rural versus urban issue, rates of deaths with guns is higher in rural and northern areas, where access to guns is higher, and it is women and children living in these regions who are facing the greatest increased danger with the weakening of gun control in Canada. Women in rural areas are often afraid to voice support for the registry and express what may be an 'unpopular' opinion, but those who can repeatedly say they feel safer when guns are registered and safely stored.

JUST THE FACTS – WOMEN AND GUN VIOLENCE

- 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 firearms are lethal, and any gun in the wrong hands is dangerous. **We need controls on ALL guns.**
- When women are killed by their spouse using a gun, it is a **long gun in 72% of cases**. Since 1995 when controls on all firearms were first introduced, **spousal homicides with rifles and shotguns have decreased by 69%**. In fact, the rate of spousal homicides with rifles and shotguns has declined significantly with stronger gun control, while the rate of spousal homicides using other means has remained the same.
- **A firearm in the home dramatically increases the risk of death in domestic violence situations**. Coroners' inquests have consistently identified access to firearms as one of the top risk factors determining whether a woman will die in domestic violence situations.
- Screening and licensing gun owners **reduce the risks that dangerous people will have access to weapons**, and registration is essential to enforcing licensing.
- There were **7.1 million** registered **"non-restricted guns"**. Referring to all of them simply as "duck guns" or "family guns" minimizes the threat they can pose to public safety. This category of guns includes rifles and shotguns, such as the powerful semi-automatic Ruger Mini 14 used in the **Montreal Massacre to kill 14 young women**.

COALITION for Gun Control www.guncontrol.ca • @CGCguncontrol • coalitionforguncontrol@gmail.com • 416.604.0209

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, CAW, just to name a few. CGC was recipient of the Canadian Labour Congress 2011 Making a Difference in People's Lives Award.