

# Canada's long-gun registry protects public safety, don't pass private member's bill

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TORONTO—Canada's long-gun registry helps to save lives, protect communities, and prevent crime. It is an important public safety resource that our police use every day in the important work they do.

This fall a federal private member's bill to eliminate Canada's long-gun registry has been working its way through Parliament and will soon be considered by a House of Commons committee. As a government that is doing everything in its power to stop the agony caused by gun violence, Ontario urges all federal Members of Parliament to support public safety and stop the bill.

Before a police officer knocks on a door, they want and need to know whether the person behind that door owns a gun. The gun-registry provides police with that valuable and sometimes life-saving knowledge and is one of the reasons why police support keeping it.

Bill Blair, chief of the Toronto Police Service and president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, estimates police in Canada check the gun registry more than 10,000 times a day and that since the gun registry was created in 1998, police have used it over seven million times.

Recently, the registry helped Toronto police uncover a stash of 58 unregistered firearms, including a machine gun and submachine gun. This is just one example of many that underlines the value of the gun registry.

The gun registry has provided over 7,000 sworn statements to support the prosecution of firearms-related crime. These documents help support the arrest of criminals, often before they commit violence. They can also support the seizure of illegal guns, disrupt gang activity, and help prevent theft, violence and home invasions. If this information disappears, judges and justices of the peace will have less information before them, which will mean less support for arrest and search warrants that police need to keep our communities safe.

Support for the gun registry is not limited to the McGuinty government and police. In the past 12 years, eight Ontario coroner's inquests have made recommendations to the federal government calling for gun licensing and registration.

It is important that we track guns in order to know where they are. But the federal government's repeated extensions to the amnesty on long-gun registration means that every year the database becomes less comprehensive and reliable. The amnesty needs to end to ensure police have access to the strongest, most reliable database possible.

The gun registry allows us to trace the origins of guns. It allows us to ensure that all gun owners in Canada are acting responsibly by storing their guns safely and using them appropriately. When guns do get into the hands of criminals, the registry helps us deal with them by identifying the guns as illegal. The result is increased public safety.

As Canadians, we must ensure that we have the best laws in place to allow us to prosecute those who do us harm. In addition, we must ensure that the necessary supports are in place to support those who are victimized by violent crime. The gun registry helps to prevent crime and prevent victimization.

The gun registry does not deny long gun ownership. It only asks that you register. We register our pets, why not our guns. As we mark the 20th anniversary of the terrible tragedy at Ecole Polytechnique and the loss of 14 female students, it is disheartening that the federal government is moving to eliminate the gun registry at the same time.

Now is the time for all who believe in a safe society, all who believe in preventing gun violence, to speak with one loud, clear, resolute voice. Stand up for safe communities. Keep the registry.