

Gun registry advocates appeal to NDP

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[CBC News](#)

Victims of three school shootings in Montreal say they will blame federal NDP Leader Jack Layton if legislation calling for the abolition of the gun registry is adopted.

A dozen people who were wounded, or lost family members in the École Polytechnique massacre, as well as fatal shootings at Concordia University and Dawson College, said Bill C-391 must be blocked.

Gathered together in public for the first time on Friday, the victims expressed frustration with Layton's refusal to enforce the party line for the upcoming vote on the bill, which could be held as early as next week.

With some rural MPs under pressure to support the bill, Layton has said he would allow for a free vote.

Supporters of the registry, however, say some NDP votes could be enough for the bill to pass.

The Liberals and Bloc Québécois are committed to protecting the registry, but the Conservatives and two independent MPs are expected to vote in favour of its abolition.

Six months after the fatal shooting at Dawson College in September 2006, Hayder Khadim said Layton gave him a personal promise that he would do everything in his power to protect the registry.

Khadim, 21, was left with a bullet lodged in his neck, when he was shot by Kimveer Gill.

In all, the shooting injured 19 people and left one woman, 18-year old Anastasia Desousa, dead.

Playing political game

"It makes me feel like he is playing a political game," said Khadim. "I mean, in front of us he is a completely strong advocate of gun control — someone who you feel would be one of the strongest to impose a party line or anything like that, to make sure the gun registry would be saved.

Khadim was joined by Mark Hogben, the son of a chemistry professor killed at Concordia University when a deranged professor, Valery Fabrikant, went on a shooting rampage in 1992.

Michael Hogben was one of four of Fabrikant's colleagues who was killed that day.

His son said he finds it painful to talk about his father's death, but felt he had no choice.

"I'm worried about the politics going on right now, and I am hoping Mr. Layton will be the voice for us," Hogben said.

If passed, Bill C-391 would scrap the decade-old registry and destroy existing data within the system on about seven million shotguns and rifles.

The legislation was proposed by Manitoba Tory backbencher Candice Hoepfner.

The Conservatives have long opposed the gun registry, brought in by the former Liberal government in response to the killing of 14 women at Montreal's L'École Polytechnique in 1989.

However, there is unwavering support for the gun registry from such groups as the Coalition for Gun Control, the Canadian Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Police Association.