

## **Victims of Gun Violence Appalled at Mayoralty Candidate Rob Ford's Remarks**

**October 22, 2010 For immediate release:** Victims of gun violence and public safety experts expressed their shock at comments by mayoralty candidate Rob Ford on gun control. Elaine Lumley, whose son Aidan was shot and killed, expressed disbelief: "We have been fighting for years to defend the registry in the face of virulent opposition from the gun lobby in rural Canada. I am from Northern Ontario and know that even in smaller communities there is support for keeping the registration of rifles and shotguns, particularly among women. I was in the House of Commons exactly one month ago, when we defeated the Conservative Bill to dismantle the registration of rifles and shotguns by two votes. It is simply unfathomable that a candidate for mayor of Canada's largest city will not advocate for Toronto's citizens but would kowtow to Prime Minister Stephen Harper on gun control."

In a mayoral candidate debate held on Wednesday, **Ford indicated that he would take his lead on gun control from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the federal Conservatives.** *"It's a federal issue John you know what and that's up to the Prime Minister.... Absolutely, I am going to sit down with the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister, and take their lead it is a federal issue John. (...)"* Newstalk 1010 Debate, October 10, 2010 available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acqcagyp9II>

In recent months, police, health and safety experts, women's organizations, unions and victims of gun violence have fought hard to keep the registry. But Prime Minister Stephen Harper has reiterated *"The party I lead will not rest until the day [the registry] is abolished."* Depending on the election results, he may have the help of the mayor of Canada's largest city in dismantling gun control.

Ford's stance on gun control would be an incredible reversal of the City's long support for gun control. Wendy Cukier, President of the Coalition for Gun Control said: "I have been working on gun control for more than 20 years now. During that time, every single Mayor of the city of Toronto and every Toronto City Council has stood behind gun control. The City of Toronto was an intervenor in defence of the firearms registry all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Toronto Police Services Board, the Toronto Chief of Police, the Toronto Medical Officer of Health, as well as Toronto based community groups, and victims of gun violence have fought hard to defend the firearms law. This is staggering."

She added: "Mr. Ford's comments also suggest he is just parroting Mr. Harper and does not know the facts. Our Chief of Police has been very clear this is a vital tool to police across the country. Rifles and shotguns account for a substantial proportion of the guns recovered in crime – even in Toronto. The Toronto Police query the registry thousands of times each day and use it to support criminal investigations and to help prosecute criminals. Ford is also totally confused about the costs. Seven million guns are registered. The money has been spent. The costs of keeping it are estimated by the RCMP at \$4 million dollars a year. That pales compared to the costs of gun violence."

### **Facts on the firearms registry:**

- Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in domestic violence, suicides, accidents and in the murder of police officers and account for a portion of the crime firearms seized. Testifying before a Parliamentary Committee, along with Toronto Police Service Police Chief William Blair last May, TPS Det. Nadine Teeft stated that over the past year and a half in Toronto, hundreds of people have been victims of retail armed robberies in which rifles and shotguns have been used.
- Gun control works: firearm death and injury have declined with stronger laws. Licensing gun owners and registering firearms reduces the chances these guns will fall into the hands of dangerous people.
- Recent polls have shown that two thirds of Canadians support the registry. Even in rural areas, supporters equal opponents. While there are more gun owners in rural areas and more opposition to gun control there are also higher rates of firearm death and injury.

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