

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

www.guncontrol.ca

For immediate distribution

Police Officers, Suicide Prevention Experts and Victims Maintain Myths, Misinformation and Money are Fuelling Efforts to Dismantle Firearms Registry

Press Release: Montreal, December 8, 2009- Police, victims and suicide prevention experts are tackling the myths and misinformation about the firearms registry head on. While most of the country was focused on the H1N1 crisis, the House of Commons passed private member's Bill C-391 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (repeal of long-gun registry)* through second reading on November 4, 2009. This bill will eliminate the need to register rifles and shotguns, depriving front line police, suicide prevention and domestic violence prevention workers of an essential tool.

"Opponents of gun control claim rifles and shotguns are not a problem in Canada. They are wrong. Rifles and shotguns make up a substantial proportion of the guns recovered in crime in this country. They are the guns most often used to kill police officers, in domestic violence situations and in suicides, particularly those involving youths. As police officers, we see the damages that rifles and shotguns can do. Any gun in the wrong hands is a threat to public safety and this law will make it easier for dangerous people to get access to guns" said **Denis Côté, President of the Fédération des policiers et policières municipaux du Québec.**

About the use of the registry, **Yves Francoeur, President of the Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal** said: "Police across the country use the gun registry 11,000 times a day. We have used the registry to remove guns from dangerous people and to solve crimes. We need to know what guns an individual owns so they can be held accountable. Will the gun registry prevent all criminal acts? Obviously not. But it is not a valuable reason to make it easier for dangerous individuals to possession firearms. Unfortunately this is what this law proposes. The claim that hunting guns are not a problem infuriates me. As a police officer I was at Polytechnique on December 6th 1989. If this law passes, the Ruger Mini 14 used that day will number amongst the rifles and shotguns that are no longer registered. How many tragedies were avoided by the registry? We will never know, but it does not mean that it should be used as an argument to scrap this tool."

"Rifles and shotguns are the guns most available in people's homes, therefore stronger controls on these guns has contributed to a reduction in suicide. It is wrong to think that guns are just an urban problem. In fact, suicide rates are higher in regions where there are higher rates of gun ownership," said **Bruno Marchand, Director of the Association québécoise pour la prévention du suicide.** He added: "Since 1995, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of suicides with firearms in Quebec. The gun registry as well as efforts to raise awareness and improve the storage of firearms has paid off. Suicide rates have been substantially reduced in Quebec. Registration is key to allow the removal of firearms when there is a risk of suicide."

Wendy Cukier, President of the Coalition for Gun Control and a Professor at Ryerson University in Toronto added: "There is a well-funded, US inspired campaign to misrepresent the facts. Millions have been spent on targeted campaigns and strategies. Reports were withheld until after the registry vote. The opponents continue to invoke the costs of the registry, but the RCMP have stated clearly that dismantling the registration of rifles and shotguns will at most save \$3 million a year, less than the cost of a complex murder investigation. Canadians must understand that 7 million guns have been registered. The money has been spent. The only guns that need to be registered going forward are new guns or those being

traded. The \$3 million dollars it costs to maintain the registration of rifles and shotguns is trivial when compared to the costs of gun injury and death.”

Sylvie Haviernick, whose sister Maud was killed on December 6, 1989 concluded: “Twenty years after the Montreal massacre, I am astonished that we are still having this debate. The gun lobby is well resourced and highly motivated, but it represents a small percentage of the population. However, despite the outpouring of support that victims witnessed at the time of the tragedy, Canadians will need to demonstrate their support for measures that reduce gun violence once again. Furthermore, twenty years ago, gun control was merely an idea to fight gun violence. Today, the facts are clear; it’s a tool that benefits everyone. We need gun control and nothing else.”

Organizations including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the YWCA Canada, the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Canadian Association for Adolescent Health, le Barreau du Québec, la Fédération des femmes du Québec, the G-13 consortium of 13 national women’s groups in Quebec and l’Association pour la santé publique du Québec also oppose plans to dismantle the gun registry.

Since 1989, the Coalition for Gun Control has worked to reduce firearm death, injury and crime in Canada. Its 300 supporting organizations include the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, the Fédération des policiers et policières municipaux du Québec, the Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal, women’s groups, victims groups, and others.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

The Coalition for Gun Control
cgc.montreal@gmail.com / 514-725-2021
www.guncontrol.ca