

Victim's Mother Pleads to Elected Officials Do Not Vote in Favour of Bill C-391 on November 4

For Immediate Distribution: On November 4, the House of Commons is expected to vote on Private member's Bill C-391, a bill that proposes to repeal registration for unrestricted firearms and erase the data contained in the gun registry.

“In 1991 in the wake of the Montreal Massacre my daughter, Nina de Villiers, was shot and killed in Burlington Ontario together with Karen Marquis of New Brunswick, by a sexual predator with his own rifle, which he had recently used to terrorise and threaten his victim in a violent sexual assault. He then turned that same gun on himself. The Inquest into his death called for a gun registry. I had standing in that Inquest for many months and was convinced that we have to do everything possible to save lives and quality of life.

Six other Inquests in Ontario, each examining different circumstances also recommended the need for a gun registry: suicide, mental health, domestic violence, accident and the threat to children, The one clear message that continues to emerge from terrible tragedies whether criminal, accidental or self-inflicted is that of the Coroner: what we learn from one may save the lives of many.

Gun violence is prevalent in Canadian communities today. Not a week goes by when there are not shootings or legally owned caches of guns seized by police that are illegally stored or that have been stolen. Many rifles and shotguns have been used in drive-by shootings, home invasions, threatening and intimidation and murder. Guns in the home continue to be the leading cause of suicide in young men, a lethal weapon in family violence, a cause of intimidation and terror in children, accidental injury and death. Much of which is never publicly reported.

It is incomprehensible that after all these years we should still be held hostage by a relatively small group of citizens, gun owners, who demand the right to possess, exchange or use weapons without the same restrictions that we, in a civil society, demand from owners of vehicles and animals so that safe-storage requirements can be enforced and police can identify the rightful owners of stolen weapons or determine the presence of guns when attending an emergency call.

Whenever another tragedy happens politicians of all stripes attend the ceremonies, sometimes shed a tear, and vow vengeance on the perpetrator. While this is all welcome as are the very necessary changes to the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, these same people are prepared to destroy a gun registry that is now successfully being operated by the RCMP through passing Bill C-391. A gun registry that is supported by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, women's groups and victim groups, to name a few. None of these bodies stand to gain personally by their support. Instead they are dedicated to the well-being of our society and because of grim experience in the violent realities of their professions they recognise the need for a reduction in access to legally owned weapons.

As a long-time victim advocate and as Nina's mother I beg Members of Parliament to withstand the self-serving ideology of a few and, whatever party they represent, to withstand political coercion. I would give anything on this earth to have my daughter back and there is not a day that I don't mourn the many victims of gun violence whom I have only come to know after their deaths and whom I have not been able to save, despite 18 years of trying.”

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