

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

www.guncontrol.ca

March 8, 2011 - International Women's Day

Gun Control Helps Keep Women Safe

Firearms increase the risks that assaults will escalate into murder, are frequently part of the cycle of intimidation and violence that many victims face in their homes, and are used against women when they are present during domestic conflicts. Often children are also victims, as the presence of firearms not only increases the lethality of domestic violence situations, but the number of victims. Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in domestic violence and when women are murdered.

"The firearms registry saved my life. The fact that the registry was used to remove my husband's guns is why I am here today." – Heather Imming, domestic violence survivor

In 1995, Canada passed the Firearms Act that requires all gun owners to obtain a renewable license and register all firearms once. Canada's gun laws are recognized internationally as an effective tool to reduce gun violence targeting women.

Canada's gun control laws have contributed to a significant reduction in death and injury. In 2007, 400 fewer Canadians died of gunshots compared to 1995. Spousal homicides with firearms have plummeted.

Women's groups and front-line shelter workers across the country continue to support the Firearms Act because they see firsthand that it works. On a national scale, Canada's gun control legislation is supported by more than 300 organizations, including more than 100 women's groups, such as: the YWCA of Canada, Coalition of Provincial & Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, etc.

"It is not only city-born, city living folks who are asking for this registry to continue, it is Northern women who fear for their lives and their mental health who are asking for protection. We see women who have experienced years of brutal intimidation. Women have told us that the guns used here in the North predominantly for hunting – that is, long guns – are also used to intimidate, subdue and control them." – Lyda Fuller, Executive Director of YWCA Yellowknife

In spite of evidence that our gun control law helps keep women safe the Conservative government has vowed to end the requirement to register 6.8 million non-restricted firearms (rifles, shotguns and some sniper rifles), introducing five separate Bills also aimed at destroying the existing records. Last September, the House of Commons voted narrowly to shelve their latest attempt. The Prime Minister has vowed that sooner or later he will be successful in his bid to end the registry and said in January 2011 *"We are in this minority government. We haven't been able to pass what we want to pass. But that doesn't mean we have forgotten ... we will get rid of that wasteful, ineffective long-gun registry."* The Prime Minister is using the registry to create a wedge among Canadians, **but women's security and safety aren't a political game!**

Police consult the gun registry when responding to domestic violence calls and to take prevention actions. There is no doubt that ending the long-gun registry would put more women and children at risk.

SEE BACK FOR DETAILS AS TO HOW YOU CAN HELP BY TAKING ACTION NOW!

Founded in the wake of the Montreal massacre, the Coalition for Gun Control is the only national non-profit organization working to reduce gun injury, death and crime in Canada. We are endorsed by more than 300 crime and injury prevention, policing, health, child safety, victims' rights, grassroots and community organizations. These include: the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Dawson College Gun Control Committee, the YWCA of Canada, just to name a few.

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Just the Facts: Reducing Domestic Homicides

ON GUN CONTROL AND WOMEN'S SAFETY

"The gun registry is essential if we are to prevent the deaths of women at the hands of their abusers. If the long-gun registry is abandoned, rates of domestic homicide will rise back to the levels of the 1990s. A long-gun registry prevents delays in police investigations before, after and during crime."
– Paulette Senior, CEO, YWCA of Canada

"Dismantling the gun registry reflects profound disregard for women's rights to life, liberty security of the person and equality, and amounts to a clear violation of women's *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* rights."
– Canadian Federation of University Women

"Based on results and findings, it is clear that gun control saves lives. (...) Unfortunately, one woman in three killed by her husband is still murdered using a firearm. The progress thus far is encouraging, but this is no time to relax those controls; there is still a great deal to be done."
– Louise Riendeau, Coordinator, Quebec Women's Shelter Association

Just the facts:

- Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in domestic violence. **All guns are potentially dangerous and need to be controlled.**
- Gun control works: **firearm death and injury have declined with stronger laws.**
- **The rate of female homicide is at its lowest point** and decreased by 55% since 1989.
- Although there is more opposition to gun control in rural areas and in the Western provinces, there are also higher rates of gun death in these areas. While many gun owners oppose gun control, the vast majority of people living with gun owners support the legislation, especially women living in rural areas.
- The registry is part of comprehensive gun control and is **used 14,000 times daily** to take preventative action and support criminal investigations.
- The registry has been used to **remove guns from dangerous people** including a potential copy cat shortly after the Dawson College shooting and in cases of domestic violence.
- The gun registry is supported by police, women's safety, public safety and crime prevention experts, victims, health groups and individual citizens.
- A recent poll has shown that **two thirds of Canadians support the gun registry.** Even in rural areas, supporters equal opponents. Although they are less vocal, the majority of rural women support the registry.
- According to the RCMP, abolishing the long gun registry would save between \$1.5 and \$4 million per year. These costs are dwarfed by those incurred by firearm death and injury (estimated at \$6.6 billion per year in 1995).
- The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Small Arms have emphasized that states which do not adequately regulate firearms are failing to meet their obligations under international law, **particularly with respect to the safety of women and children.**

Three Steps to Help Defend Canada's Gun Control Law

1. Become a supporter of the Coalition for Gun Control. Visit our website to donate by credit card through Paypal and get more information to share with everyone you know: www.guncontrol.ca. Note that due to our strong and successful advocacy work government rules do not allow us to issue tax receipts.
2. Join our Twitter group: CGCguncontrol
3. Contact your Member of Parliament and tell her or him you support Canada's gun control laws. Call 1-800-O-Canada or go to www.parl.gc.ca to find your MP's contact info.