

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

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For Immediate Release

Despite Risks to Public Safety, Harper Wants Majority so that Conservatives Can Dismantle Gun Registry

Toronto, ON, September 10, 2009: In a closed meeting, held last week in Sault Ste. Marie, Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a group of Conservative supporters that he needs a majority mandate so the Conservatives can proceed with their plan to dismantle gun control. Police, women's groups and public safety experts across the country support the control of all firearms in order to reduce the risk of dangerous people having access to guns. They have explicitly opposed Harper's plans to dismantle the registration of rifles and shotguns because without information about who owns guns and the guns they own, there is no effective way to prevent dangerous people from getting firearms.

Statistics show that, in Canada, rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used in teen suicide, domestic homicide and murders of police. Legal guns are often misused by their owners or diverted to illegal markets. Although handguns figure prominently in urban crime, rifles and shotguns account for more than one third of guns recovered in large cities and outnumber handguns 2 to 1 in smaller communities like York Region in Ontario and Surrey, BC. With stronger controls on rifles and shotguns homicides, suicides and robberies have declined substantially. Although significant money was spent setting up the system to license gun owners and register firearms, RCMP estimate that dismantling the registry would save only \$3 million a year.

Coalition for Gun Control President Wendy Cukier said, "the Conservatives are bent on dismantling the registry -- they have three different bills that are before Parliament, they have renewed the amnesty for failing to register and the Prime Minister has been working closely with gun lobby groups to mobilize supporters. While a vocal minority opposes the law, the fact remains, that the registry has been working to make Canada safer. Police use it thousands of times each day and gun deaths in Canada have declined dramatically. Harper is trying to appeal to his base in rural Canada, while presenting a kinder, gentler face to urban votes, women and Quebec. But the message is clear, with a Conservative majority we will lose the gains we have made since the Montreal massacre twenty years ago."

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Harper says "We are still you know we believe that you go after the people who use guns to commit crimes. We are still trying to get rid of that registry. We have the NDP, the Liberals and the Bloc stopping us from even having a vote on that issue in the House of Commons. We need to get a mandate so we can get that thing passed. (...)"

<http://www.cbc.ca/mrf3/8752/news/features/harper-sault-090909.wmv>