

For immediate release

Coalition for Gun Control Applauds Defeat of Bill C-391 and the Saving of the Gun Registry

Ottawa ON, September 22, 2010: Today, opposition Members of Parliament killed Private Member's Bill C-391, which would have ended the registration of 7 million rifles and shotguns. All the major safety groups in the country support saving the firearms registry. The Coalition for Gun Control (CGC) applauds the defeat of Bill C-391. The CGC includes more than 300 organizations including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Public Health Association, Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, Canadian Paediatric Society, YWCA of Canada, Canadian Federation of University Women, Canadian Auto Workers, and Canadian Labour Congress.

Reaction quotes:

Dr. Barbara Kane, Rural B.C. Psychiatrist As a rural psychiatrist working in Prince George, I have used the registry on numerous occasions in situations where people were suicidal or mentally ill or unstable. I would not want to minimize the impact of any type of suicide but finding someone you love with half their face shot off is devastating. Ironically, rural areas where there is the most vocal opposition to gun control are also the areas with the highest rates of suicides, homicides and accidentals injuries with firearms. Polls have shown that women in rural areas and particularly women living with gun owners are in the majority in supporting gun control and the registry. Rates of suicide and domestic violence in rural Canada are much higher than in urban centres. With stronger controls on firearms we have seen these rates decline. In my professional practice, I have personally seen many cases where the registry has been used to remove guns from individuals who might present a risk to themselves or others. While it is hard to definitely "prove" in a specific case that a life was saved we do know for certain that the registry has contributed to a decline in suicide, particularly in rural areas. The registry makes people accountable for their guns and helps people like me and the police prevent gun death. It is a vital tool we need to preserve. Dr. Kane submitted a brief to the Committee studying Bill C-391 as did the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Canadian Paediatric Society as well as public health organizations and others.

Denis Côté, President of the Fédération des policiers et policières municipaux du Québec (FPMQ) We are pleased with today's vote. The majority of Members of Parliament have understood the importance of maintaining the gun registry as it is a useful tool to Canadian front-line officers. We hope that this issue is now closed and there are no more questions that the long gun registry is here to stay. It is a police officer's and public safety issue.

Yves Francoeur, President of the Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal Over the last 12 years, 14 of 16 police officers killed with guns, were killed with rifles and shotguns generally in smaller communities. Even in large cities we often see rifles and shotguns are often recovered in crime. Licensing screens gun owners for risk factors; one time registration holds them accountable for their guns. Taken together they reduce the risks dangerous people will have access to firearms. The Canadian Police Association and along with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Canadian Association of Police Boards have stood united in defending the registry.

Les Holloway, CAW Atlantic area director, speaking on behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress Canada's unions stand behind the registry as an important tool to keep workplaces safe. A number of high profile shootings have occurred in the workplace. For example, the inquest into the OC Transpo shooting, here in Ottawa, recommended the licensing of gun owners and registration of firearms. We stand with the front line police officers across this country who say it is an important tool. It is a health and safety issue. The Canadian Labour Congress testified before the Parliamentary Committee on Bill C-391.

Karen Vanscoy, a psychiatric nurse whose 14 year old daughter Jasmine was shot and killed by an acquaintance using a stolen gun on September 24, 1996. It's clear that the opponents of the law will never be satisfied until gun control is dismantled. We need political leaders who are prepared to tackle the myths head on and state the simple facts: the registry works. It is a good investment. It reduces the chances dangerous people will get guns by holding gun owners accountable. Jasmine was killed with a handgun but all guns are potentially dangerous and all guns should be registered. From a professional perspective, I am a psychiatric nurse and I deal on a regular basis with people who are suicidal. I understand the importance of having controls in place to reduce suicide. Nurses are on the front line of dealing with gun violence in all its forms and the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, the National Emergency Nurses Association and the Canadian Nurses Association have all stated their unequivocal support for the registry.

Priscilla de Villiers, whose daughter Nina was abducted from a Burlington Ontario tennis court and killed with a legally owned unrestricted rifle in 1991. The killer was out on bail on violence offenses with that gun. The inquest into the suicide of my daughter's murderer recommended licensing all gun owners and the registration of all guns. For almost twenty years I have been fighting for this law. During this whole debate, there has been virtual silence on the victims' perspective. People talk about gun owner rights. What about our rights and the rights of our children to be safe. Every group concerned about crime prevention and public safety supports the registry. De Villier's brief on Bill C-391 was supported by individual victims of gun violence as well as the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, the Canadian Crime Victim Foundation, W.A.V.E (Walk Against Violence Everywhere), the Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes and the United Mothers Opposing Violence Everywhere. On Monday the Conservative-appointed ombudsperson for victims spoke in defense of the registry.

Julie White, CAW Director of Women's Programs Rifles and shotguns figure prominently in gender based violence in our communities. We have heard from women and from men across the country of the terrible tragedies of guns in the wrong hands, of the cycle of threats and abuse that many women and their children experience, at the end of a gun barrel. For every woman killed, there are hundreds who are terrorized in their own homes. There is clear evidence that the long gun registry is saving women's lives. The CAW recognizes that our members' lives don't begin and end in the workplace, which is why we stand with our community partners in the struggle to save the national long gun registry. Women need more than just promises from our government. We need action!

Wendy Cukier, President of the Coalition for Gun Control Some politicians have tried to divide the issue as rural vs urban. In fact, gun violence, whether criminal, suicide, accident or intimidation knows no boundaries. Much of the opposition to the registry is ideological and grounded in misinformation. In watching the testimony of the Parliamentary Committee on Bill C-391, three things were striking. First, the fact that virtually all major safety groups in the country support the registry. Second, the case the Conservatives brought forward was feeble and with little foundation. On the one hand, you have the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association the Canadian Association of Police Boards, and the RCMP, all defending the registry. In contrast, the Conservatives called a handful of individual police officers as witnesses including four retired police officers from Winnipeg and a Saskatoon officer who had appeared in an NRA infomercial. You had major health organizations saying the registry works including a study from the Quebec Institute for Public Health. On the other side? A retired marketing professor who admitted his early research on arming for self-protection was funded by the NRA and who could not remember how many guns he had. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation railing against the costs of the registry and citing the Auditor General of Canada. The very next day the actual Auditor General of Canada said that the costs were contained and her office had no further concerns about the program. And the piece de resistance was a gun lobby group bragging about its ties to the National Rifle Association and the support and encouragement it receives. At the end of the day, much of the opposition to the gun registry is ideological which is why the Prime Minister has vowed to continue his fight. Many of the claims made about the registry by its opponents are demonstrably untrue. This is a question of who do you believe? The police, public safety and health care groups? Or, the gun lobby and its allies? At the end of the day it is also about what we value as Canadians. The costs of keeping the gun registration of rifles and shotguns are modest - \$4 million a year - while the costs of gun

violence is immense. We can debate statistics all you want but at the end of the day we know for sure, the firearms registry never killed anyone. While getting rid of it might.

Background: Bill C-391 passed second reading in February when eight Liberals and 12 NDP members voted with the Conservatives. Subsequently, Liberal and Bloc Quebecois leaders promised that their MPs would vote to defeat this Bill. A report from the RCMP showing that the registry is working and that the registration of rifles and shotguns costs less than \$4 million per year was withheld until after the vote. While NDP leader Jack Layton allowed his MPs to vote for or against the Bill, most of them voted to keep the registry in spite of a massive campaign.

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