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Leading public safety groups appalled that Opposition parties will help pass Tory Bill dismantling the registration of rifles and shotguns

November 4, 2009- For immediate distribution: Groups from across the country are horrified that just a few months after Opposition parties voted to pass a Bloc Quebecois motion supporting the registry and opposing Conservative efforts to erode gun control, they will vote today to end the registration of rifles and shotguns. A sophisticated, expensive, US style lobbying campaign by the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister, his former employer the Canadian Taxpayers federation along with the gun lobby, targeting specific opposition MPs seems to have worked, and Bill C-391 is expected to pass second reading in a vote today. While Mr. Ignatieff and Mr. Layton as well as the MPs planning to vote with the Tories have tried to explain this in many ways - calling it a vote to study the bill or suggesting the senate can defeat it, the fact is that the second reading vote will approve the bill in principle. Stunned at the about face, safety groups have been pleading with Opposition leaders and MPs to stop the Bill but, apparently without effect.

Among the groups that have stated their opposition to this bill and its deleterious effects on public safety are:

President of the Canadian Association of the Chiefs of Police and Toronto Chief of Police William Blair said: "Bill C-391, is intended to gut the gun registry, and to make it impossible for law enforcement officials to have access to the information. The same type of information, that enabled us to seize 58 illegally owned firearms in October 2009 -- and frankly, make our cities safer. [The registry] helps keep communities safe, along with the police officers who work in them."

<http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/modules.php?>

[op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=4375&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=4375&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0)

The Canadian Association of Police Boards said: "As civilian oversight bodies of municipal policing, CAPB cannot support any attempt to weaken police ability to deal with gun violence, as this bill will surely do, if passed. At a time when gun crime is a serious concern in communities across the country, such an act will be irresponsible and a disservice to the cause of building safe communities." Jennifer Lanzon, Executive Director. <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/November2009/01/c4686.html>

"We frequently witness the relevance of the gun registry to police's work. Shortly after the Dawson College shooting in September 2006, the police heard of threats made by another individual. The gun registry gave them the information needed to find out that this individual possessed several firearms and these weapons were confiscated before a tragedy could occur. Strict control on all firearms is an integral part of any effective integrated strategy to combat violent crime. The SPVM may only condemn the changes to gun control proposed in Bill C-391 as it would weaken controls and reduce our effectiveness in fighting violent crime. The gun registry is an investment that allows us to hope that a tragedy like the Ecole Polytechnique massacre will never happen again," said **Yvan Delorme, Chief of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)** http://www.spvm.qc.ca/en/profil/4_3_messagedirect.asp

Suzanne Laplante-Edward said: "The Firearms Act is a monument erected in memory of the victims of the Montreal massacre, including my daughter Anne- Marie Edward. I am disheartened that the Conservative Party of Canada, which claims to be the party of law and order, is ignoring police, ignoring victims and ignoring the vast majority of Canadians to appease the gun lobby. I am disheartened that the leaders of the Liberal and the NDP parties seem unprepared to stop them. I am disheartened that they are pretending that

C-391 is a Private Member's Bill they cannot stop. It is really a government Bill - the Prime Minister, the Conservative Party and its allies have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to push this Bill through."

Priscilla de Villiers, mother of Nina de Villiers, said: "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."

Elaine Lumley, mother of Aidan, wrote: "Just weeks shy of the 20th anniversary of the Montreal massacre, it seems that the Opposition leaders will help Stephen Harper pass this law. A law which the parents of the Polytechnique victims called a monument to the memory of their daughters killed that day. In spite of the problems with implementation, the firearms registry is used by police 10,000 times a day, has helped remove guns from dangerous people and solve crimes. My only son Aidan may have been killed with a handgun, but the victims of gun violence know that a rifle or a shotgun in the wrong hands kills just as dead as a handgun. If Bill C-391 passes [today] and becomes law, we will have more information about who owns cats and dogs in Canada than who owns guns and public safety will be compromised. A few weeks ago, in a closed meeting, the Prime Minister claimed he needed a majority so he could follow through on his promises to dismantle the registry. But he does not need a majority. He just needs the help of Mr. Layton and Mr. Ignatieff. And it looks like he will get it."

Alexa Conradi, president of the Fédération des Femmes du Québec said: "Even if the gun registry is not a panacea, it is still an effective tool in the fight to end violence against women. Bill C-391 is proposing to end registration of rifles and shotguns, the type of guns that figure the most prominently in domestic violence. There is clear evidence that our gun control is working to help keep women in abusive relationships safer. Knowing who owns firearms and how many firearms are owned help police in taking preventive action and remove all firearms when there is a risk."

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/October2009/30/c4411.html>

The **AFEAS**, a provincial organizations representing 12,000 women, opposes all changes to weaken the Gun Registry. **Helene Cornellier, Communications Coordinator**, concluded: "All guns are potentially dangerous and must be registered. The fact that farmers and hunters are opposed does not change anything to the dangerousness of firearms. We will continue to fight to en Bill C-391"

Coalition president Wendy Cukier and others including Priscilla de Villiers, mother of Nina, Elaine Lumley, mother of Aidan, and Karen Vanscoy, mother of Jasmine, representatives of the Canadian Association of University Women and the National Association of Women and the Law are travelling to Ottawa for the vote today.

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Chief Bill Blair, President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police: (416) 808-7100
Jennifer Lanzon, Executive Director of CAPB (819) 682-1440
Service de police de la Ville de Montréal: 514-280-2015
Stéfany Ranger, LCOM Communication for Fédération des femmes du Québec, (514) 393-3178,
1-877-393-3178,
Hélène Cornellier, AFEAS Communication and Action Coordinator : (514) 251-1636
Wendy Cukier, Coalition for Gun Control, (416) 604-0209