

Brief to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security  
Mrs. Suzanne Laplante Edward  
Mother of Anne-Marie Edward (1968-1989)

**[TRANSLATION]**

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Suzanne Laplante Edward. You may have heard my name before, you may have seen and read me in the medias. I am the mother of Anne-Marie Edward, savagely assassinated in the Polytechnique massacre. I have been repeatedly traveling to Ottawa for 20 years now to defend the common sense of stronger controls on firearms.

On December 6th 1989, my life and that of my entire family plummeted into despair. We have remained maimed by the loss, not only of our daughter Anne-Marie, but as well, of all the grandchildren she would have given us. We have never fully recovered from our loss. Everyday, it requires tremendous moral strength to get on with our lives.

That historical day of December 6th 1989, a man, armed with the hunting gun Ruger Mini-14, precisely one of the guns the present government does not want registered, this man entered with impunity into an institution we have a right to consider sacred, a university, and cowardly assassinated 14 young women with a brilliant career as engineers before them.

I can hear you say: 'But this man was crazy! And we cannot pass laws against insanity!' Careful! This man had a troubled childhood, to be sure, but he was perfectly lucid and rational. He was also anti-social, insanely jealous of women's successes, as well as suicidal.

Tell me: how many people roam the streets everyday with like problems? Your so-called 'law-abiding citizens'. Scary thought.

Firearms can kill not only bodies but equally souls. Our family was forever amputated. A few of Anne-Marie's friends did not fare so well... twenty years later, they are still trying to put their lives together, still trying to recover from the shock. The Polytechnique tragedy did not, as is widely thought, make 14 victims. Thousands of people, men and women alike, have remained psychologically traumatized by the event. That is equally the case for the Dawson and Concordia tragedies.

The government is bending over backwards to comply to the wishes of the gun lobby. This government is in the process of abolishing the cornerstone of gun control in Canada: the registration of long, hunting guns. Put bluntly: the semi-automatic Ruger Mini-14 hunting gun used to kill my daughter and her 13 companions in less than 25 minutes will become unregistered. Untraceable. Unknown to the police forces.

Each year, on December 6th, the whole Canadian population, and for sure, politicians of every conviction, wear the White Ribbon, the symbol created expressly to commemorate the 14 Polytechnique victims and all women victims of violence.

Mr. Harper, dear elected Members of Parliament: IT TAKES MORE THAN WHITE RIBBONS !

The very day of December 6th has been declared through a Canadian law: 'National Day of Commemoration and Action on Violence Against Women'.

If it is important to remember, it is more vital to act, to prevent further tragedies. And what does the present government want to do in terms of prevention? THEY WANT TO PUT MURDERERS IN PRISON FOR A LONGER TIME!

Let us look at this option for a moment! The murderer has committed his crime. The wife and three children are dead. Buried. IT IS TOO LATE, MR. HARPER, WE HAVE DEAD PEOPLE HERE! Putting the murderer in prison and throwing away the key will change nothing to the fact that we have dead Canadians. Longer prison terms are the ANTITHESIS OF PREVENTION.

Gun registration! That is your solution, Mr. Harper. The registration of all guns, regardless of their length. You are playing into the hands of the gun lobby for strictly political reasons. To create a featherbed for your election base in Western Canada. By doing so, you are pitting East against West, rural against urban Canadians, Quebec against the rest of Canada, women against men. Shame on you, Mr. Harper.

You have to admit that gun registration is functioning amazingly well. Gun death tolls have decreased dramatically since its inception. The police forces are clamoring for it. They say it is a powerful tool to do their job. They claim to use it some 11,000 times a day. They say gun registration saves lives. Women's groups across the country, suicide prevention experts, and generally, the entire health community in Canada are saying they want and need it to curb violence and gun death.

Gun registration is a Monument erected to the memory of our daughters, for which myself personally, and other members of the families have worked tirelessly for 20 years now.

Dear Members of Parliament, the future of gun control in Canada is in your hands. Only you can avoid the disastrous dismantlement of gun registry by the Conservatives, by voting against Bill-C-391. Mr. Duceppe and Mr. Ignatief have already said they would call for a whip vote against this irresponsible bill, because it is a matter of life and death. Mr. Jack Layton needs to do the same thing. He is the leader of his party, the leader of the New Democratic Party, the party that strives to defend social justice, the party that defends the rights of women, the rights of victims. Leaders must lead.

Mr. Layton, I plead with you to do the only thing a man of character can do, the only moral thing to do: order a whip vote of your party against Bill C-391, designed to do away with gun registration in Canada. The gun registration that is so dear to our hearts and minds.

We will not be deterred in our resolve to maintain the gun control law we worked so hard to put in place, the gun control law that a great majority of the Canadian people want and deserve, the gun control law which helps save Canadian lives. Let us remember that gun control is not meant for the few, but for the many.