



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Listen to Our Police Leaders on Long Gun Registry says YWCA Canada** *Registry costs \$4.1 million per year, protects vulnerable women and police officers*

**Toronto, May 26, 2010** – YWCA Canada, the nation’s largest provider of shelter to women and children fleeing violence, joins today’s call by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to preserve the long gun registry. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is appearing before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Bill C-391, which would repeal the long gun registry if it passes unchanged on third reading.

“We agree with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police that the registry has made Canada a safer country,” says Paulette Senior, CEO of YWCA Canada. “Long guns and rifles are the guns most commonly used in spousal homicides. We need to know where those guns are, and that’s what the registry does. Police can access it from a patrol car. Since the RCMP took control in 2006, costs are down dramatically and use is way up. The Government’s commitment to destroying the registry flies in the face of its commitment to victim’s rights.”

YWCA Canada’s local Member Associations operate 31 shelters across the country, serving rural populations in Sudbury, Brandon, Prince Albert, Lethbridge, Peterborough, Saskatoon, Yellowknife and Iqaluit, where shot guns and rifles are part of the culture. Member Associations oppose Bill C-391.

“It is not city-born, city-living folks who are asking for this registry to continue,” says Lyda Fuller, Executive Director of YWCA Yellowknife, “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. We hear this over and over again, in small communities without RCMP and in larger communities with RCMP. These women cannot safely express their need for protection themselves, and it is up to Canada to understand this and respond in an appropriate way.”

“Having lost three brother-in-laws, three nephews, two nieces, two former students, two neighbours in Nunavut, I remind the Government of Canada that Nunavut leads all of North America in suicides,” says Caroline Anawak, Executive Director of YWCA Agvvik Nunavut. “The cost of this tragic loss of life is sorely under-estimated. The painful message it helps to send is a message no mother, no father and no elected representative should ever want to hear.”

Police forces across the country have rapidly increased their use of the registry database with average daily inquires for 2009 more than double usage in 2005. Annual queries increased from 425,000 in 2004, to 3.4 million in 2008 to over 4 million in 2009.

“What are we to think? The Canadian government wants to erase nearly 6.8 million database records locating firearms against the expressed advice of the nation’s police forces. Whose interests are being served here? Certainly not those of women vulnerable to violence,” says Ann Decter, YWCA Canada Director of Advocacy. “Are we expected to believe that our police services would consult a useless system more than 4 million times in a year?”

Evidence clearly shows a continuing decline in homicides committed with rifles and shotguns, coincident with increasing use of the long gun registry by Canadian police services. At the same time, the use of firearms in violence in general has increased. While spousal homicides with rifles and shotguns have decreased, spousal homicides by all other means have not.

“The question facing Parliamentarians is not the mismanagement of the registry in the past,” Senior adds “but the future of a modern database that is constantly consulted by Canadian police services in the course of their duties. The choice is clear – preserve the registry.”

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For information on YWCA Canada and its Member Associations, or to set up an interview with Paulette Senior, CEO of YWCA Canada, contact Laura Tilley, Communications & Marketing Manager at 416-962-8881 x 233.

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About YWCA Canada: YWCA Canada is the country’s oldest and largest women's multi-service organization. With 33 Member Associations operating in more than 400 districts and communities across the country, our Turning Point Programs for Women™ - which address personal safety, economic security and well-being – reach out to 1 million women and girls in nine provinces and one territory. YWCA is the largest national provider of shelter to women, serving 25,000 women, children and teen girls, including 6,000 fleeing domestic violence, each year. We are the largest provider of literacy, life skills, employment and counselling programs in the country, and the second largest provider of childcare services. YWCA Canada is a member association of the World YWCA which unites 25 million women and girls worldwide and spans 125 countries. For more information about YWCA Canada and our Member Associations, visit [www.ywacacanada.ca](http://www.ywacacanada.ca).

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