

April 29, 2010
Mr. John Rafferty
Member of Parliament
Thunder Bay- Rainy River Riding
Etc.

Dear Mr. Rafferty:

I am writing you in regards to the impending vote in Parliament concerning the private members bill to scrap the long gun registry.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors and Executive of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police held in Windsor, Ontario on April 27 and 28, 2010, the Board unanimously passed a resolution supporting the long gun registry and that Parliament reject the private members bill that would effectively scrap the long gun registry. This is not new, as the O.A.C.P. has long supported the continuance of the firearms registry

I am well aware of the opposition to the registry by a number of people in Northwestern Ontario. However, I believe efforts to gain enough support in Parliament to pass this bill are misguided and based on misinformation that has been circulating for years. On the issue of scrapping the registry, public safety must always outweigh partisan politics.

Contrary to the assertions of some, the registry has been operated effectively and efficiently since the Royal Canadian Mounted Police took over administration of the system in 2005. As well, the cost of maintaining the registry on an annual basis has vastly been reduced to approximately 4 million dollars a year.

Canadian police officers use the registry in excess of 11,500 times per day for a vast array of reasons. In essence it has become an effective law enforcement tool for front line officers who put themselves at risk for community safety on a daily basis.

As well, the vast majority of police leaders, Police Associations and Police Services Boards are united in our position that scrapping the registry would be a mistake and would take away an important community safety initiative.

I have stated publicly that the police have no interest in criminalizing those who don't register their firearms. Certainly, there are other options available in our legal system to move people to compliance of registering their firearms. I have also stated that a license simply tells us a person has a right to own a gun while the registry tells us what guns the person actually owns. There is a huge difference between the two. Knowing what guns a person owns can mean the difference between the ability of the police to legally obtain authorization to search and seize firearms in a potentially dangerous situation and having that situation turn tragic because of the lack of pertinent information which is currently available through the registry.

There are many examples where the registry has been instrumental in effectively achieving what I have stated above which I would be very willing to share with you.

It is my understanding that the N.D.P. caucus has received a briefing by representatives of the C.A.C.P. and others that would clear up many misconceptions surrounding the registry.

As the Chief of Police of Thunder Bay, I am requesting that you do not support the private members bill and that you meet with me at your convenience to discuss this issue in an informed manner.

Yours truly,

Robert P. Herman
Etc.

c.c. Chief Bill Blair, President, C.A.C.P.
R. Bain - Executive Director, O.A.C.P.