

**Coalition for Gun Control ALERT:
Bill C-391 scheduled to be debated September 28**

Dear Coalition for Gun Control's Friends,

Conservative MP Candace Hoepfner's Private Member's Bill C-391's second reading debate is scheduled for Monday September 28, 2009. **We urgently need the help of supporters in order to remind ALL Members of Parliament that Bill C-391 turns back the clock on gun control.**

Specifically, Bill C-391 proposes to eliminate long-gun registration and to destroy all existing registration records. Firearms registration **is a one-time only** procedure that:

- makes gun owners accountable for their firearms and enforces the licensing provisions of the law. Furthermore, registration makes it more difficult for straw purchases to occur, as well as illegal sales by legal gun owners.
- is an essential tool used by police when taking preventive action, and enforcing prohibition orders. It is the system police use to ensure that all firearms are removed from an individual's possession when the situation warrants it
- helps police investigations. Two men were identified and convicted as accessories to the murder of 4 RCMP officers in Mayerthorpe, Alberta, in part because a registered gun was left at the scene of the crime.
- allows police to differentiate between legal and illegal firearms. Without information about who owns firearms legally and the firearms they own, police cannot charge individuals with illegal possession.
- allows police to trace firearms easily, thus facilitating further investigations into smuggling.
- reduces the chances that legal guns will be diverted into illegal markets.

The evidence shows that stronger gun laws, which include the licensing of gun owners and registration of all guns, have helped reduce gun related death, injury, violence and suicide:

- When controls on rifles and shotguns were strengthened in 1991, 1441 Canadians were killed with guns; in 2005, the number was 818.
- Murders with rifles and shotguns have decreased dramatically, from 107 in 1991 to 32 in 2008, in part because of the stronger controls on firearms.
- The number of women murdered with firearms fell from 85 in 1991 to 32 in 2005. In contrast murders of women without firearms declined only slightly during the same period of time.
- The gun registry is consulted by police 10,000 times a day and has helped in efforts to take preventive actions and in several investigations.

We have grave concerns **that Bill C-391 may get enough support to pass**. Only 10 opposition votes are needed to pass this bill, and 3 NDP MPs as well as one Liberal have spoken against the long-gun registry in the media. The gun lobby has targeted opposition MPs in rural ridings. Also, with an election looming, the Liberals and NDP have floated compromises that would also weaken the law.

In these difficult circumstances, the vote of one MP can make all the difference, and it is for that reason that we are once again soliciting your help. **Members of Parliament are in their ridings this week, and it is a key time to ensure that your MP will vote against C-391, as well as that the opposition parties will hold party lines.** Coordinates of all MPs may be found at www.parl.gc.ca or by calling 1-800-O-CANADA

Key coordinates:

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, Tel. Ottawa: 613-995-9364 Riding: 416-251-5510
IgnatM@parl.gc.ca

NDP Leader Jack Layton Tel. Ottawa: 613-995-7224 Riding: 416-405-8914 LaytoJ@parl.gc.ca

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe Tel. Ott: 613-992-6779 Riding: 514-522-1339

DucepG@parl.gc.ca **Prime Minister Stephen Harper** Tel. Ottawa: 613-992-4211 Riding: 403-253-7990 HarpeS@parl.gc.ca

Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan Tel. Ott: 613-996-7752 Riding: 905-898-1600
VanLoP@parl.gc.ca

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson Tel Ottawa: 613-995-1547 Riding: 905-353-9590
NichoR@parl.gc.ca

Rifles and shotguns are the guns most often used to threaten women and children, and the weapons of choice in murders of police officers. Many are stolen from legal owners and are also seized from gangs. The Ruger mini 14 used in the Montreal Massacre to kill 14 young girls and injure 28 is still sold as an unrestricted hunting rifle. The possession of rifles and shotguns should be regulated. There are still too many tragedies involving rifles and shotguns, for example:

- Heidi Ferguson was shot by her estranged husband at her Orangeville (ON) home in September 2009. An avid hunter and gun collector, it is believed that he later turned the gun on himself.
- In July 2009, Joan Hanson, her daughter and granddaughter were shot by her estranged husband who then turned the rifle on himself at her rural home in northern Alberta. Financial pressure is believed to have been a motive.
- In November 2008, 84-year-old Lily Walker was shot by her husband who committed suicide in Red Deer Alberta.
- In February 2008, an 8-year-old wounded his 9-year-old friend with his father's .22 calibre rifle while playing "guns" in the basement of his house on Manitoulin Island (ON).
- In February 2008, a teenager in Whitby (ON) contacted police as her distraught stepfather had locked himself in a closet with a rifle and was threatening to commit suicide. Police found 26 firearms inside the house, all of them legally registered.
- A 16 years old girl was shot in the head by her 17 years-old ex-boyfriend in Regina, Saskatchewan with a stolen rifle and ammunition in October 2007. The girl lost one eye, the hearing in her right ear, experienced paralysis on one side of her face, some brain damage and had to relearn how to walk, speak, chew and swallow.
- In September 2007, Kathryn Knudsen was shot to death in broad daylight in the parking lot of a local park in Sarnia (ON) by her boyfriend who committed suicide at the same time
- The man found guilty of triple murder in Ontario stole a rifle on a nearby farm in July 2007 and killed Bill and Helene Regier at their Mount Carmel's (ON) farmhouse.

We are very grateful for your help and support on this matter. Please let us know if you require any assistance.

Yours Truly,

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Professor, Ryerson University

Recipient of the *Prix policiers du Québec* (2007), *Canadian Criminal Justice Public Education Award* (2000), *Canadian Public Health Association Award of Merit* (1996), *YWCA Woman of Distinction* (1996)