

Ralph Goodale M.P. Regina-Wascana
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

May 2nd, 2018

Re: Bill C-71, An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms

Dear Minister Goodale,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to offer support for Bill C-71 from our organization with more than 8000 members across Canada.

As an equality seeking organization that works to ensure that all girls and women have equal opportunities with equal access to quality education within a peaceful and secure environment, we are pleased to see Bill C-71 being introduced to help guarantee the safety of all Canadians. Since the 1989 Polytechnique Massacre, CFUW and its 100 clubs across Canada have been relentless advocates for stronger gun control legislation.

In 2016, Canada registered its highest rate of homicide since 2005 with 0.61 firearm-related homicides per 100,000 population. Moreover, ownership of restricted firearms doubled between 2004-2015 (*data on sales of unrestricted firearms, namely rifles and shotguns, are no longer available*).ⁱ

The lack of control over guns endangers human life. Guns facilitate violence and increase the vulnerability of women and children living in abusive situations to serious physical and psychological harm and to homicide. Studies and coroners have shown that the availability of firearms in the home significantly increases the risk of homicide in domestic violence situations as well as the risk of firearm suicide (the latter representing 80% of deaths by firearms).ⁱⁱ Moreover, in situations of intimate partner violence where guns are available, “hostile gun display” is frequent and is used as a mean of intimidation to increase a partner’s control over their victims and perpetuate the continuum of violence.ⁱⁱⁱ

As highlighted by the Barbra Schlifer clinic: “While men are disproportionately harmed by handguns, women are disproportionately harmed by rifles and shotguns”.^{iv} According to statistics Canada, in 2005 long guns were used in 72% of firearm-related spousal homicides, and 77% of police officers killed on the job between 1995-2005 were killed by long guns.

Gun control has nothing to do with limiting rights, rather it has everything to do with protecting them. Canada has obligations under National and International law to adequately regulate firearms in order to protect the right to life, liberty and security of the person (Art. 7, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms), the right to equality before and under law (art.15, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) and its commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All of the Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), among other international instruments.

CFUW supports the enhancement of criteria for background checks and continuous eligibility checks, in addition to stronger provisions on control of sales requiring gun shop retailers to keep records of

sales and to verify that licenses for owning firearms are current. Individuals who represent a risk to public safety and to themselves should not have access to firearms. We also call for stronger controls on handguns and other restricted weapons and support increased measures for the safe transport of these weapons.

CFUW recognizes Bill C-71 as an important step to advance gun control in Canada. We request elected officials to pass Bill C-71 and align its provisions with the following recommendations:

- Ensure Bill C-71 amends the criminal code to update the prohibited and restricted list consistent with the advice of police experts, in order to **ban all military assault weapons**.
- Ensure an effective system that tracks all gun sales.
- Ensure that the drafting and implementation of the legislation are informed by experts on violence prevention and gender analysis, taking into account displays of toxic masculinity as risk factors for gun violence.
- Implement, along with Bill C-71, public awareness campaigns to raise awareness on firearms risks and regulations.
- Provide detailed analysis and sharing of justice statistics including firearms death, injury and crime; imports/exports, firearms used in crime, disaggregated by gender and other social, cultural, economic criteria to represent Canadians in all their diversity.
- Provide sufficient funding over several years for all levels of government to participate collectively in community-level prevention and enforcement.

We stay attentive to further development on the issue. It is crucial elected officials put the lives and safety of our communities' first.

Sincerely,



Grace Hollett
CFUW National President - FCFDU Présidente nationale

ⁱ Royal Canadian Mounted Police. "2015 Commissioner of Firearms report", [online], 2015, <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/2015-commissioner-firearms-report>, (accessed May 2, 2018).

ⁱⁱ Linda L. Dahlberg and al. "Guns in the Home and Risk of a Violent Death in the Home: Findings from a National Study", *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 160, Issue 10, 15 November 2004, pages 929–936. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwh309>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Deborah Azrael and David Hemenway, "In the Safety of Your Own Home': Results from a National Survey on Gun Use at Home," *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 50, 2000, pages 285-291. http://guncontrol.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/domestic_hom.pdf

^{iv} Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. "Backgrounder on Gun Control and Women", [online], 2018, <http://schliferclinic.com/services/advocacy-and-social-change/legal-reform/long-gun-registry/backgrounder-on-gun-control-and-women/>, (accessed May 2, 2018).