

Tool Kit for Bill C-391

Next Steps

Canadian Federation of University Women
November 2009



Background and Update

Gun Control a CFUW Issue – Update:

Immediately after the 1989 Massacre of 14 young women in Montreal at the École Polytechnique, CFUW members move to introduce the 1990 Resolution on “Banning Semi-Automatic Weapons¹. This policy was adopted at the CFUW AGM in Toronto in 1990. At the same time the CFUW Board of Directors voted to establish the École Polytechnique Memorial Award, in honour of those women students and by inference all other women who become victims of gun violence. Today, a number of CFUW Clubs take part in events to mark the December 6th killings and to add to the fund that supports that award.

Then in 1994 CFUW adopted further policy supporting the registry². Since then CFUW has worked – through many Press conferences, campaigns and supporting letters to government to support gun control including the registry. We were present when the Bill passed though the

¹ **Gun Control - Ban on Semi-Automatic etc.**
CFUW, 1990

RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Government of Canada to build on the initial success of existing Canadian gun control legislation by passing new laws to ban automatic and semi-automatic rifles and make more stringent the requirements for obtaining a Firearm Acquisition Certificate.

² **Gun Control - Comprehensive**
CFUW, 1994
CFUW Legislation Committee

RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Government of Canada:

1. To establish a cost effective national registry of all firearms and of Firearms Acquisition Certificates (FAC);
2. To require periodic renewal of all Firearms Acquisition Certificates;
3. To seize firearms and FAC from any person under a restraining order or peace bond;
4. To amend the Criminal Code to create a total ban on assault weapons, large capacity magazines and handguns; and
5. To diligently enforce the ban on the importation of prohibited weapons and to increase border checks on the entry of all firearms into Canada.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada and the provincial and territorial governments to strictly enforce regulations under the firearms control law regarding the safe storage, display, handling and transportation of firearms; and decrease the number of weapons in Canadian homes by sponsoring gun amnesty days for disposal of unwanted weapons.

House and when it received Royal assent. CFUW has continued to support gun control as one way to help to end violence against women.

CFUW joined the Coalition for Gun Control by a formal vote at the AGM in Kelowna in 1997.

Current Status of the Bill:

On November 4, 2009 members of the Coalition, representatives from CFUW, NAWL and women from the CUPE, all wearing white ribbons, gathered on the Hill to witness this vote. We watched as the members of the House filed in to have their votes counted in an historic private member's bill. Both the Liberal and NDP party did not whip the vote since this was a private member's bill. The Bloc voted as promised, solidly in favour of the Gun Registry. The bill passed by a surprising 164-137, winning more supporters than expected as 12 New Democrats, 8 Liberals and one Independent cast their votes with the government. The bill is now sent to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Several of the women sitting with me wept as the votes were cast. However, it is not over until it is over. The Bill now goes to Committee stage and it is of the greatest importance for those of us who understand the protection that the registration of guns gives to public safety, to move forward.

What it means?

- The Bill will go now to Committee and then return for Third Reading and Royal Assent. If that happens would mean the dismantling of **seven million firearms records**. Remember firearm registration is a one-time only procedure (a form to fill) 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 four 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.

Proposal to “decriminalize” failure to register: This proposal would mean that individuals with unregistered firearms could get a regulatory violation – a ticket -and that police would be unable to remove the firearms. This was a hostile amendment proposed to the law in 1995 which Public Safety Experts including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police strongly opposed as it would effectively render registration optional and remove the teeth from the legislation.

Cost: The bulk of the cost of the firearms program is associated with licensing and screening of risk factors. The RCMP estimates, that if the registration of rifles and shotguns were discontinued, it would save only \$3 million per year. CBC reported on October 5, 2009 that the Conservative government's decision to waive fees for people licensing their firearms will cost more than \$15 million in 2009. With the successive amnesties introduced by the Conservative government, the data in the firearms registry is becoming more inaccurate and out of date, putting the lives of Canadians at stake.

Next Steps

What can we do?

1. **It is critical that MPs and Party Leaders hear as soon as possible from shocked and appalled people, especially women.**
2. Get members better acquainted with this issue. Invite a knowledgeable speaker who understands the need for public safety.
3. Look for allies in your community and ask them to approach the member – when we approached the leaders they all said that the MPs had not heard from their constituents
4. CFUW will provide Briefing materials for other organizations and will apply to appear before the Committee as a witness.
5. Read the material below from the Coalition

NOTE:

We know e-mails are easier but MPs tell us they only get calls from the gun lobby, so please take the extra time to **call them**, tell them your story and why you care. The phone number of your MP is available at: www.parl.gc.ca or by calling 1-800-O-CANADA. Meanwhile, the phone numbers of the MP that voted in favour of the bill and those that abstained (or were not present), as well as party leaders, are below.

Who voted in favour of the Bill?

- Call the following MPs (and/or your own) and share your disappointment, shock and disgust that they would threaten public and women's safety for pure political gain.

NDP

- Malcolm Allen (Welland, ON) (613) 995-0988
- Charlie Angus (Timmins-James Bay) (613) 992-2919, Kirkland Lake 705-567-2747, Timmins 705-268-6464
- Niki Ashton (Churchill, MB) (613) 992-3018, Thompson 866-785-0522
- Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic) (613) 992-4587, Yellowknife 867-873-6995
- Nathan Cullen (Skeena -- Bulkley Valley, BC) (613) 993-6654, Smithers 250-877-4140, Terrace 250-615-5339, Prince Rupert 250-622-2413
- Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, ON) 613-995-9104, Val Caron 705-897-2222, Sturgeon Falls 705-753-3760
- Carol Hughes (Algoma -- Manitoulin -- Kapuskasing, ON) (613) 996-5376, Elliot Lake 705-848-8080, Kapuskasing 705-335-5533
- Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay -- Superior-North, ON)(613) 996-4792
- Jim Maloway (Elmwood -- Transcona, MB) (613) 995-6339, Winnipeg 204-984-2499
- John Rafferty (Thunder Bay -- Rainy River)(613) 992-3061, Thunder Bay 807-623-6000, Atikokan 807-597-2000
- Peter Stoffer (Sackville -- Eastern Shore, NS) (613) 995-5822, Fall River 902-861-2311
- Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, ON)(613) 996-8962, Sudbury 705-673-7107

LIBERALS

- Scott Andrews (Avalon, Nfld) (613) 992-4133, Kelligrews 709-834-3424
- Larry Bagnell (Yukon) (613) 995-9368 Whitehorse 867-668-6565
- Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska -- Restigouche, NB) (613) 995-0581, Edmunston 506-739-4600, Campbellton 506-789-4580, Dalhousie 506-685-5011
- Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, PEI) (613) 992-2406, Hunter River 902-964-2428
- Hon. Dr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, BC)(613) 996-2625, Victoria 250-474-6505
- Anthony Rota (Nipissing -- Timiskaming, ON)(613) 995-6255, North Bay 705-474-3700, Haileybury 705-672-2664
- Tony Russell (Labrador, NF) (613) 996-4630, Labrador City 709-944-2146
- Scott Simms (Bonavista -- Gander -- Grand Falls -- Windsor, NF)(613) 996-3935, Gander 709-256-3130, Grand Falls 709-489-8470

INDEPENDENT

- Andre Arthur (Portneuf -- Jacques-Cartier, QC) (613) 992-2798, Donnacona 418-285-0018

***ALL CONSERVATIVES VOTED FOR- NOT ONE MISSING INCL PRIME MINISTER**

WHO WAS NOT THERE OR ABSTAINED

LIBERALS

- Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga-East-Cooksville)(613) 996-0420, Mississauga 905-566-0009
- Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough-Agincourt) (613) 992-4501, Scarborough 416-321-5454
- Peter Milliken was speaker

NDP

--- All present

BLOC

* ALL VOTED AGAINST-

PARTY LEADERS

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (613) 995-9364

Hon. Jack Layton (613) 995-7224

Hon. Gilles Duceppe (613) 992-6779

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (613) 992-4211

To look up your MP via your postal code go to:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

Clicking on the picture of your MP will take you a new page where you can find contact information, including an email address.

For more information see the following articles:

The Toronto Star

Liberals soften on gun law, November 05, 2009

Tonda MacCharles

OTTAWA—In a **surprising softening** of Liberal policy, party leader Michael Ignatieff says penalties for violating requirements of the long-gun registry could be "decriminalized" as part of an effort to broaden its legitimacy in the eyes of rural Canadians.

Ignatieff's statement set the stage for a vote hours later in the House of Commons in which a majority of MPs voted, for the first time in 14 years, to give "**approval in principle**" to a bill to kill the long-gun registry.

In a 164-137 vote, MPs – including 12 New Democrats, eight Liberals, and one independent – agreed to give second reading to a private member's bill sponsored by Conservative Candice Hoepfner (Portage-Lisgar).

That means the bill goes to committee for more study and **explosive debate** more than a decade after the gun registry's creation, before coming back for a final decision by the Commons and the Senate.

The bill's critics and its supporters view the Commons vote as a **big step** toward the registry's elimination, especially as the Conservatives will have a majority in the Senate within a couple of months.

Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe said the result was "**worrying**" and goes against a consensus in Quebec that long-gun registration is a crucial public safety tool.

Hoepfner's bill would repeal legal requirements to register long-barrelled rifles and shotguns, but it would maintain registration for restricted and prohibited weapons, such as handguns, sawed-off shotguns, and semi-automatic and automatic weapons.

It maintains mandatory licensing for all gun owners, and, for now, the data currently held on 1.8 million licensed gun owners, and 7.3 million firearms.

Ignatieff, who voted against the bill, said the Liberal caucus supports the "principle of gun control," and he personally believes it should include long guns. But he said it faces "resistance" in rural Canada, and divides urban and rural Canadians.

He said his **caucus is working on proposals** to bridge that gap. In French, he said any Liberal changes would start with a "simple principle: we are for a firearms registration system that includes all firearms, but there is a problem of resistance in rural areas. It could be possible to decriminalize but to maintain a firearms registration system for long guns."

Wendy Cukier and other supporters of the Coalition for Gun Control watched **aghast** in the public gallery as MPs cast their votes.

Cukier said it was "**horrifying**" to see former Liberal solicitor-general Wayne Easter of P.E.I. and Liberal MP Keith Martin, a physician, vote with the Conservatives, and an urban MP, Toronto's Albina Guarnieri, abstain.

"It wasn't even close," Cukier said, shaking her head. "We've lost an important fight for public safety today,"

She vowed to mobilize the public health and police advocates who fought for gun control in the 1990s to continue the battle.

Cukier said Ignatieff and NDP Leader Jack Layton – a founder of the White Ribbon campaign against violence against women – need to do "**some soul-searching**" **after allowing the free vote** among their caucus members.

As for Ignatieff's suggestion on decriminalization, Cukier noted that when the Conservatives suggested such an amendment in 1995, the Liberals argued it would take the teeth out of the law, making long-gun registration "optional."

Liberal MP Judy Sgro (York West) said in an interview that in the Paul Martin government, Guarnieri had come up with recommendations to take the criminal sting out of the gun registration laws, but was never able to bring the proposals forward for caucus approval.

Guarnieri's ideas were recently revived within the Liberal caucus, Sgro said, adding one of them was to "look at taking it out of the Criminal Code so that we would not be making criminals out of people – it's one thing to give them a ticket, fine them \$500. It's another thing to give them a criminal record because they hadn't registered."

Sgro said caucus recognizes it needs to look at possible changes. "I think we've been hearing this for some time. Criminalizing gun owners just for owning a gun and not registering them was not a smart way of doing things."

It was a Liberal government that enacted changes to the Criminal Code of Canada – in the wake of the 1989 Montreal massacre – and required Canadians to register their firearms including long-barrelled hunting rifles or shotguns.

Late Wednesday, some Liberal MPs told the *Star* the public safety committee's opposition members all oppose Hoepfner's bill, and it would "never see the light of day." But they defended Ignatieff's new position, saying "why should we be bound by something enacted 15 years ago?"

Since 2006, the federal Conservatives have brought in successive "amnesties" under the law and

proposed government legislation to kill the registry, which has never been brought to a vote. The government supported a private member's bill to kill the registry because opposition parties tend to allow their MPs to vote freely – and not toe a party line – on such bills.

CBC News

Police use of firearms registry jumps: RCMP

November 5, 2009 12:42 PM

By Chris Hall

A new report prepared by the RCMP shows that the number of police officers using the firearms registry jumped last year. The information is contained in the Mounties annual performance report filed with the Treasury Board.

It says the number of queries to the Canadian Firearms Registry went up 24 per cent in 2008-09 -- more than twice the increase the registry had targeted.

The report also says the government spent just \$8.4 million on the firearms registry last year -- a third of what had originally been budgeted, in part because it needed 66 fewer full-time workers than the 131 anticipated. This information is being made public a just a day after Liberal and New Democrat MPs from rural ridings voted with the government to scrap the long-gun registry which covers hunting rifles and shotguns.

That bill, fronted by Conservative MP Candice Hoepfner, now goes to committee for further study. But opponents concede there is little chance of stopping it from becoming law.

The report released today blames confusion over the future of the registry for a sharp drop in the number of firearms owners who renewed their licences.

The report says 100,000 gun owners failed to renew their five-year licences despite the government's decision to waive the fees. Owners of rifles and shotguns still need to be licensed, even if they are no longer required to register those firearms.

Some of the information included in the annual performance report comes from the Commissioner of Firearms' 2008 report, which has yet to be tabled by Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan -- despite Friday being the deadline.

CBC News

Quebec disappointed with gun registry vote: Bloc jumps on issue ahead of byelections

Last Updated: Thursday, November 5, 2009

Quebec politicians, police officers and victims' rights groups are expressing frustration with plans to abolish the federal long-gun registry.

On Wednesday the House of Commons narrowly passed a private member's bill calling on the government to scrap the federal long-gun registry. The vote comes one month before the 20th anniversary of the shooting at Montreal's École Polytechnique.

Quebec Public Security Minister Jacques Dupuis said he was disappointed but not surprised by the vote: 164 for, 137 against. The vote is only one step in a long process to abolish the registry for rifles and shotguns, Dupuis said. Dupuis said he will continue to press Ottawa not to go through with the Conservative government's plan and will testify at upcoming hearings before a Commons committee. The vote was also a disappointment for Montrealer Suzanne Laplante-Edward.

Edward's 21-year-old daughter Anne-Marie was one of the 14 women gunned down at the École Polytechnique on Dec. 6 1989. Edward said she and the members of other victims' families fought hard for the creation of the registry. "It's been a monument erected to our daughters, and we are not about to let it disappear," Laplante-Edward said. "Why this government is hell bent — hell bent — on destroying gun control is beyond my comprehension."

Montreal police have also weighed in on the issue. The registry is checked by police officers across Canada 10,000 thousand times a day, said Insp. Daniel Rousseau.

Rousseau said the registry helped Montreal police prevent at least one potential tragedy.

Soon after the Dawson College shooting in 2007, Rousseau said police received information about a young man making similar threats. Through the registry, Rousseau said police were able to learn the man owned several firearms. "So he was arrested. We seized the firearms before the commission of the criminal act," Rousseau said.

Campaign issue

Meanwhile, it seems the Bloc Québécois is ready to leap on the emotional gun-control debate ahead of byelections next week in two Quebec ridings.

The Bloc's blood-oozing, bullet-riddled campaign posters suggest the pan-Canadian parties are one and the same when it comes to gun control. McGill University political scientist Antonia Maioni says this is just the sort of emotional wedge issue the Bloc was looking to seize on, to boost its support. Voters go to the polls Nov. 9 in the Montreal riding of Hochelaga and the riding of Montmagny-L'Islet-Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup in the Lower St. Lawrence region.

Notes: