



Canadian Federation of University Women
Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités

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November 4, 2011

Mr. Kevin Sorenson, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

Re: Bill C-19 Ending the Long Gun Registry Act

I am writing you today on behalf of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to ask that the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security defeat Bill C-19: Ending the Long Gun Registry Act. At the very least, the records that have already been collected for the registry should be saved. In the event that the long gun registry is eliminated with this bill, the Government of Canada should reinstitute the requirement for merchants to maintain records of the sales on non-restricted firearm, as well as the mandatory requirement for license checks.

Rifles and shotguns in the wrong hands are as deadly as handguns. Registering all firearms holds gun owners accountable for their firearms and reduces the chances that their guns will be diverted to unlicensed owners, helping to cut off an illegal supply. Police use the gun registry approximately 17,000 times a day, including when intervening in domestic disputes. It also assists in police investigations and aids in the removal of ALL guns from dangerous people, enforcing prohibition orders, and taking preventative action. Since the introduction of controls on all firearms, murders with rifles and shotguns have decreased dramatically, from 61 in 1995 (0.21 per 100,000) to 29 in 2009 (0.08 per 100,000). With that, the number of women murdered with firearms has decreased by 70 percent since 1991.

CFUW particularly denounces the provisions of Bill C-19 that will roll back gun control measures that have been in place since 1977, including:

- Eliminating mandatory license checks with the Registrar for the purchase of non-restricted firearms to ensure that individuals are still eligible to hold licenses; and
- Eliminating the need to maintain transaction records of non-restricted gun sales. Beginning in 1977 Canada required merchants to keep the records of gun sale transactions. This obligation was removed with the introduction of the Firearms Act because all guns were registered to the owner at the point of sale. These measures should be reintroduced by including them in Bill C-19, as several international treaties require that countries maintain firearm sales records for the purpose of tracing.

Furthermore, CFUW does not support the destruction of the data on the 7 million non-restricted firearms that are already registered. Keeping the long gun registry data will be useful as an investigative tool to help police officers trace firearms. The provinces and territories may choose to set up their own long gun registries and could significantly benefit from access to this data. The Privacy Commissioner has ruled that it is possible for the federal government to share the data with the

provinces.¹ Deleting the date will not refund the financial investment that has been made to build the registry, nor will it be cost neutral.

Bill C-19 will also make it possible for a licensed individual to acquire an unlimited number of guns, including powerful semi-automatics and some sniper rifles, without any flags being raised. With the elimination of the registry there will be no means to know who owns these powerful guns, nor how many are owned.

CFUW first and foremost urges the Government of Canada to maintain the long gun registry. In the event that the long gun registry is abolished, the records should be saved and the Government of Canada should reintroduce the requirement for merchants to maintain records of the sales on non-restricted firearm, as well as the mandatory requirement for license checks.

CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization of close to 10,000 women university graduates, students and Associate Members in 112 Clubs across Canada that works to improve the status of women and human rights, education, social justice, and peace. CFUW holds special consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and belongs to the Education committee of the Canadian Sub-Commission to UNESCO. CFUW is the largest of the 61 affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Wallace".

Brenda Wallace, CFUW National President

Cc:

Hon. Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, NDP Public Safety Critic

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia, Liberal Public Safety Critic

¹ Canadian Press (Nov.2, 2011) retrieved from: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/privacy-czar-shoots-down-tory-rationale-for-destroying-gun-records/article2221326/>