

COALITION

for Gun Control / pour le contrôle des armes

www.guncontrol.ca

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO GUN CONTROL: WEAKENING OUR PROTECTIONS

Changes in 2012 and 2013

Despite evidence from police, public health and safety experts that strong controls on all firearms are useful, efficient and have had concrete impact in reducing firearm deaths and injuries, the government has seriously weakened firearms regulations.

- In April 2012, the government ended the registration of rifles and shotguns — allowing a licensed individual to **buy as many guns as they want, including powerful semi-automatics, without any records being kept.**
- It also **removed the obligation** for sellers of rifles and shotguns **to verify a buyer's licence** before a sale.
- It mandated the destruction of data on 7.1 million of firearms. In spite of pleas by police, records on 5.6 million rifles and shotguns (outside Quebec) were destroyed in October 2012, making it **next to impossible for stolen guns or guns recovered in crime to be traced back to their owners.**
- The government quietly passed regulations in July 2012 **forbidding provinces from requiring their dealers to keep records of their sales** of rifles and shotguns, eliminating a tool in place since 1977.
- In the fall of 2012, the government **eliminated gun show regulations and postponed UN marking regulations.**
- In March 2013, the fee for firearm licence renewals was reintroduced, while the amnesty for those who don't renew was extend, **creating a disincentive to comply with the law.**

Bill C-19, passed by the federal government in April 2012, is currently contested in court. The Quebec government has filed a constitutional challenge demanding the province's data. The registry continues in the province under court order. Toronto's Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic that serves abused women has also filed a challenge against the bill, based on the violation of the life, liberty and security of women under section 7 and on the violation of women's equality rights under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

“We've seen a fairly significant decline in the number of firearms seized by my firearms unit this year because the information that they once relied on isn't available to them. If someone was prohibited from possessing firearms and they had firearms registered to them, we would go and get them. Now we have no idea.”

— *Chief William Blair, Toronto Police Service*

Creating Loopholes

Police warn that that the changes over the past year have made illegal trafficking easier to do and harder to prosecute.

Since April 2012, sellers of rifles and shotguns now need only have “no reason to believe” that a buyer does not have a licence to buy their gun. There is no requirement to verify that the licence is valid and not revoked, fraudulent or expired, or even to see it. This same loophole was exploited by dangerous individuals under the previous system to devastating consequences.

The destruction of the registry data and elimination of records of sales making it impossible to trace guns to their owners, combined with no licence checks before gun sales, the elimination of gun show regulations and the postponement of UN marking regulations risk facilitating illegal sales and trafficking.

Organized crime, terrorists and criminals take the easiest route to obtain their guns, and it's only a matter of time before these weaknesses in Canadian law are exploited.

“Like many Canadians, I took some comfort in the strong Canadian laws and the seeming lack of comparable influence of the Canadian gun lobby compared to their NRA cousins in the US. However, the changes to Canadian gun laws over the past year show that this sense of comfort was naive.”

— *Francine Dulong, daughter of Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, a Canadian professor killed in the Virginia Tech Massacre in 2007*

Gun Control Facts

- Most firearm-related deaths in Canada are caused by rifles or shotguns, and these are the guns most commonly used to threaten and injure, in domestic violence and when police officers are killed. All firearms are lethal, and any gun in the wrong hands is dangerous. **We need controls on ALL guns.**
- Referring to **non-restricted guns** as just “duck guns” minimizes the threat they can pose to public safety. This category **includes many powerful rifles and shotguns**, such as the Montreal Massacre’s Ruger Mini-14 and .50 caliber sniper rifles designed to pierce light armor.
- **A firearm in the home dramatically increases the risk of death in domestic violence situations.** Coroners’ inquests have consistently identified access to firearms as one of the top risk factors determining whether a woman will die in domestic violence situations.
- When women are killed by their spouse using a gun, it is a **rifle or a shotgun in 72% of cases.** Since 1995 when controls on all firearms were first introduced, **spousal homicides with rifles and shotguns have decreased by 69%.**
- **73% of all gun deaths in Canada are suicides.** The mere presence of a firearm in the home multiplies the risk of suicide by five.
- The rate of gun deaths is the lowest it has been in over 40 years. Nearly 400 fewer Canadians died of gunshots in 2009 (730) compared to 1995 (1125).
- Thanks to documents obtained by the Coalition, a Toronto Star article revealed that ending the long gun registry saved **only \$ 2 million per year**, and there would be **no savings for taxpayers** as the money would have to be reinvested to compensate for weaknesses to public safety created by this decision.

“Suicide, contrary to public opinion, is often an impulsive gesture. Keeping guns away from depressed people is essential. In the assaults and murders I have seen that have involved guns, the perpetrators acted on impulse and the unsafely stored long gun was readily available.”

— *Dr. Alan Drummond, rural coroner and Canadian Association of Emergency*

“Dismantling the long gun registry will not serve the interests of women and children vulnerable to violence. Nor will making it optional to verify someone’s licence before selling them a gun. It will put them and the police services who respond to domestic violence at greater risk.”

— *YWCA Canada*

Act Now!

1. **Write, call and email your Member of Parliament and the party leaders.** Tell them you're paying attention and won't stand for further weakening of our gun laws, and that you will remember the slow dismantling of gun control during the next election. Contact information for your MP is available at www.parl.gc.ca.

× CPC	→ Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper	(613) 992-4211	Stephen.Harper@parl.gc.ca
× NDP	→ Hon. Thomas Mulcair	(613) 995-7224	Thomas.Mulcair@parl.gc.ca
× LPC	→ Justin Trudeau	(613) 995-8872	Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca
× BQ	→ André Bellavance	(613) 995-1554	Andre.Bellavance@parl.gc.ca
× GPC	→ Elizabeth May	(613) 996-1119	Elizabeth.May@parl.gc.ca
2. **Become involved in the online campaign**, follow us on Twitter: @CGCguncontrol.
3. **Write a letter to the editor to your newspaper** to ensure that the real facts on gun control get covered too. Contact us if you'd like us to let you know of opportunities to send letters or provide tips on how to respond.
4. **Encourage others to get involved and raise awareness of the risks associated with firearm misuse.**
5. **Donate to the Coalition** and support the continued fight for sensible gun laws in Canada. We accept PayPal donations at www.guncontrol.ca.

Founded in the wake of the Montreal massacre, the Coalition for Gun Control is the only national non-profit organization working to reduce gun injury, death and crime in Canada. We are endorsed by more than 300 crime and injury prevention, policing, health, child safety, victims' rights, grassroots and community organizations. These include: the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the YWCA of Canada, just to name a few. CGC was recipient of the Canadian Labour Congress 2011 Making a Difference in People's Lives Award.

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