

**Statement in reaction to the Government of
Canada's tabling of Bill C-42
(the "Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act")**

For Immediate Release

October 7, 2014 - Public Safety Minister Blaney tabled today in the House of Commons the "Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act". Common sense indicates that we should strengthen not weaken our gun control laws. We note that this bill is introduced the day before the Supreme Court of Canada will hear the Government of Quebec's appeal to obtain the gun registry data for the province. The Coalition has been granted intervenor status on this case.

Making it easier for people to get access to guns carries with it a huge price. Inadequate controls make it easier for legal guns to be diverted to illegal markets. Inadequate controls fuel the use of guns in domestic violence. Inadequate controls also fuel the use of guns in suicides increasing fatalities, particularly among youth. Research has shown that firearm death and injury have declined with progressively strong controls on firearms. We fear what will happen as our laws are further eroded.

We have not had the opportunity to study the fine print of the bill but at first glance, it appears that the Federal Government's new proposals will make it easier to transport restricted firearms such as handguns. By reducing the powers of the Chief Firearms Officers, the federal government may make it difficult for provinces to strengthen their legislation within their powers. There are also plans to reduce the screening processes needed for some licenses.

Polls show Canadians want the government to make it harder not easier to get guns. Legal guns are a major source of illegal guns, up to a third of handguns recovered in crime in Canada were stolen or otherwise diverted from legal handgun owners with often tragic consequences. These proposals not only further relax the controls on rifles and shotguns but on handguns. Historically, we have strictly controlled their possession and movements.

The gun lobby has bragged about its access to the Prime Minister, and this is the latest evidence of their influence. Calls from police for stronger controls, particularly on military weapons appear to have been ignored. In spite of the risks to public safety, leading injury prevention, public health experts and women's safety groups do not appear to have been consulted on these changes. Canada is one of the only countries in the world that is moving backwards: weakening its controls on firearms while other countries are introducing stronger laws to improve safety and combat the trafficking of firearms.