

# Protect Women's Right to Safety Say NO to Weakening Gun Control

Legally owned, easily accessible rifles and shotguns are the guns of choice in domestic violence and women's safety experts and front-line shelter workers have repeatedly said that **controlling access to all firearms is crucial to preventing avoidable deaths.**

But the federal government has ignored them, along with victims, police and other public safety experts, opting instead to pursue a long campaign of misinformation to satisfy a vocal minority who believe they should have the right to own guns with few controls or responsibilities.

Last spring, Bill C-19 was passed, ending the national long-gun registry, weakening licence checks when firearms are purchased and mandating the destruction of data on 7.1 million of firearms.

In January, thanks to documents obtained by the Coalition, a Toronto Star article revealed that the elimination of 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.

And in spite of pleas by police, records on 5.6 million rifles and shotguns (outside Quebec) were destroyed, making it next to impossible for stolen guns or guns recovered in crime, **including spousal homicides, to be traced back to their owners.** The deleted data included ownership records on guns like the Ruger Mini-14, nicknamed the *'poor man's assault rifle'*, that in the hands of an unbalanced individual killed fourteen women at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

**Safety experts argue the risks of gun violence facing vulnerable women and children have increased** with these changes. Without registration and with sellers needing only to have "no reason to believe" a gun buyer isn't licensed, it is much easier for the 17,000 Canadians who have had their gun licence revoked or application refused since 2005 to buy a gun, including outwardly 'respectable' abusers sellers may be less likely to challenge.



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**Canada's gun laws were heralded worldwide as a model for addressing armed violence against women.**

UN Special Rapporteurs have emphasized that countries that do not adequately regulate firearms are failing to meet their obligations under international law, particularly with respect to the safety of women and children.

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**The fight has now turned to courts.**

The Government of Quebec won their constitutional challenge demanding the province's data, receiving a permanent injunction preventing its deletion and ordering the federal government to share it with the province. The federal government is appealing the decision.

Toronto's Barbra Schlifer Clinic has filed a Charter challenge 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 Charter of Rights and Freedom.

"Hunting rifles and shotguns are the weapons used most often to threaten women and children. Threats made with firearms are not counted in the statistics, but the damage they do is very real. How many women in shelters have told us that the simple fact of there being a hunting rifle beside the door was a constant threat to their safety!"

— M. Monastesse, Quebec Federation of Women's Shelters

# 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](http://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](http://www.guncontrol.ca).

## Rural Women and Children are Most At Risk

Every year in Canada, more than 100,000 women and children leave their homes to seek safety in a shelter. Gun violence is present in many of these cases, though intimidation, control and homicide. **Studies have shown that rates of homicide in domestic violence situations increase significantly when there is a firearm in the home.** "Long guns" — rifles and shotguns — are the guns most likely to be used. While the long-gun registry is often portrayed as a rural versus urban issue, rates of deaths with guns is higher in rural and northern areas, where access to guns is higher, and it is women and children living in these regions who are facing the greatest increased danger with the weakening of gun control in Canada.

*Join the fight for important safety protections for all women and children.*

## Just the Facts – Women and Gun Violence

- Most firearm-related deaths in Canada are caused by rifles or shotguns, and these are the guns most commonly used to threaten and injure. All firearms are lethal, and any gun in the wrong hands is dangerous. **We need controls on ALL guns.**
- When women are killed by their spouse using a gun, it is a **long gun in 72% of cases.** Since 1995 when controls on all firearms were first introduced, **spousal homicides with rifles and shotguns have decreased by 69%**, while the rate of spousal homicides using other means has remained the same.
- **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.
- Referring to the **7.1 million** registered **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 military guns designed to pierce light armor.

### The COALITION for Gun Control

[www.guncontrol.ca](http://www.guncontrol.ca) • [@CGCguncontrol](https://twitter.com/CGCguncontrol) • [coalitionforguncontrol@gmail.com](mailto:coalitionforguncontrol@gmail.com) • 416.604.0209

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 Association of Emergency Physicians, Canadian Paediatric Society, YWCA of Canada, City of Toronto, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, just to name a few. CGC was recipient of the Canadian Labour Congress 2011 Making a Difference in People's Lives Award.