

Response from Coalition for Gun Control about today's announcement from Minister Blaney

For Immediate Release

While Minister Blaney announced today the Government of Canada's intention to table the Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act, common sense actually indicates that we should strengthen not weaken our gun control laws. 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 await further details, but at first glance, it appears that the Conservative 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.

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.