

The Coalition for Gun Control congratulates the Government of Québec for standing firm: Bill 64: reinstates the registration of rifles and shotguns in Québec and controls on sales

For immediate release

MONTRÉAL, 13 June 2016 - On June 9, 2016, **Bill 64** was adopted at the National Assembly of Quebec by an overwhelming majority (99 MNAs in favor, 8 against) in spite of vocal opposition from the gun lobby, never before seen in the Province.

“Over the last 10 years, controls on firearms have been steadily eroded”, said Wendy Cukier, President of the Coalition for Gun Control an alliance of more than 300 public safety organizations. “Not only was the registration of rifles and shotguns ended and the data destroyed on who owned 6 million registered long guns, but controls on the sales of rifles and shotguns which had been in place since 1977 were lost. This presents one important step towards sensible controls. Most countries register rifles and shotguns.” The Coalition encouraged the Province to challenge the constitutionality of the ending of the registry but lost in a split decision made by five judges against four judges including three judges from Quebec. However, thanks to a civil suit, the data for Quebec was saved.

But the registration of rifles and shotguns is not all that Canadians lost. Bill C42 passed in 2015 proposes that transportation of handguns by licensed gun owners be unrestricted within the province of possession. It also relaxed controls on handguns and assault weapons. In fact, the number of legally owned restricted weapons in Canada has almost doubled over the past decade. Not only are legal guns sometimes misused but they fuel the illegal gun market domestically and internationally. Police have said that there are many military assault weapons being sold in Canada that should be prohibited but have been stymied in their efforts to take action. And the gun lobby blocked Canada’s ratification of key international agreements aimed at choking off the illegal gun trade. It continues to fight to relax controls, for example, launching a petition to have the AR15, a military assault weapon, classified as unrestricted, “so it can be used for hunting” (see <https://petitions.parl.gc.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-111>). The Federal government has promised to address some of the most egregious gaps in the system but has pledged not to bring back a national firearms registry.

“There is no right to bear arms in Canada – a point the Supreme Court of Canada has made time after time for example in 2005 writing “possession and use of firearms is not a right or freedom guaranteed under the Charter, but a privilege.” International law experts actually maintain that countries which do not protect their citizens from gun violence through appropriate legislation are failing their obligations under international human rights law. But American rhetoric floods Canadian discourse on gun control. There is clear evidence that the American gun lobby provides support and encouragement to its Canadian counterparts. We are grateful that Quebec has seen through the rhetoric and continues to place a priority on public safety.” said Cukier, who has led the Coalition for more than 25 years.

For more information: Call (416) 604-0209

You can also learn more about the Coalition for Gun Control: <http://guncontrol.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/TheGunControlStory.pdf>