

Canada's Coalition for Gun Control calls on Canadians to Join the Coalition and *March For Our Lives* And Push for Stricter Gun Laws at Home and in the U.S.

March 23, 2018, Toronto, ON: Members of Canada's Coalition for Gun Control (CGC) will join the March For Our Lives movement tomorrow in Washington, DC and in cities across Canada including Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and St. Johns, to name a few. It is expected to be one of the largest demonstrations for gun control since the Million Mom's march as organizers describe it as "the kids and families of March For Our Lives will take to the streets to demand that their lives and safety become a priority, and that we end gun violence in our schools and communities."

For almost three decades, Canada's Coalition for Gun Control has advocated for stronger gun laws and worked with groups in the United States and around the world to address the global problem. "When the USA failed to act following the murder of 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook, I thought that there was nothing that could counter the influence of the National Rifle Association," said Wendy Cukier, President of the Coalition for Gun Control. "I was wrong. The fact that the US legislature is considering new measures under the Trump administration suggests there is hope. Where adults have failed over and over, children and youth have succeeded. We may have reached a tipping point."

The Coalition for Gun Control, legal experts, victims of gun violence and women's groups were in Ottawa to push for stronger Canadian laws earlier this week when the Liberal government launched Bill C-71 to fill the loopholes created after a decade of measures to erode gun laws resulting in driving up gun crime. "While on the one hand, the experience of Canada compared to the United States clearly shows the effectiveness of stronger laws, Canadians ought not to be complacent," Cukier says. "In some respects, the U.S. has stronger regulations of gun dealers and the sale of firearms than we do in Canada."

For the first time in 30 years, police report more crime guns originated from legal owners in Canada than were smuggled in from the US. And the AR-15 weapon used in Portland, Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting and the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, which March For Our Lives wants to ban, is legally sold in Canada today. In the last decade, ownership of handguns and assault weapons and other restricted and prohibited weapons has doubled – there are now more than 1 million. This increases the risk to public safety.

Quotes:

CGC International Coordinator, Meagan Trush recently joined American and International NGOs at the United Nations meeting on the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. “Progress at the international level has been slow and Canada still has not ratified international agreements because of gaps in our domestic laws. But the excitement was palpable around the upcoming March For Our Lives and CGC supporters are joining the march in Washington D.C. alongside our American and global partners. We also look forward to working with Canadian government officials leading up to the next UN conference on this issue in June.

Priscilla de Villiers, Victim Justice Network, mother of Nina who was abducted and killed with a legally-owned unrestricted rifle in Burlington, ON in 1991 (in spite of the fact the killer was out on bail on violence offenses). “We are calling on Canadians to make their voices heard, to break the silence, to give voice to the voiceless, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children and society at large. Canadians should act now.”

Abby Couture, McGill University Student: “Gun control is an extremely important issue for my generation. Unlike our parents, we have had to grow up with the familiarity of guns in our schools, mass shootings and increased gun violence. I am rallying all of my peers and joining the Coalition for Gun Control at the Montreal March to show that we want stricter laws and we want them now.”

Founded in the wake of the Montreal Massacre, the Coalition for Gun Control was formed to support strategies through advocacy, research and education to reduce gun death, injury and crime. It is also a founding member of the International Action Network on Small Arms and works with New Yorkers for Gun Violence, the Brady Campaign and others to combat the misuse and illegal trade in guns.