



Canadian Federation of University Women
Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités

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www.cfuw.org

September 18, 2011

Ms. Nycole Turmel, M.P.
Interim Leader of the Opposition
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Turmel,

Re: Oppose Plans to Abolish the Long Gun Registry

I am writing you today on behalf of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to ask that the New Democrat Party oppose the Conservatives' plans to weaken Canada's gun controls. Jack Layton was a strong supporter of gun control, and worked to ensure that New Democratic members did not vote in favour of bill C-391, which sought to abolish the Long Gun Registry. The Conservative Government has indicated that abolishing the Long Gun Registry will be one of its top priorities. If they are successful, they will eliminate an important public safety tool that has helped decrease firearm-related homicide, suicide and accidental death.

Rifles and shotguns in the wrong hands are as deadly as handguns. Registering all firearms holds gun owners accountable for their firearms and reduces the chances that their guns will be diverted to unlicensed owners, helping to cut off an illegal supply. Police use the gun registry approximately 16,000 times a day, including when intervening in domestic disputes. It also assists in police investigations and aids in the removal of ALL guns from dangerous people, enforcing prohibition orders, and taking preventative action. Since the introduction of controls on all firearms, murders with rifles and shotguns have decreased dramatically, from 61 in 1995 (0.21 per 100,000) to 29 in 2009 (0.08 per 100,000). With that, the number of women murdered with firearms has decreased by 70 percent since 1991.

A recent poll has shown that two thirds of Canadians support the gun registry. Even in rural areas, the number of supporters equals the number of opponents. Although they are less vocal, the vast majority of people living with gun owners, and the majority of rural women, support the long gun registry. Licensing gun owners and registering firearms is also the norm internationally. Scrapping the long-gun registry will in effect, undermine our ability to meet our international commitments to combat gun trafficking.

Registration is a one-time procedure, which is free to the owner. The system that is in place has already resulted in the registration of 6.9 million rifles and shotguns. Abolishing the gun registry will not refund the financial investment made to set up the system, nor will it save Canada billions of dollars in the long run. According to the RCMP, eliminating the long gun registry would save less than



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\$4 million per year, which is miniscule in comparison to the costs incurred as a result of firearm death and injury (estimated at \$6.6 billion per year in 1995).

Evidence clearly shows that the long gun registry is effective and efficient in both cost and function, and most importantly - it saves lives. CFUW urges you and your party to continue Jack's legacy by working to end gun violence and oppose the Conservative Government's agenda to scrap the long gun registry.

CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization of close to 10,000 women university graduates, students and Associate Members in 112 Clubs across Canada that works to improve the status of women and human rights, education, social justice, and peace. CFUW holds special consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and belongs to the Education committee of the Canadian Sub-Commission to UNESCO. CFUW is the largest of the 61 affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

Sincerely,

Brenda Wallace

Brenda Wallace, CFUW National President

Cc:

Ms. Françoise Boivin, Status of Women Critic

Mr. Joe Comartin, Justice Critic

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, Public Safety Critic