

March 22, 2008

Mr. Lyndon Murdock, Acting Director  
Firearms and Operational Policing Policy Division  
Policing, Law Enforcement and Interoperability Branch  
269, Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON K1A 0P8

Dear Mr. Murdock:

Re: Canada Gazette, Part 1, Vol. 42, no. 9 – March 1, 2008

It has come to the attention of the National Council of Women of Canada that the Conservative government has filed, in the Parliamentary Gazette, their intention to renew the amnesty for failure to renew licences or to register rifles and shotguns for one year.

The National Council of Women of Canada is strongly in favour of gun control and any amnesty such as that currently in effect and being proposed for an additional year is just another step toward eliminating the requirement to register rifles and shotguns and the renewal process for licences. The Conservative government, by first introducing amnesty in 2006, has seemingly found an effective way to accomplish their aims by continually renewing this amnesty.

We, along with the police, believe that the gun registry is an important tool to prevent crime and to support criminal investigations, in addition to getting guns away from those who should not have them. It is equally important to have licences renewed to ensure that the data the Registry has is as up to date as possible. An amnesty encourages people to not renew their licences which puts the integrity of the data on file at risk.

We believe that the existing controls over rifles and shotguns have contributed to public safety. Compliance with the law has been estimated at over 90% (2 million gun owners, 7 million guns are in the system.) Since 1995, 333 fewer Canadians die annually from gunshots. Homicides with firearms are down, suicides with firearms are down, and domestic violence with firearms has gone down drastically (although murders by other means have not.)

The Coalition for Gun Control shows that the current system works, stating that 9000 licences were revoked from potentially dangerous persons. Those who support the Gun Control Registry include the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, the Canadian Police Association, the Centre for Suicide Prevention, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, and more than 40 women's organizations.

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The National Council of Women of Canada firmly believes that all firearms should be strictly controlled. Unrestricted rifles and shotguns are most often used in domestic violence, suicide, and police killings. They include the powerful semi-automatics such as that used at the Ecole Polytechnique and the "elephant gun" used to kill Constable Gignac in Laval. These guns are also frequently found in caches recovered from gangs and organized crime.

We believe that the licence renewal process is essential to allow for re-screening on a regular basis of risk factors for violence and suicide that are NOT currently in police databases reducing the chances that dangerous persons will obtain access to guns. The amnesty is being used to circumvent parliamentary process. It is leading to deterioration of the data currently available to police in the registry.

We, the National Council of Women of Canada, call for the Government of Canada to not renew this amnesty and to call for all Canadian gun owners to achieve compliance with the Gun Control Laws and Gun Control Registry.

Sincerely,

Karen Dempsey, President

***The National Council of Women of Canada*** is a federation comprised of Local Councils, Provincial Councils, and National Organizations. Founded in 1893, it was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1914 and has been designated by the Government of Canada as being of national historic significance for its role in Canadian women's history. For more information, consult our web site at [www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca) or contact our national office at #205, 251 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1X3.

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