

Coalition

for gun control/pour le contrôle des armes



Renew your support TODAY!

July 6, 2015

Dear Ms Bazinet,

It is hard to believe that it has been twenty five years since we formed **Canadians for Gun Control (CGC)** in the wake of the Montreal massacre. Modelled on best practices around the globe, a small group of public health professionals, police, and criminologists worked together on a strategy to strengthen gun control in Canada. **The CGC received its first of many letters of support from the Ontario Provincial Police Association on January 20, 1990.** Criminologists, mental health advocates and public safety experts joined the effort developing an evidence-based program for effective gun control including licensing, registration of all firearms and a ban on military assault weapons. Shortly after, the students of Polytechnique, joined forces and we became the **Coalition for Gun Control**. It grew to more than 300 organizations from across the country supporting stronger gun laws, many of them still working as hard today as they did at the beginning. The words I wrote 25 years ago are as true today as they were then:

"The government has tried to accommodate the perceived interests of the so-called firearms community, but it is not compelled to frame legislation in deference of their interests. There is also a mistaken but recurring notion that gun owners are experts on gun control. They may know about guns and they may know about the impact of guns but they are hardly reliable or objective sources on the subject of gun control. The police, the physicians, the criminologists and the majority of Canadians have clearly stated their position in support of tougher laws. There is no right to bear arms in this country but we do have a right to effective gun laws."

I recently testified before the Parliamentary Committee about the gun control issues in Bill C-42 and was shocked at the arguments still being made for the loosening of controls on firearms:

- *That we punishing the criminals.* But where do the criminals get their guns?
- *That training is the solution.* But lack of training is seldom the issue in homicides and suicides
- *That legally owned guns are not the problem.* The facts, and recent tragedies show otherwise.

These are the same tired claims that the gun lobby has made for more than twenty five years. One thing for certain that my experience yet again confirms is that our work is as important today as ever. Today the Coalition is the only national, citizen-funded not-for-profit organization working to reduce gun violence in Canada. We have had our victories and our set-backs but we cannot give up.

It has not been easy, but together we have been able to achieve amazing successes like the passage in 1995 of an internationally respected gun law and a victory at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2000. In the face of all the challenges and with very limited funds we have been able to accomplish a tremendous amount of work for a safer Canada and helped drive down rates of gun violence and death.

But, 2015 was a tough year for gun control. We lost a heartbreaking challenge in the Supreme Court of Canada, in a 5-4 decision. Our case aimed at forcing the federal government to hand over the records of 1.2 million rifles and shotguns to the Quebec Government. The strongly worded minority opinion reinforcing what we have known all along – that the federal government had no good reason for

destroying the data. Quebec has resolved to press forward with a provincial registry. Not content with the destruction of the registry, the federal Government rushed through legislation – Bill C-42 - that weakens licensing as well as controls on handguns and assault weapons and has refused to listen to police, public health or domestic violence experts who believe that the law will jeopardize public safety.

With a federal election looming, our work must continue. Your continued participation and support are critical. That is why I am asking you to please renew your support today. Our work depends on the generosity of donors like you.

With your support we were able to accomplish great things last year. On issue after issue, we have rallied support and stood up for gun control. This year we were able again to draw the media's attention to the fact that much of the action taken to weaken gun control has been shrouded in secrecy, veiled from the public. We also mobilized young Canadians to join the fight against gun violence by founding **Generation Action** to educate and engage youth. More than 15,000 action postcards were sent to elected officials so that Prime Minister Harper, Leader of the Opposition Thomas Mulcair and Liberal Party Leader Justin Trudeau know that thousands of concerned Canadians demand action on gun control.

Our hard work has been recognized. We were invited to participate in several high profile events commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre where our efforts were acknowledged. More recently the Coalition's work was recognized on Martin Luther King Day at Montreal's City Hall.

We continued to defend our law from the constant attacks by the Canadian gun lobby which works closely with the American National Rifle Association (NRA). For example, the National Firearms Association (one of Canada's largest anti-gun control groups) preyed on fears of violence. After the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting, it suggested that French residents should carry guns instead of their cell phones to protect themselves.

And arming for self protection, was invoked by the Prime Minister, who is also playing on those fears: *"after years of cautiously linking gun ownership to farmers and duck hunters, now says firearms are needed by rural Canadians for their own security so they can shoot people who pose a danger."* **Harper sparks controversy by linking guns and personal security.** *Ottawa Citizen 16/3/15.*

This past year we saw terrible evidence of the devastation caused by guns in the wrong hands:

- **Moncton shooting: Justin Bourque was armed with rifle, shotgun.** *National Firearms Association blasts gun rules after deadly attack - CBC News 5/6/14.*
- **Ottawa shooting: A day of chaos leaves soldier, gunman dead.** *Prime minister condemns 'brutal and violent attack' and vows 'Canada will not be intimidated' - CBC News 22/10/14.*
- **Lethbridge police investigating triple homicide.** *2 men, 1 woman found inside home - CBC News 28/4/15.*
- **Randy Janzen and family's recent history probed by police.** *Police say discovery of 3 badly burned bodies is consistent with apparent Facebook confession. CBC News 11/5/15*

The Coalition fights daily to protect us from the type of wholesale gun violence we see all too often in the U.S. The evidence is clear: strong gun control laws help make Canada a safer place. And we can do better.

While smuggled guns are part of the problem, **all of these incidents involved guns which were legally owned or stolen from Canadians.** Ottawa Police reported that about half of all guns seized last year were locally sourced. In Southwestern Ontario, 55% of the guns collected by London police that year were rifles and shotguns, the type of guns the federal government considerably weakened controls on. Former Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair has already commented on the negative effects the destruction of the registry has had in the fight against illegal guns and gun crime.

But in spite of the evidence that gun control works, Harper passed Bill C-42 further eroding the law. And the ways in which the government is operating are simply shocking.

- ***Omnibus budget bill rewrites history to clear RCMP of potential criminal charges.*** *The Harper government moved to retroactively rewrite Canada's access to information law in order to prevent possible criminal charges against the RCMP, The Canadian Press has learned. An unheralded change buried in last week's 167-page omnibus budget bill exempted all records from the defunct long-gun registry, and also any "request, complaint, investigation, application, judicial review, appeal or other proceeding under the Access to Information Act or the Privacy Act," related to those old records. Globe and Mail 13/5/15.*
- ***RCMP ordered to turn over Quebec's long-gun data to court.*** *A federal court has ordered the remnants of Quebec's long-gun data be turned over to the court. - Toronto Star 22/6/15.*

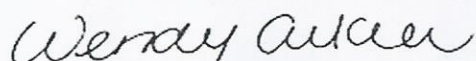
We have already stood together for a quarter of a century but **I need your help more than ever.** In this next year we have lots to do.

- Rally, mobilize and organize campaigns to make sure that the voices of the majority of Canadians are heard during the upcoming federal election so that our political leaders pay attention and stand up for safety;
- Fight misinformation with facts and hard evidence;
- Expose the political parties' track records on gun control during the election campaign;
- Get commitments to repeal C-42, to strengthen licensing, reinstitute controls on gun sales and find 21st century solutions to ways to combat the misuse and illegal sales of guns;
- Update the criteria used to classify firearms as restricted or prohibited to ensure military weapons are banned and handguns are strictly controlled;
- Monitor Canadian government positions at international forums on small arms, and how the weakening of our guns laws is breaching Canada's international obligations;
- Engage youth and encourage them to take an active role in the gun control movement. They are our future.

Please take a moment to renew your membership and send as generous a donation as you can. Your contribution of \$75, \$100, \$125 or even \$500 will allow us to carry on the fight in 2015 and work hard to stop gun violence.

Thank you so much for your quick action and your important support.

Yours truly,



Wendy Cukier, President, Coalitions for Gun Control

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

Our top projects

- ✓ Developed and launched a brand new campaign targeted at the next generation to raise awareness, build engagement and mobilize support.
- ✓ Developed and implemented a successful large-scale campaign to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre touching millions of Canadians from coast to coast.
- ✓ Prepared an assessment of Bill C-42 and its serious impact on public safety. We testified before committees in the House of Commons and the Senate and drew attention to the misuse of process and government efforts to rush the legislation through without proper analysis of its impacts.
- ✓ Maintained on-going media attention, focusing attention to the legal battles and the destruction of the registry data, as well as to the influence of the gun lobby on government policies
- ✓ We issued e-mail calls to action and news bulletins to our network. Working with public health, police, women's groups, labour, victims and other organizations to defend our gun control laws and speak out on critical issues.
- ✓ Exposed and combated the gun lobby's efforts to further weaken and undermine gun control measures, their implementation and enforcement.
- ✓ Drew attention to the federal government's public attack of the RCMP for attempting to enforce the prohibition on military weapons.
- ✓ Used Access to Information requests to learn critical information on government policies and plans related to gun control. Documents provided by CGC to media outlets obtained significant exposure in 2014.
- ✓ Conducted cutting edge research and continued to collect data, monitor progress and track the latest studies on firearm crime, death and injury.
- ✓ Grew our English and French Twitter followers. Follow us at @cgguncontrol and @cgcmontreal.
- ✓ Continued to renew the organizations and build support.

Generation Action: Gun Control the Next Generation

In this 25th anniversary year, there was no better time to ensure that today's youth is equipped to continue the fight and work at educating, engaging and mobilizing toward an end to gun violence. That's why we launched the Generation Action campaign. Our young activists spent the Fall creating opportunities to engage youth face to face in schools, community events and even at a film festival. They are also keeping the conversation going on the social media. CGC and Generation Action held a student poster to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Montreal massacre. Ten entries were selected and more than 7,000 votes were cast by the public.

