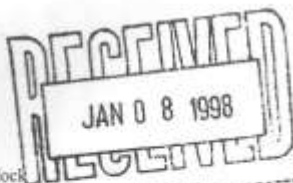


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Progressive Conservative Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire du Parti progressiste-conservateur

① December 9, 1997

Dear Mr. _____

I am writing in response to your correspondence addressed to the Minister of Justice, copies of which you have forwarded to me for comments.

I first would like to say that I agree with you in stating that killing is a criminal act, but owning a firearm is not and I would add, should not be considered as such.

I also would like to mention that next week, I will be tabling a dissenting opinion to the Standing Committee on Justice's Report on the Firearms Regulations that have emanated from Bill C-68. I invite you to read the Committee's report that will include my dissenting comments.

Please be assured that the Progressive Conservative Party's opinion about Bill C-68 has not changed: this legislation must be repealed as it does not effectively address the problems of crimes committed with firearms.

Since your letters deal directly with Bill C-68, let me take this opportunity to explain to you our position on that piece of legislation

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As a former Crown prosecutor, public safety is a very important issue for me and violence and crime are certainly problems that need to be addressed in a meaningful and effective way. It is clear to the Progressive Conservative Party Members including myself that something must be done to reduce crime involving firearms. It is also clear that the legislation tabled by the government will not realize this objective and yet will remain a significant cost to taxpayers. We estimate that more than \$500 million will be spent on the implementation of the government's gun control package, despite the fact that serious questions exist about the effectiveness of mandatory registration. This large sum of money will be spent with little or no impact on violent crime, or its causes, while major components of Bill C-17, the firearms legislation introduced by the previous PC government, remain unenforced.

It is easy to argue that such a large amount of money, if it is available, would be better spent directly addressing the fundamental causes of crime and violence itself, rather than on an unproven and indirect method such as mandatory registration. At the very least, the federal government should have ensured that the regulations under Bill C-17 were sufficiently enforced before introducing an additional set of regulations whose effectiveness and enforceability are doubtful at best.

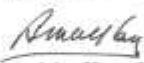
We all know that those who own illegal weapons cannot be counted on to register their weapons; whether it be through the FAC Program or a National Registry. As such, why should taxpayers spend the additional exorbitant amounts of money for a duplicate program which does not find any new solutions to the existing problems?

I believe I share the frustrations of many Canadians with this government's facade of dealing with a problem before actually addressing the issue at hand. Canadians deserve gun control which improves public safety. Without spending half a billion dollars, the government, for example, could do more to reduce the cross boarder weapons trade and to ensure that people who are no longer eligible to hold an FAC have their weapons removed.

In the meantime, rest assured that the repeal of Bill C-68 is one of the priorities for myself and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

Thank you once again for taking the time to share with me your position on gun control. Let me assure you that I have noted your comments and will transmit them to my colleagues.

Yours truly,


Peter MacKay, M.P.