



Canadian Network of Women's
Shelters & Transition Houses

Réseau canadien des maisons
d'hébergement pour femmes

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www.endVAW.ca
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October 31, 2011

Re: Bill C-19 (Ending the Long Gun Registry Act)

We, as members of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, are writing on behalf of those whose voices so often go unheard, on behalf of victims of domestic violence across this country, both past, present, and future, to implore you to reconsider scrapping Canada's long gun registry and vote against Bill C-19 (*Ending the Long-gun Registry Act*). In the past weeks, many articles and statistical reports have surfaced which underscore the value of the gun registry as a critical tool in reducing gun related deaths in Canada. With this letter, we stand together as a unified voice representing every provincial and territorial sheltering organization. Collectively, our organizations represent over 350 emergency and second stage shelters for abused women and their children across Canada.

Gun violence takes many forms including intimidation, control and homicide within domestic violence situations. In many cases, the mere presence of a firearm in the home is enough to instill fear and intimidate. Furthermore, women are more likely to express concern for their safety when the firearms aren't registered or safely stored. Many women who've sought refuge in Canada's women's shelters and transition houses have told us that they do not want these firearms to be unregistered. Sadly, we know that rifles and shotguns are the weapons of choice in violence against women situations and 72% of gun-related spousal homicides in Canada involve a shotgun or rifle. By scrapping the long gun registry, we are sending the message that long guns are the harmless cousins of handguns. We know better.

Many experts have recommended that the long-gun registry be maintained, including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime and countless others. On March 3, 2010, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, after hearing hours of testimony and weighing the evidence, concluded that the long gun registry promoted public safety and recommended that it not be scrapped. This was not a surprise to us. As grassroots organizations working both with women and children who've experienced gun-related trauma as well as police, who use the registry more than 17,000 times daily, we have witnessed first-hand the importance of this tool.

We are counting on you to reverse this decision, uphold the registry and maintain the data collected over the years. The mothers, the daughters, and the sisters of this country depend on it.

Sincerely,

The following members of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses:

United to End Violence Against Women
Unies contre la violence faite aux femmes





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