

Conservative government moves to end gun registry

The Liberal Party of Canada supports the gun registry in Canada because it works.

Canadians are safer today because of the work of the Liberal government in establishing the gun registry and other gun control measures. While there is always room for improvement it is important to take a proactive approach by making constructive changes to the system instead of scrapping it completely.

The Conservative government has introduced Bill S-5, an act to repeal the registration of firearms, into the Senate further reinforcing the Conservatives desire to weaken our gun laws. Instead of being proactive by maintaining the long gun registry they are putting money into creating more jails.

The Conservative government is currently ignoring the law by granting amnesty to those who do not register their guns— actively undermining the registry.



This is why the Liberal Party continues to oppose the kind of legislation being pushed by the Conservative government. Conservative MP Gary Breitkreuz's Bill C-301, for example, would actually allow fully automatic weapons to be driven through residential neighborhoods – something that has been illegal for more than a decade. The bill would also gut the registry on prohibited and restricted weapons. This bill is broadly opposed by every major group and association involved in promoting public safety.

The Conservative government wants to dismantle the gun registry. The Prime Minister sees this as yet another partisan wedge issue with which to divide rural and urban Canadians and to damage their political enemies rather than making good policy for the country.

The Conservative government has also suspended the registry of serial numbers on firearms imported into Canada breaking a convention that the previous Liberal government signed. Can you imagine a government not wanting to know what guns are coming into this country and where they are going?

The facts speak for themselves. Between 1995 and 2003, the total number of deaths due to firearms dropped by 70%. Homicides committed with rifles and shotguns – the weapons most likely to be used in domestic violence – are down by almost 40%.

Chiefs of Police across the nation support the current system. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police maintains that weakening any of our nation's gun controls, including long-gun registry, would "seriously compromise safety and that rifles and shotguns are weapons of choice for criminals and are the weapons most often used in domestic homicides".

The number of women killed by guns has dropped by 70% since 1991. For women and children in particular, there is no question that the gun registry has been an important step forward in preventing violence.

In 2008, police services queried the registry on average over 9,400 times per day, and more than 3.4 million times per year. This includes over 2 million checks of individuals, 90,000 address checks, and 74,000 checks of serial numbers on firearms.

It is also important that we engage in dialogue with the U.S. administration and enforcement officers on developing an effective strategy to combat the illegal smuggling of firearms across the Canada-U.S. border into Canada. According to the Canadian Emergency Physicians Report 2007, most firearms used in gang-related and youth homicides are illicit and have been smuggled from the U.S. The Liberal Party is prepared to support a multi-faceted approach with the US administration to devise mechanisms to prevent the illegal smuggling of guns

The Liberal Party will work with lawful, legitimate gun owners to make the registry better for everyone – but we categorically refuse to go along with any plan to get rid of the registry.