

November 14, 2018

The Honourable Bill Blair,
Minister for Border Security and Crime Reduction
Government of Canada

Re: Gun Violence Consultations

Dear Minister Blair:

In June 2018 the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) at their Annual General Meeting adopted policy titled “Curbing Gang Activity and Gun Violence”. This policy addresses preventive and interventions practices and urges your government to identify and act upon systemic problems underlying the issue of gang activity and gun violence. We are all aware that hardly a day goes by without a news item describing another incident involving gun violence frequently associated with gang activity.

There is no doubt that drugs and gang activity play a big role in gun violence. Rightly so, this must be addressed by the police and the criminal justice system. There is a large body of evidence however to indicate that violence is a symptom, not a cause. It is therefore critical that your consultation seriously consider the social issues that impact the problem. Poverty and social ills contribute significantly to what has become a national concern. The social and economic divide that promotes this in big cities and smaller towns across our country must be addressed.

This may require more reliable information to support a more informed discussion. Collaboration and consensus building with an emphasis on the collective benefits of halting this scourge and steering our young people in a positive direction will go a long way to address the real issues.

Political resolve is necessary. Broader issues that may indeed require long-term solutions are critical. All aspects must be considered including programs that will mitigate the recruitment of youths to criminal gangs and others to ensure rescue and rehabilitation; programs that support better educational outcomes; and as difficult as it may be to stop the flow of illegal firearms both from international and national sources this must be a priority.

Our members encourage your widespread consultation and the leadership that you are providing. We look forward to the final report and the on-going initiatives to address this national problem.

Sincerely,



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