



September 08, 2020

Honourable Bill Blair
Minister Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Government of Canada

Dear Minister Blair

Re: C-71, An Act to Amend Firearms Regulations

On behalf of the members of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), I urge you without delay to implement the entirety of the gun-control measures identified in Bill C-71. Gun-rights activists must not be given the opportunity or encouragement to tinker with or deflect focus from the provisions of this Bill which are intended to limit the availability and use of firearms.

Expanding background checks to determine eligibility and instances of intimate partner violence are particularly critical. It is well documented that, although women form a minority of gun owners, they represent the largest number of victims. Funding to implement these provisions must not become a major stumbling block that may result in the delay of the full implementation of this bill. Current budgetary challenges mean an immediate top priority must be the development of a funding proposal that will ensure the necessary support for this bill to be enacted.

In the thirty years since the event that has come to be referred to as the 'Montreal Massacre', the NCWC has held policy and advocated for gun control. In the past year, at least two major events have reinforced the need for a stronger emphasis on both gun control and the limiting of access to firearms. In April 2020, the twenty-two victims of an enraged gunman in Nova Scotia outnumber the victims in Montreal. The rampage in 2019 that extended from British Columbia across three adjacent provinces resulted in needless deaths, destruction, and a significant cost in policing. These two instances alone have strengthened the case for stronger gun control measures.

Many of your predecessors on the benches of the Federal Government were far more concerned with the backlash of law-abiding gun owners than they were with providing protection to the women, children, and communities who have borne the brunt of such vicious attacks as witnessed in Montreal and more recently, in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. The implementation of Bill C-71 will be a big step forward for all Canadians to be assured of a safe and secure future, free from gun violence.

The NCWC strongly urges you to be proactive and enact Bill C-71 as soon as possible; many Canadians are counting on you to follow through on your commitment to limit the availability and use of firearms.

Even one death due to gun violence is one death too many.

Sincerely

Patricia Leson, President
National Council of Women of Canada

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of First Nations and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.

*With thanks to Monica Cullum, NCWC Convenor, who prepared this letter.

