



February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

Dear Minister Blair

**Re: Bill C-21, A series of Amendments to Existing Laws (Firearms)**

On behalf of the membership of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), I am writing to express our disappointment in the proposed amendments to the above Bill, which are intended to restrict firearms possession in Canada. The NCWC first adopted policies on gun control in 1975, and we have been pleased to note the many positive legislative changes that have been enacted since that time. However, the amendments you have recently introduced to the possession of assault-style weapons and handguns still are not far reaching enough to ensure the safety of Canadians.

The amendments you introduced were the fulfillment of an election promise made by our Prime Minister. An Ipsos poll taken before the Nova Scotia incident (May 2020) showed that a large majority of Canadians were concerned about public safety due to the rise in in firearms related violence and supported a ban on assault-style weapons. This number increased significantly following the mass shooting in Nova Scotia.

The NCWC agrees with the Prime Minister in his stated response to the incident in Nova Scotia, "There is no use – and no place – for such weapons in Canada." Although the buy-back program is designed to encourage owners to relinquish these weapons, it is completely voluntary. It is our considered opinion that a mandatory program would be more effective in accomplishing this goal.

Our second concern is the downloading of the responsibility for enacting the use of handguns onto the municipalities. This raises the spectrum of adjacent municipalities enacting (or not) differing laws to address the problem. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already introduced laws prohibiting municipalities within their jurisdictions from banning handguns, in contradiction of the fact that handguns are the most used weapons in homicides. Leaders in many large municipalities join us in stating a national law is needed that would ensure compliance throughout Canada.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to reconsider Bill C-21 and uphold your government's commitment that it would do everything in its power to keep Canadian communities safe and reduce firearms violations.

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 Indigenous 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.***

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