

Don't Play Politics with Women's Lives Says Equality Coalition

Women Tell Leaders to Support the Gun Registry and Women's Safety

Ottawa, April 28, 2011 – Women across Canada are endorsing an open letter to party leaders urging them to preserve the long gun registry to prevent an increase in gun deaths of women and children. The Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights, representing 42 women's groups, unions and human rights organizations, is calling on women to sign on to support the long gun registry as a tool for women's safety.

"We issued this letter to say to party leaders, don't play politics with women's lives," said Paulette Senior, CEO of YWCA Canada, the nation's single largest provider of shelter for women and children fleeing violence, "the registry is here to stay. That was confirmed when Bill C-391 failed. And it failed because Canadians understand the long gun registry is a modern database that police use every day for their own safety and always before they go on a domestic violence call. People got the message that ending the registry is not in the best interests of women living with violence."

"Women across Canada know the gun registry works," said Barb Byers, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Labour Congress. "Women know it makes our communities and our workplaces safer. It's that simple. Doing away with it would make women less safe. It would make our workplaces less safe, and it would make the jobs of police officers and first responders less safe."

Long guns are the guns most commonly used in spousal homicides, especially when women are the victim. The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee found firearms to be present in 47% of domestic homicides in 2007. Since the registry's creation, gun deaths in Canada have fallen significantly. In 1995, 1125 Canadians were killed with guns. In 2007, the latest year for which figures are available, Statistics Canada reported 723 deaths due to firearms. By 2009, the rate of murders with rifles and shotguns had dropped by more than 62% from 1995.

Police and physicians on the public record in support of the long gun registry include the Canadian Association of Police Boards, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians and the Canadian Paediatric Society.

Supporters are invited to sign on to the Open Letter at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/supportguncontrol/>