

**POLYSESOUVIENT.CA**  
*Polytechnique Students and Graduates  
for Gun Control*



**NEWS RELEASE**

**New regulations to further weaken Firearms Act:  
Rushed hearings / Hushed process / Loss for public safety**

**Ottawa, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012** – Only days before Parliament’s summer recess, the federal government tabled<sup>i</sup> draft regulations<sup>ii</sup> to prevent gun businesses from being forced to collect point-of-sale data on long gun transactions as a condition under the **Firearms Act** – a requirement that exists in Canada since 1977. Business sales records are essential to monitor commercial gun sales, and a simple and cost effective way to prevent sales to unauthorized buyers.

Following an unannounced appearance yesterday by **Public Safety minister Vic Toews** before the **Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security**<sup>iii</sup> (the only testimony regarding these regulations before the **House of Commons**), a handful of witnesses were hastily summoned to testify before the **Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs**, for no more than three hours of hearings that will take place today and tomorrow<sup>iv</sup>. No public health authority, suicide prevention organization or women’s groups has been invited to testify. (**Polysesouvient** is scheduled to testify Thursday morning at 11h30.)

*“Vic Toews might as well be wearing a crown on his head. These regulations will have a profound impact on crime prevention, yet they are being rushed through Parliament with little or no debate, and for no other reason than to please the gun lobby,”* says **Heidi Rathjen**, a witness to the **École Polytechnique** tragedy and **spokesperson for Polysesouvient**.

*“For over 35 years, these ledgers have never been the subject of any serious complaint and were not even used to create the long gun registry. The ‘debate’ regarding these records is a manufactured controversy that surfaced only after the adoption last April of Bill C-19 — because the gun lobby then decided that destroying the long gun registry wasn’t enough. Having witnessed the damage caused by one single long gun in the wrong hands, we are stunned and outraged at this additional gift to the gun lobby. The regulations represent another cruel insult to the witnesses and victims of gun crimes, to police officers who risk their lives every day, as well as to the public that expects a minimum of precautions against illegal gun sales.”*

**Victims’ advocate Priscilla de Villiers** who was prepared to testify on the regulations but was not invited says: *“According to the government the simple act of having their name and address recorded alongside the make and model of their firearm during a purchase will cause ‘difficulties for hundreds of thousands of people’ and must be dealt with urgently. I can tell you that, having lost my daughter to a sexual predator with a .22 rifle, this requirement pales in comparison to the difficulties faced by the victims of gun crime. I have also experienced firsthand the terror and anger of a community fearing an unidentified killer in their*

*midst, armed and dangerous. The inconvenience of registering the purchase of a gun pales by comparison to all the forms and processes that we, who have lost children or have been injured by gun violence, continue to live with for many years.” Ms. de Villiers’s full submission to the Senate on the regulations is on-line at:*

[http://www.guncontrol.ca/English/Home/Releases/Submission\\_De\\_Villiers.pdf](http://www.guncontrol.ca/English/Home/Releases/Submission_De_Villiers.pdf)

**Steve Sullivan, executive director, Ottawa Victim’s Service**, adds: *“The voices of advocates for women who experience domestic and sexual violence are once again being ignored. Given that this minimum protection is being stripped away, we fear what will come next and what the impact will be on abused women.”*

Business ledgers consist of detailed forms on weapons (make, model, serial number) and their status (in for repair, sold to which buyer, in storage, etc.) that police contrast against a gun store’s inventory to ensure that every gun is accounted for. Any missing firearm can be flagged. In other words, sales records allow the police to reduce the risk of legal guns being diverted to illegal markets.

Police associations have argued that sales records are an essential tool for solving gun related crimes. The tracing of a gun found at the scene of a crime to its initial seller and buyer is an important starting point for a police investigation. Indeed, sales records enabled police to identify the perpetrator of the Montreal Massacre in 1989.

*“Sales records are used to monitor commercial gun sales, not gun ownership by individual. Even in the United-States, gun stores are required to keep sales records. The only people that these requirements could trouble are merchants who intend on conducting illegal transactions. These individuals are likely very grateful for such new favourable circumstances — courtesy of a government that purports to be hard on crime,”* concludes **Ms Rathjen**.

**Polysesouvient’s** bilingual brief is on-line at:

[http://www.polysesouvient.ca/Documents/MEMO\\_12\\_06\\_21\\_Polysesouvient\\_Reglements\\_BILINGUE.pdf](http://www.polysesouvient.ca/Documents/MEMO_12_06_21_Polysesouvient_Reglements_BILINGUE.pdf)

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*Polysesouvient.ca représente l’Association des Étudiants de Polytechnique, l’Association des étudiants aux cycles supérieurs de Polytechnique, le C.A. de l’Association des diplômés de Polytechnique, le président de l’Association des Étudiants de Polytechnique 1989-1990, le président de l’Association des étudiants aux cycles supérieurs de Polytechnique 1987-1988, le président de la 114e Promotion (1989-1990) et de nombreux témoins et survivants du massacre du 6 décembre 1989 et leurs familles.  
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<sup>i</sup> **Public Safety Canada**, Press release, June 13<sup>th</sup> 2012. <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/media/nr/2012/nr20120613-2-eng.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> Proposed regulations: [http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/LOI\\_12\\_06\\_13\\_ProjetReglementsRegistresDeVente.pdf](http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/LOI_12_06_13_ProjetReglementsRegistresDeVente.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> **ParlVu**, House of Commons SECU Meeting No. 47, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012.

<http://parlvu.parl.gc.ca/ParlVu/TimeBandit/PowerBrowser.aspx?ContentEntityId=9244&EssenceFormatID=494>

<sup>iv</sup> Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup> **Senate LCA Committee schedule:**

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/sencommitteebusiness/CommitteeMeetingSchedule.aspx?parl=41&ses=1&Language=E&comm\\_id=11&searchMetings=1&fromDate=2012-06-20&toDate=2012-06-20](http://www.parl.gc.ca/sencommitteebusiness/CommitteeMeetingSchedule.aspx?parl=41&ses=1&Language=E&comm_id=11&searchMetings=1&fromDate=2012-06-20&toDate=2012-06-20); Thursday June 21<sup>st</sup> **Senate LCA schedule:**

[http://www.parl.gc.ca/sencommitteebusiness/CommitteeMeetingSchedule.aspx?parl=41&ses=1&Language=E&comm\\_id=11&searchMetings=1&fromDate=2012-06-21&toDate=2012-06-21](http://www.parl.gc.ca/sencommitteebusiness/CommitteeMeetingSchedule.aspx?parl=41&ses=1&Language=E&comm_id=11&searchMetings=1&fromDate=2012-06-21&toDate=2012-06-21)