



SEARCH

Gun control advocates celebrate Quebec judge's ruling on registry

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Gun control advocates were relieved that the Quebec Superior Court ruled in favour of maintaining the gun registry in Quebec and hoped that decision will encourage other provinces to take similar steps.

"A gun registry only in Quebec is better than no registry at all," said Heidi Rathjen, a prominent gun control advocate in Quebec. "Perhaps this ruling will influence other provincial governments as to whether or not they want to take on the federal government to protect their citizens."

Ms. Rathjen is head of *Polysesouvient*, a group commemorating the victims of the December 1989 École Polytechnique massacre. Lone gunman Marc Lépine, armed with a rifle, killed 14 women and injuring 10 others as well as four men in what he called his fight against feminism.

The Polytechnique massacre sparked a massive social movement in support of the victims' families and students demand for a tougher gun control law and the creation of a gun control law by Ottawa to abolish the gun registry, gun control activists were now focussed on protecting Quebec's right to create its own system.

"Quebec is now a step closer to having its own registry," Ms. Rathjen said. "This ruling underlined the obvious, which is that the federal government has not acted in good faith to create an effective crime prevention tool."

Ms. Rathjen and other advocates for tougher gun control believed that Quebec has every right to maintain and preserve the data contained in the gun registry and that the ruling will help keep updating the information until the legal battle is over.

Gun control advocates hope that today's ruling will help the legal case of a private women's clinic in Toronto also seeking a court injunction to stop the destruction of the federal gun registry. "The ruling can only help in the context of the Toronto case," Ms. Rathjen said.

After last week's shooting in Montreal at the Parti Québécois election victory celebrations where one man was killed and another seriously wounded, gun control advocates believe that the Quebec for maintaining the gun registry will motivate the newly elected PQ government to mount even more political pressure on Ottawa as well as pursue the legal battle.

"Given the events of last week I would think that their determination to see this through the end will be stronger than ever," Ms. Rathjen said.