

Poly Remembers

Students and Graduates of
Polytechnique for gun control



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NEWS RELEASE

Firearms classification:

Victims welcome statement from Public Safety Minister, remain concerned about Prime Minister's comments

81% of Canadians agree that private ownership of semi-automatic assault weapons for recreational purposes should not be legal in Canada

<p>ARMALITE M-15 Defensive Carbine <u>Legal in Canada</u></p>  <p>"Restricted" = need to be a member of gun club or a gun collector to own</p>	<p>Sig Sauer MCX <u>Legal in Canada</u></p>  <p>"Restricted" = need to be a member of gun club or a gun collector to own (Used to kill 49 and injure 28 in an Orlando, Florida night club, June 12th 2016)</p>
<p>Kel-Tec RDB <u>Legal in Canada</u></p>  <p>"Non restricted" = not registered, no one knows who owns them (Approved for sale in Canada by the RCMP in September 2017)</p>	<p>CZ Scorpion EVO <u>Legal in Canada</u></p>  <p>"Restricted" = need to be a member of gun club or a gun collector to own (Approved for sale in Canada by the RCMP in March 2017)</p>

Montreal, May 8, 2018 – Poly Remembers (which represents victims of gun violence) welcomed the comments made by **Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale** during his testimony before the parliamentary committee studying **Bill C-71** indicating his willingness to consider changes to the criteria that determines whether a firearm is legal or prohibited, while remaining concerned that the **Prime Minister continues to pass the buck to the RCMP**.

"The Prime Minister's position is somewhat misleading," said **Heidi Rathjen**, spokesperson for the group. "It's the law, not the RCMP, that determine which weapons are legal and which ones are prohibited. Passing the buck to the RCMP is just a good way of avoiding the question, namely, should the private possession of semi-automatic military-style weapons be allowed in Canada?"

Although the complexity of the law, as well as some firearm models, may require a certain level of interpretation, the **RCMP** isn't the one that decides the rules of classification. Essentially, the **RCMP's**

role is to apply the legal criteria — criteria that is established by **Parliament**.

What the **Prime Minister** was referring to is the power the **Conservatives** gave themselves (via **Bill C-42**) to overrule the **RCMP's** interpretation of the law. In other words, the Minister of Public Safety can decide, quite arbitrarily and antidemocratically, that the law does not apply to certain weapons. This is what **former Conservative Minister Steven Blaney** did on the eve of the 2015 elections in the cases of the **Swiss Arms** and **CZ-858** models. (The **RCMP** had determined that these models were prohibited based on their **ability to be converted to automatic mode** — a characteristic that **makes them prohibited by law**.)

"We strongly support the elimination of this arbitrary power, just as we support the reinstatement of the proper classification for the Swiss Arms and CZ-858 models."

What about assault weapons?

*"The problem is that C-17 in no way changes the legislative criteria that allows assault weapons to be legal, and this despite several **warnings from the RCMP** regarding their risk to public safety. And so far, the only response to the idea of banning assault weapons from the Liberals has been to divert the discussion towards enforcement by the "experts" at the RCMP.*

*"After years of calling for their ban, we are still in the dark regarding the Liberals' stand on assault weapons. Given that a ban is **supported by 80% of the public**, in addition to police associations, police chiefs and victims of gun violence, Canadians are entitled to know whether their government agrees or disagrees with the private possession of assault weapons for recreational purposes.*

*"That being said, we welcome Minister Goodale's openness to legislative proposals related to the classification of firearms. This is the first time this government has mentioned the possibility of changing the law in this regard," concludes **Ms. Rathjen**.*

→ Poly Remembers brief on C-71 : http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/MEMO_18_05_06_Brief_C71.pdf

→ Statements in reaction to the [request of the victims and survivors of the Quebec Mosque tragedy](#) to ban assault weapons:

...le premier ministre s'est félicité d'avoir remis entre les mains de la police fédérale, avec le projet de loi C-71, le pouvoir de prendre des décisions en matière de classification des armes au pays. Il estime qu'aller à contre-courant du gouvernement conservateur de Stephen Harper, qui avait transféré ce pouvoir «aux politiciens», constitue la meilleure approche, car ces décisions ne devraient pas être «politiques», mais plutôt en fonction «des choix des experts».

[OTTAWA - Justin Trudeau says the police, not politicians, should be the ones to determine the restrictions placed on specific kinds of guns.](#) ... Trudeau touts provisions of his government's firearms bill that would restore the authority of RCMP experts to classify firearms without political influence, repealing cabinet's authority to overrule Mountie determinations.

(Ralph Goodale's testimony - from 11:27 to 11:29): "We have put into Bill C-71 a very important change in process by insuring that the decision with respect to the technical categorization of firearms is in the hands of the professional unit within the RCMP and is not subject to a political second guess. The principle here is ... that Parliament should define the categories, and then the experts within the RCMP will make the technical judgement as to which firearm falls into which category. If Parliament comes forward with a proposal, certainly, my attitude towards any legislation before standing committee, if parliament wishes to make a proposal to amend that legislation, I will give it fair consideration. I'm open to all constructive suggestions and ideas."