

March 17, 2021

[Translation of French original]

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Re: Bill C-21, a betrayal of the victims, survivors and families destroyed by mass shootings

Mr. Prime Minister

This letter is addressed to you in a personal capacity and does not bind the various groups of which we are a part. We are writing to express our anger with respect to the dismal Bill C-21. This bill gives the appearance of a follow-up to your election commitments, but in reality it does not respect them at all and therefore cannot satisfy us. While you and your government may be able to deceive a large segment of the population with empty talking points and catchy slogans, you cannot fool the families and survivors who have been fighting for gun control for over thirty years. We know what we are talking about.

And to add insult to injury, you have presented this bill as a response to the pain of the victims and their families. As you do year after year at every memorial, you say that you share the pain and suffering that we are experiencing. This is not true, Mr. Prime Minister. For if this were truly the case, you would have had the courage to follow through with your convictions. By introducing this bill, you are playing into the hands of the gun lobby. In a few months, at worst in a few years, the ban on assault weapons will be overturned by the next Conservative government (which has already promised to do so). And we will have gained nothing. Once again.

Do you realize that your bill changes nothing? Tomorrow, a week from now, a year from now, killers like those of Polytechnique, Dawson or the Quebec Mosque, all licensed owners of legally acquired assault weapons, could commit the same massacres with the same weapons and the same high-capacity magazines.

Indeed, despite the demonstrated risks of these weapons, you have chosen not to remove them from circulation! You say that under no circumstances can these weapons be legally fired, not a single bullet, but you are not requiring that they be rendered inoperable! You have also chosen to do nothing to stop the sale of modifiable magazines that can, by the simple removal of a pin, regain their full illegal capacity. Yet 30 bullets fired without the need to reload multiplies the damage as well as the death toll. We know this, unfortunately.

No, we will not be safer because of your bill.

Do you realize that your bill does not correct any of the flaws in the system that have been identified by various coroners' inquests or journalistic investigations in relation to access to guns by at-risk individuals? On the contrary, you propose to create an additional burden for potential victims by offering them a more cumbersome and time-consuming process for removing the firearms of a potential aggressor. Do you think it is easy to go to court when one is afraid? Or to face your aggressor while arguing to take his guns away? And all this based on the same criteria that failed to remove guns from individuals who ended up killing their accusers...

No, we will not be safer because of your bill.

Do you realize that your bill aims to create a patchwork of over 3000 bylaws in municipalities that never asked for nor want this authority? What a legal debacle and ineffective approach! Another needless burden on the backs of elected municipal officials who already have enough on their plate providing local services. Face up to your own responsibilities, Mr. Prime Minister!

No, we will not be safer because of your bill.

We cannot tolerate this anymore. We have had the very great privilege of meeting with you on a few occasions since 2014, including on the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique femicide and your second year as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. Every time, you expressed your compassion for the tragic events and the drama that the families of the victims of December 6, 1989 had to live through. On each occasion, you also personally expressed your intention to do "the necessary work" to restore reasonable gun controls in Canada.

We believed you during the 2015 election: "Sunny ways" is what you said. Your fervor at the funeral following the Quebec City Mosque attack in 2017 and again at its first commemoration renewed our confidence. The precision and scope of your 2019 election promises, followed by the Orders in Council that froze the assault weapons market on May 1, 2020, gave us real hope. Finally, the Ruger mini-14 used by the Polytechnique killer as well as all military style semi-automatic weapons will be banned from Canada, once and for all! All that was missing was the legislation that would make this decision permanent and the details of the mandatory buy-back program.

With Bill C-21, you have abandoning the survivors, the families of victims, the witnesses of gun violence as well as Canada's future generations. If this bill is not radically changed, if the buyback program is not made mandatory, if a simple decision by a future government can overturn the assault weapons ban, we lose the battle, and we lose faith in you and your government.

Mr. Trudeau, we, survivors, families of the victims and students of Polytechnique, launched the modern gun control movement in the wake of the events of December 6, 1989. In January 1990, we held our first press conference to call for stricter gun laws. For 31 years, we have fought a difficult and acrimonious battle for tougher controls so that Canada can be a country where citizens are protected from gun violence and where, as you yourself said on February 16, our children can grow up feeling safe. But with Bill C-21, this possibility becomes illusive.

If you carry on with this bill, we will never again accept to have you by our side as we mourn the death of our daughters, our sisters, our friends, during annual commemorations.

Please respect the will of the vast majority of Canadians who share our belief that our safety is worth more than the privilege of some.

Be assured of our willingness to contribute to Canadian society and to the safety of all our fellow citizens.

Yours sincerely

(Signatures follow)

C.C.: Minister of Public Safety
Minister of Justice
Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Suzanne Laplante Edward
Mother of Anne-Marie Edward

Jim Edward
Father of Anne-Marie Edward

Jimmy Edward
Brother of Anne-Marie Edward

Sylvie Haviernick
Sister of Maud Haviernick

Anna Klucznik
Mother of Barbara Klucznik

Pawel Wiktor Klucznik
Bother of Barbara Klucznik

Jean-François Larivée, P.Eng, M.Sc.A
Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1988
Husband of Maryse Laganière

Pierre Lemay
Father of Anne-Marie Lemay

Michelle Proulx
Mother of Anne-Marie Lemay

Isabel Lemay
Sister of Anne-Marie Lemay

Carmen Pépin
Mother of Annie Turcotte

Donald Turcotte
Brother of Annie Turcotte

Fabiola Turcotte
Niece of Annie Turcotte

Heidi Turcotte
Niece of Annie Turcotte

Zoé Turcotte

Niece of Annie Turcotte

Serge St-Arneault

Brother of Annie St-Arneault

Laurette Perron

Mother of Annie St-Arneault

Lucie St-Arneault

Sister of Annie St-Arneault

Sylvain St-Arneault

Brother of Annie St-Arneault

Henriette Thérien

Mother of Barbara Daigneault

Louise C. Daigneault

Cousin of Barbara Daigneault,
Barbara Daigneault Foundation

Gilles Simoneau

Uncle of Barbara Daigneault

Claude Jeanson

Close friend of Barbara Daigneault's family

Louise Laporte

Close friend of Barbara Daigneault's family

Louise Prévost Brisson

Close friend of Barbara Daigneault's family

Marcel Brisson

Close friend of Barbara Daigneault's family

Sylvie Bouchard, Eng

Graduate of the École Polytechnique –
1992

Survivor

Geneviève Cauden, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1994
Survivor

France Chrétien, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
Survivor

Josée Martin, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
Survivor

Nathalie Provost, M. Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
Survivor

Jean-Paul Bailon, Eng.

Professor at École Polytechnique (1971-
2008)

Witness

Martin Bureau, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1992
Witness

Maryse Dandurand

Employee of École Polytechnique (1973-
2008)

Witness

Témoin Benoît Laganière, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1991
Witness

Eric Pagé-Chavarie, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
Witness

Alain Perreault, B.Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
President of the Polytechnique Student
Association (1989-1990)

Witness

Heidi Rathjen, B.Eng, Dr.h.c., LLD, M.S.C

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1990
Witness

Stéphane Rouillon, Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1992
Witness

Hélène Thibault, B.Eng

Graduate of École Polytechnique – 1993
Witness

*[Electronic signatures removed on this public version;
signatures in dark blue added after official letter sent]*