

PolySeSouvient / Poly Remembers

Étudiants et diplômés de Polytechnique pour le contrôle des armes
Students and Graduates of Polytechnique for gun control

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Montreal, September 24, 2021

[Translation of [French original](#)]

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

Re: Fulfilling gun control election commitments without delay

Mr. Prime Minister,

Allow us to begin by congratulating you on the re-election of the Liberal Party as well as your own ascent to a third term as Prime Minister of Canada. As you know, PolySeSouvient encouraged voting Liberal during the election campaign. Indeed, your May 2020 Orders in Council banning some 1,500 models of assault weapons and your clear and precise [promise](#) for a mandatory buyback program allowed us to overcome our disappointment with the [Liberal Party's weak approach to gun control](#) since 2012.

In fact, the [importance](#) that the gun control issue gained over the election campaign as well as the conviction that [you](#) and [your candidates](#) displayed throughout have given us confidence that a real ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines will finally be achieved under the next Liberal government. As you know, banning paramilitary weapons has been our primary goal [since 1989](#).

We are writing to you today to present to you what we believe is required, from our perspective, to fulfill your gun control election commitments with sincerity and determination. We are convinced that the Canadian public, whose votes were [clearly influenced](#) by the issue, expects, as we do, swift and bold action to strengthen our gun laws.

We will not dwell on the weakness of Minister Ralph Goodale's Bill C-71, which purported to respect your 2015 promises when in reality [very few have been fulfilled](#), including the [verification of the validity of a prospective buyer's licence](#). We will additionally not go into detail about the empty nature of Minister Bill Blair's Bill C-21, legislation that is practically void of any effective measures. This legislation not only [went against a key 2019 promise](#) but would have [worsened the situation](#) by offloading the possibility of banning handguns to municipalities and by proposing a "red flag" measure that would increase the burden on victims and potential victims.

To ensure an approach that is in accordance with what Canadians expect, we ask that you appoint a minister of Public Safety or of Justice (who held the file in the past) who truly supports gun control, like Minister Alan Rock who spearheaded the adoption of the 1995 Bill C-68, a ground-breaking law that was strong and

comprehensive before it was destroyed by Stephen Harper's government. For example, a minister or member of Parliament who publicly defended Bill C-21 would not be trustworthy to deliver on gun control in our eyes.

In short, we ask that you appoint a minister who we can count on to:

- 1) conduct meaningful consultations before bills or regulations are drafted, namely with chiefs of police, police representatives, organizations that fight against domestic violence, public health and suicide prevention specialists, legal experts, etc., in addition to victims organizations and user groups like hunters and gun stores (lobby groups whose main objective is to [defend non-existent gun "rights"](#) or who [advocate civil disobedience](#) are not credible stakeholders in our eyes),
- 2) implement a mandatory buy-back or alteration (rendering permanently inoperable) program for newly prohibited assault weapons as soon as possible, as the amnesty for current owners ends on April 30, 2022, and refuse to grant any delay in implementation associated with the legal challenges launched by pro-gun interests,
- 3) complete the Orders in Council in order to prohibit numerous models that were not covered by the regulations (e.g.: [WK180](#), [IWI Tavor](#), [SKS](#), [Deyra MK](#), [Type 97](#), etc.),
- 4) enshrine into the law a new definition of "prohibited" weapons to complete and make permanent the assault weapons ban, and establish a pre-approval process for all new firearm models,
- 5) eliminate all the [loopholes, exemptions and exceptions](#) related to magazines to ensure universal compliance with the legal limits of 5/10 rounds, while considering the public safety benefits of a 5-round limit for all magazines as supported [by 7 out of 10 Canadians](#),
- 6) prioritize the implementation of Bill C-71 which was adopted two and a half years ago,
- 7) amend the draft regulations tabled before the election enabling the implementation of Bill C-71 to ensure the systematic verification of the validity of a potential buyer's licence as was promised in 2015,
- 8) avoid offloading the responsibility to further restrict or ban handguns (including to provinces) in order to implement a federal ban as is the wish of [7 out of 10 Canadians](#), and immediately institute a freeze on new handgun acquisitions (or, at a minimum, a moratorium on new imports and manufacturing),
- 9) strengthen the criteria in the law leading to the automatic denial of a possession permit, invest substantial resources in screening for licence applicants and to train police and the courts on the importance of preventative measures (in order to prioritize the precautionary principle with respect to permit refusals and revocations, and gun confiscations), and eliminate the six-month grace period for owners who fail to renew their licences,
- 10) improve police access to sales records to allow data collection and compilation, including by eliminating the need for a search warrant, so that police can better trace the origin of a non-restricted firearm and detect suspicious transaction patterns such as mass purchases, and
- 11) implement the international firearms marking regulations in accordance with Canada's obligations under two international treaties to combat illegal trafficking - instead of [continually delaying them](#).

Today, Mr. Prime Minister, all the necessary conditions are in place for you to meet the expectations of Canadians with respect to gun control: a clear mandate, strong public support, a politically discredited gun lobby and the support of two opposition parties, particularly the [Bloc Québécois](#) in addition to the [NDP](#).

All that remains is to appoint a minister who is up to the task.

As you know, gun crime and violence are on the rise in Canada, and handgun sales are increasing exponentially. These sad statistics will not change until there is concrete and significant change on the ground, something we have not seen since you took office six years ago.

We very much look forward to working with you and your next government to protect Canadians and future generations from gun violence.

Sincerely,

[Signatures removed for publication]

Nathalie Provost, graduate of Polytechnique,
survivor and spokesperson for PolySeSouvient

Heidi Rathjen, graduate of Polytechnique
and coordinator of PolySeSouvient