

Poly Remembers

Students and Graduates of
Polytechnique for gun control



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NEWS RELEASE

Bill C-71

Victims group condemns bill that provides bare minimum and fails to put public safety first

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 <u>September 2017</u>)</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 <u>March 2017</u>)</p>

Montréal, March 20th 2018 — Witnesses, survivors and families of the victims of the **École Polytechnique, Dawson College** and **Quebec Mosque** tragedies welcomed the tabling of **Bill C-71**, the long-awaited reform of the **Firearms Act** promised in the last election by the **Liberal Party**. However, a preliminary review of the bill reveals an incomplete set of unnecessarily weak measures.

"While the government may have somewhat respected the letter of its election commitments, it did not respect the spirit. The measures contained in the bill consist of the very bare minimum in order to technically fulfill some — not all — of the Liberal's election promises. It seems very clear to us that the primary intent is not to maximize public safety but to minimize the ire of the gun lobby while looking like they are doing something," says **Heidi Rathjen**, **Polytechnique** graduate and spokesperson for

Poly Remembers (PolySeSouvient). Media reports have recounted how gun legislation was “[scaring the hell out of the Liberal caucus](#)” because of their fear of the gun lobby.

Meaghan Hennegan, who survived the mass shooting at **Dawson College**, adds: *“We are especially disappointed with the failure of the Trudeau government to address the legal availability of assault weapons. The weapon that was used to shoot me and many other of my classmates is [more easily accessible](#) today. This is [totally messed up](#). The Liberals were elected to a majority on a pro-gun control platform, and the overwhelming majority of Canadians supports a ban on assault weapon, including a majority of gun owners! The only ones who oppose reigning in these killing machines are a loud minority of gun enthusiasts. On this issue of the availability of assault weapons, it sure looks like the Trudeau government has sided with the gun lobby and not the public’s interest.”*

A recent **Environics Research poll**¹ commissioned by **Poly Remembers** found that 81% of **Canadians** agree that “private ownership of semi-automatic assault weapons for recreational purposes should not be legal in Canada,” with identical support in urban and rural areas and 63% of support among gun owners. Another poll, [published by Policy Options](#), showed 85% in support of “banning personal possession of military assault weapons and sniper rifles by civilians.”

Boufeldja Benabdallah, vice-president of the **Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec** comments: *“We have seen the damage guns can do when they fall into the wrong hands. Six widows and 17 children are still mourning the slaughter of their husbands and fathers. How can the government respond with such a timid piece of legislation?”*

Sales records and inventories

The group is also shocked at the weak approach **Minister Goodale** chose to address sales records, based on the **Liberals’** promise to “require firearms vendors to keep records of all firearms inventory and sales to assist police in investigating firearms trafficking and other gun crimes”. Provincial and police authorities previously [testified to the importance](#) of inventory and sales records.

“Where are the controls on store inventories? Proposed controls on sales are weaker than what existed since the 70s, when police did not require judicial authority to consult them. Even the in United-States, commercial gun dealers are required to record gun sales and those records are readily available to the authorities. An effective measure would take into account all gun transfers, not just commercial ones,” explained **Ms Rathjen**. *“What is the purpose of protecting sales data from the government? How are police supposed to detect the building of arsenals? How will they know which gun store to inspect when tracing a gun found on the scene of a crime?”*

“Based on these toothless provisions, it is hard to believe the government genuinely wants to support the police in their criminal investigations and efforts to counter illegal sales. The proposed legislation clearly seeks to protect somebody’ interests, but certainly not the public’s.”

Last November, a large delegation of survivors and family members of victims of gun violence came to **Parliament Hill** to call [on MPs](#) and **Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale** to table a [comprehensive](#)

¹ **Environics Research**, for PolyRemembers/PolySeSouvient, conducted online from March 6th to 8th 2018 among 1510 Canadians aged 18 years and over. Results : http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/STATS_18_03_08_Environics_Poll_Results.pdf; methodology : http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/1_ERG_Online_Methodology_n1510_March%208_2018.pdf

set of [gun control measures](#), generally consistent with the **Liberal** election promises, in addition to a [ban on assault weapons](#). Since that time, the latest school shooting, in a **Parkland** high school in **Florida**, has mobilized a popular movement in the **United States** which is also [calling for a ban on assault weapons](#).

Nathalie Provost, who survived the massacre at **Polytechnique** despite four gunshot wounds, concludes: *“Despite our disappointment, we do not want to see this legislation fail. The bill may be extremely weak, but it is still a step in the right direction. We hope that in the coming days and weeks our group can work with the Minister and members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety to substantially improve Bill C-71, to a point where we can applaud the government for doing the right thing.”*

*** A preliminary analysis of the bill will be available through this link later today:**

http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/DOCU_18_03_20_PreliminaryAnalysisBill.pdf

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Information and interviews (after 12h00):

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