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**Danforth Families for Safe Communities renews call for a national handgun ban**

## **New poll show 7 out of 10 Canadians support a national handgun ban over local ones**

May 29, 2020, Toronto Ontario, Canada

The Danforth Families for Safe Communities (DFSC), a group of citizens affected by the shooting rampage on Danforth Avenue, Toronto, on July 22, 2018, are renewing their call to the federal government to ban the private ownership of handguns in all of Canada.

“We have an ongoing handgun problem in Canada and now is the time for leadership and action from our Federal Government,” said Patrick McLeod, a retired Toronto Police Officer and DFSC member. “Nothing has changed regarding handguns, and nothing will change unless the government acts. This type of gun, concealed and powerful, in the wrong hands, takes too many lives, and creates terror and tragedy too frequently.”

Two new national surveys indicate that the majority of Canadians want a ban on handgun ownership, and they want that nationally. The [Angus Reid Institute](#) published a survey on May 1, 2020, that plainly shows 67% of Canadians want a ban on handguns. [Ipsos](#) Canada published a survey on gun control on May 28, 2020, where 71% of respondents indicated that “the federal government’s legislation (related to assault weapons) should also include a ban on all handguns”.

A third survey, made public for the first time today, commissioned by the Montreal based gun control advocacy group PolySeSouvient, asked whether Canadians felt the decision to ban handguns should be federally determined or left to municipalities. The [Environics Research poll](#) shows a full **69% of Canadians** prefer gun control laws banning or further restricting handguns to be national and applied uniformly across the country, as opposed to having the federal government work with municipal governments to allow for local bans or further restrictions on handguns.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Environics Research](#), for PolyRemembers/PolySeSouvient. Online survey conducted May 11<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 among a representative sample of 1511 Canadians aged 18 years and over. Results:

[http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/POLL\\_20\\_05\\_11\\_to\\_14\\_Environics\\_NationalLocal\\_HandgunBan.pdf](http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/POLL_20_05_11_to_14_Environics_NationalLocal_HandgunBan.pdf); Question: “During the last Federal election, the Liberals promised to work with the provinces and territories to give municipalities the ability to further restrict – or ban – handguns.(Randomize) [ ] Some / While others say that it would be preferable that a ban or further restrictions on handguns, which are not used for hunting, be national and applied uniformly across the country. [ ] Some / While others say that it would be preferable that the federal government work with municipalities to allow for local bans or further restrictions on handguns, instead of bringing in new federal measures for handguns. Which view is closer to your own? ‘It is preferable that gun control laws banning or further restricting handguns, not used for hunting, be national and applied uniformly across the country’; ‘It is preferable that the federal government work with municipal governments to allow for local bans or further restrictions on handguns’.”

The poll includes 15% of respondents that own a gun or live in a household with guns, and that number is in-line with estimates of household penetration of gun ownership. And majority support for a national approach is expressed in all provinces, from a low of 60% in Alberta to highs of 70%, 71% and 73% in Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic Canada respectively. Two thirds (66%) of Canadians in rural areas feel the same. So, based on this research, we don't really see this tremendous need for regional accommodation on this issue, and Canadians across the country agree on the steps that should be taken.

"These recent surveys of average Canadians simply restate what survivor groups, doctors, many mayors, and even responsible gun owners have indicated", said McLeod. "They want handguns prohibited, and they want that at a federal level".

The 22nd of May marked 22 months since a handgun, diverted from a legal source was used to create unspeakable tragedy for DFSC families and the community. A young girl and a teenager were murdered, thirteen victims were shot, and first responders and nearby community members all had their lives changed by the grief created by one lone gunman, his hate, and his loaded handgun.

"We won't accept living in the shadow of a handgun. Nor will we accept that any of us who continue to struggle with the impact of this tragic event should do so quietly or in isolation," said Tilly Gray, DFSC member and co-organizer of the Danforth Community Sale.

Gun violence continues to be a problem. Toronto recorded a record 490 shootings last year, and things are trending worse this year. As of May 25, the [Toronto Police Service website](#), shows there have been 18% more shootings and 21% more fatalities compared to 2019, on a year to date basis.

While the Federal government is addressing many issues related to gun violence, their initial proposal is to leave handgun regulation to municipalities. This approach could easily create a patchwork of laws that will sow confusion among gun owners, those concerned about guns, and those who will enforce these laws. No Canadian gun control advocacy group or safety organization has called for differing rules from town to town and city to city.

"We must start asking why handguns, among other firearms, are part of the mix in Canada given the threat they pose to others, even with careful ownership", said Ken Price, whose daughter was a shooting victim on the Danforth. "A vocal minority of gun owners will complain about any handgun ban; however, given what happened to us, we have an issue with close to million handguns in Canadian homes, and in 2400 retail stores, that can be stolen, diverted to criminals, sold to fraudsters, and used to kill at a distance with the pull of a trigger."

The DFSC joins other groups in calling on the federal government to follow through on its plan to prohibit assault style rifles by overhauling the classification system and to secure the regulations and resources needed to enact Bill C-71, passed by the House of Commons in May, 2019. The Trudeau Government must follow through on a commitment to stop illegal guns from coming in at the US border. They must revamp laws to further deter those that divert guns to crime. And they must also do what other thoughtful nations have chosen to do and prohibit

handguns. More than gun control measures are needed to address the whole issue of gun violence; however, that does not excuse inaction on this specific initiative.

“As a group of families and community members, we experienced a failure of existing policies just once, and once should have been enough for everybody to want to take every action possible to prevent this from happening again”, said Price.

In calling for this action, the DFSC is joined by the Coalition for Gun Control, PolySeSouvient, Student movement NOT\_HERE, and Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns.

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#### About Danforth Families for Safe Communities

DFSC is a group of survivors, families, friends and community members impacted by the shooting tragedy on Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Canada, on July 22, 2018, where a young girl and a teenager were killed and 13 were shot by a lone gunman. The DFSC have come together in the wake of our tragedy to share our views and experience, in the hope that others will not have to experience anything similar.

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#### About Coalition for Gun Control

Founded in the wake of the Montreal Massacre in 1989, the Coalition for Gun Control was formed to support strategies to reduce gun death, injury and crime. For almost 30 years, the Coalition for Gun Control has been working to make Canada safer and is supported by more than 200 health, crime prevention, victims, public safety, women's and community organizations from across Canada. We have made progress but much more needs to be done.

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#### About Poly SeSouvient

Polysesouvient is a group of volunteer citizens, including many witnesses, survivors and families of the victims of the massacre of December 6, 1989, who work for stricter gun control and whose specific objectives are endorsed by the Polytechnique Student Associations, the Polytechnique Association of Post-graduate Students, the board of the Polytechnique Graduates Association, the Quebec Order of Engineers, the Quebec Engineers Network, The École Polytechnique, the École de technologie supérieure and many engineering student associations in Quebec.

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### About Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns

Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns (CDPG) is a grassroots organization concerned about the increasing public health impact of firearms. We represent physicians working in collaboration with nurses, paramedics, rehabilitation specialists, psychologists, researchers and other front-line health care professionals. We have all witnessed first-hand the emotional and physical trauma and devastation caused by guns. CDPG calls for a comprehensive public policy response to this crisis in our communities, including preventative tools to reduce gun use and their consequences on youth violence, domestic abuse, and suicide.

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### About student movement NOT\_HERE/PAS\_ICI

Since the dismantling of Canadian gun control law in 2012, the student population has lived in the age of school shootings in a context where gun crime, violence and suicide are steadily increasing. The NOT\_HERE movement is part of a new kind of civic engagement for Canadian students. With the support of 17 student associations from across Canada representing over 250,000 members, the movement is gaining more and more credibility.

NOT\_HERE is calling for similar measures as those demanded by Canadian public interest groups, including the prohibition of assault weapons.

<https://pasici-nothere.org/home>

@Pasici\_NotHere