

NEWS RELEASE

September 13, 2021: 15th anniversary of the shooting at Dawson College Students, survivors and families urge Canadians to vote for gun control

Montréal, September 13, 2021 — On the 15th anniversary of the 2006 shooting at **Dawson College** in Montreal shooting, students, survivors and their families are urging Canadians to think twice about what kind of government they want to make decisions about their safety when they vote in the federal elections. The Dawson killer was the legal owner of a legal **Beretta CX4 Storm** with a legal 10-bullet magazine and a legal handgun, both of which used to shoot 20 people including **Anastasia De Sousa** who was shot twelve times at close range. She was 18. The assault weapon was prohibited on May 1st, 2020 but remains in circulation. Handguns remain legal as *nothing* has changed with respect to their accessibility.

“For the last decade and a half, a small group of those directly affected by the Dawson school shooting have been advocating to change the law that allowed a troubled and angry young man to have legal access to weapons that enable mass shootings,” says **Kathlene Dixon**, who witnessed the shooting and whose daughter **Meaghan** survived being shot. *“There’s been only modest progress. We still have a long way to go for Canada to have basic and reasonable controls.”*

She is calling on all **Canadians** who support gun control: *“Me and my family along with Anastasia’s family and survivor Hayder Kadhim, with the support of many others affected by the shooting, have been lobbying Ottawa for tougher gun controls for a decade and a half. But we can’t do it alone. This election will decide all. So today, we need your help. We need you to vote to protect the future of gun control in Canada. We need you to not vote Conservative. We need you to vote Liberal, or if you live in Quebec, to vote Liberal or Bloc Québécois.”*

Arwen Low, vice-president for external affairs for the **Dawson Student Union**, explains: *“In the current context, this is the most critical election for the future of gun control in Canada. That is why the Dawson Student Union and many young people like me are asking Canadians to consider what path they want our country to go down: that of most developed countries around the world, like New Zealand, Australia, and members of the European Union, or that of our neighbor to the South? That choice is on the ballot on September 20th.”*

Meaghan Hennegan wants Canadians to know that *“the group that shamelessly promotes ‘Beretta Days’ is the same one that Conservative leader Erin O’Toole is proud to be associated with, including boasting about the ‘A’ grade they granted him for his proposals to weaken gun control.”* These events include shooting fully automatic machine guns. The vice-president of the Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights, who is actively canvassing in support of the Conservative Party, recently posted a video of herself shooting an automatic weapon with hashtags #GirlsWhoShoot and #GunnieGirls.

Hayder Kadhim, who survived a serious head injury, adds: *“A vote for the Conservative Party is a vote for the gun lobby. Everything this party has done since the shooting at my school has been at the behest of the gun lobby. In fact, Erin O’Toole owes them his ascension to the party’s leadership. If the Conservatives get elected, it’ll be payback time. So if you care about your safety, about the safety of future generations, if you don’t want the gun lobby hijacking our laws like they do in the United States, then please don’t vote for the party that is beholden to the gun lobby.”*

The **De Sousa** family wished to spend this anniversary in private. [**Louise de Sousa decided to do interviews after all*]

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To set up interviews on September 13th:

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