



BILL C-21

“An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)”

Brief presented to:

The Senate of Canada

June 2023

[Version française ici](#)

A) INTRODUCTION

PolySeSouvient consists of students and graduates of the École Polytechnique as well as families and loved ones of the victims of the 1989 tragedy who support stricter gun control. We also cooperate with other survivors and families who have lost loved ones or been injured in shootings, such as those linked to the shootings at Dawson College and the Quebec Mosque.

Our mission is simple: to reduce the number of accidents, suicides, homicides, threats and other crimes committed with firearms. Having witnessed or experienced the massive human suffering that a single firearm in the wrong hands can cause, we feel it is our duty to speak up in the gun control debate to defend every person's right to life and security. We are motivated by our firm determination to prevent other families from experiencing the pain and suffering caused by avoidable tragedies.

Firearms are designed for killing. While firearms on their own don't kill, they make it easier and more efficient to kill. *Guns don't kill people; people with guns kill people.* Owning a gun is not a right but a privilege, and this privilege must be governed by strict and enforceable laws and accompanied by a range of responsibilities.

B) SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) We support Bill C-21 because of some very strong measures to better protect victims of intimate violence as well as the public safety potential prohibiting of the freeze on handgun purchases in addition to other measures. **We recommend that the Senate pass the bill as is so that it can be implemented as quickly as possible.**
- 2) That said, we are asking senators to pay attention to the bill's main flaw, namely the absence of a comprehensive ban on assault weapons, particularly as regards [models that are currently](#) on the market. The models that remain legal (restricted or non-restricted) are in addition to the 1,900 ones that were prohibited in May 2020 by OICs, which the government plans to buy back unless they are rendered inoperable.) Indeed, about 480 models would have been prohibited under amendments G-4 and G-46 introduced in November 2022. Unfortunately, these were withdrawn in February 2023 following an [effective disinformation campaign](#) by the gun lobby who [falsely claimed](#) that they would have banned all kinds of hunting firearms. **In short, we hope we can count on senators to support strong regulations banning all current military-style weapons (not reasonably used for hunting) as soon as is feasible.**
- 3) We are also asking senators to look at the issue of large-capacity magazines. Despite the theoretical limit of 5 or 10 for long guns and handguns, a series of [exemptions and loopholes](#) allow magazines whose capacity surpasses these limits to remain on the Canadian market. The government has promised to close one of these loopholes (i.e., the one allowing ["modifiable" magazines](#)), but to be truly effective the "ban" on large-capacity magazines must be comprehensive. **We hope senators will also support amending relevant regulations to eliminate all exemptions and loopholes with respect to the purported "ban" on large-capacity magazines.**

C) RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH FIREARMS

Access to guns is a primary risk factor for armed violent behaviour. The simple fact that a firearm is present in a home [increases the risks of violence and intimidation](#) for the women and children who live there. Intimate partner violence (a subset of domestic violence restricted to current or previous romantic partners) that involves a firearm is [12 times more likely to result in death](#) than similar incidents that do not involve a firearm. A [study](#) from the University of Texas [made public in 2019](#) found that individuals who had gun access were approximately 18 times more likely to have threatened someone with a gun, compared to 3.5 for individuals with high hostility. Counter to public beliefs, the majority of mental health symptoms examined were not related to gun violence. Instead, access to firearms was the primary culprit. Access to guns in the home [triples the likelihood of homicide](#) and [multiplies the risk of suicide by five](#).

Even though assault weapons are not often used in violent crimes overall, they represent both enormous and unreasonable risks for the entire population, as someone who wishes to do harm can have the power to kill dozens of people in mere minutes with a finger pulling a trigger. Some weapons are able to pierce armour and other protective equipment used by the police. The Polytechnique massacre and the shootings of police officers (two in [Innisfil](#) last fall, four in [Mayerthorpe, 2005](#), three in [Moncton, 2014](#), two in [Fredericton, 2018](#), one in [Abbotsford, 2016](#), seven injured in [2022 botched B.C. bank robbery](#), etc.) demonstrate the enormous destructive potential associated with civilian access to these types of weapons. Quebec police have been particularly vocal on the need to ban assault weapons to protect not only the public but also police ([FPMG](#), [FPPQ](#), [APPQ](#)):

As for handguns, it is important to counter the prevailing belief, promoted both by [civilian/corporate](#) and [political](#) opponents of gun control, that the problem of gun crime lies mainly with illegally imported handguns, particularly those in the hands of street gangs. In fact, [Statistics Canada's compilation of statistics for 2009-2020 on gun violence](#) shows that only 6% of firearm-related violent crimes involve a criminal organization or a street gang. [Statistics from the RCMP for the same period tabled in the House of Commons](#) reveal that the problem is also far from being limited to illegally imported handguns. Overall, 68% of guns seized by law enforcement throughout the country, including 40% of all handguns, are domestically sourced. [Various reports from all kinds of jurisdictions](#) show that source of crime guns vary from city to city, from province to province, and in time. Legal handguns also end up being used to commit crimes, as in the case of the shooter in Vaughan who killed five neighbors with [a legal handgun, according to media reports](#).

While combatting illegal trafficking remains a priority, it is not the main goal of Bill C-21. Reducing the number of legal handguns is primarily aimed at preventing the misuse by their owners (ex: Quebec Mosque shooting, Vaughan condo shooting), ending their purchase for illegitimate purposes like self-protection, and preventing their theft (for example [an average of 700 handguns were stolen annually between 2000 and 2012](#)). Gun control and crime control are not mutually exclusive: we can - and should - do both.

D) TRENDS - GUN CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Data from Statistics Canada show that the insistence of opponents of gun control to focus solely on fighting illegally imported handguns and gang violence is ill-advised, as guns seized by police [are domestically sourced](#), and most gun crime [is not gang related](#). In fact, [the latest available nationwide statistics](#) show that less than half (46%) of firearm-related homicides were identified as gang-related.

Statistics Canada [also reveals](#) that communities from 2012 to 2021, three-quarters of homicides (73%) by shooting in rural were committed using a rifle or a shotgun. By comparison, 65% were committed using a handgun in urban areas.

But what is most important is the overall number of firearm-related homicides, which continues to trend upwards since the law started being weakened in 2012, including through the adoption of Bill C-19 in 2012 (abolishing registration of non-restricted firearms, mandatory verification of the validity of a buyer's licence and sales ledgers) and Bill C-42 in 2015 (weakening control over the transportation of restricted firearms, increasing access to assault weapons and allowing thousands of gun owners to acquire new guns without screening via the transformation of the Possession Only Licence held by owners before 1995 into a Possession and Acquisition Licence). Weakened enforcement also coincided with the advent of the Conservative government in 2008, with [lackadaisical screening](#) and [record increases](#) in the number of licences, including RPALs for restricted firearms like handguns. (It should be noted that while Bill C-71 passed in May 2019, it only started being implemented in 2022 - too early to detect any potential impacts.)

According to the [2020 data from Statistics Canada](#), "the rate of firearm-related homicides has been generally increasing over the last eight years, seeing a 91% increase from 2013 to 2020". The rate has increased again in 2021. In fact, the number of homicides has increased every year since 2013 except one (2018). [In 2017](#), the *rate* of gun homicides (0.72 per 100,000 population) was deemed "the highest rate of firearm-related homicides seen in Canada since 1992." The latest statistics ([for 2021](#)) sets the rate at 0.78. This growing trend arrives after a long period of decline that started in the 1980s (with a peak around 1991) and reached [the lowest rate in 40 years](#) in 2013 with "much of the decline in firearm-related homicide since the early 1980s ... [attributed to a decrease in homicides involving a rifle or shotgun.](#)" Some may argue that the year 2013 was an outlier, but [Statistics Canada deems it an "inflection point"](#).

Year	Firearm homicides	Firearm homicides (rate per 100,000 population)
2011 – Last complete year covered by Bills C-17 and C-68	158	0.46
2012 – Passage of C-19	172	0.49
2013 – First full year without controls on rifles and shotguns (registration, sales records) except in Quebec	131	0.38
2014	156	0.44
2015 – Passage of C-42 / registration ends in Quebec / other measures weakened	178	0.50
2016	223	0.62
2017	266	0.72 ¹
2018	249	0.68
2019	262	0.70
2020	277	0.73
2021	297	0.78

¹ [Statistics Canada](#)

E) OVERVIEW OF BILL C-21

1) Domestic violence

Bill C-21 contains solid measures that protect Canadians against lethal domestic violence. This is thanks to a series of measures that were included in the initial version as well as [several amendments](#) passed by the Public Safety Committee, including some that provide stronger language. The measures introduced concerning this oft-neglected aspect of the gun control debate represent concrete and effective progress and will save many lives.

We especially support the automatic prohibition to own guns for any individual subject to a protection order related to domestic violence or stalking (a measure we have been calling for [since 2018](#)) in addition to the mandatory licence revocation for anyone engaged in domestic violence.

However, we continue to stand in solidarity with major women's organization [who expressed their opposition](#) the *ex-parte* "red-flag" measure inviting victims to go to court themselves to have firearms removed from their abusers.

2) Handguns

The freeze on handguns is a game-changing measure and we strongly applaud it.

However, the freeze could be seriously undermined by the exemption for anyone 'training, competing or coaching' in an Olympic handgun shooting discipline", as anyone can claim to want to be an Olympic athlete. Related criteria that are to be prescribed by regulation will determine whether or not this exemption will turn into a huge loophole. The exemption for businesses also risk undermining the goal of the freeze.

3) Large-capacity magazines

The bill was amended in order to require a valid Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) to purchase magazines. This represents a notable improvement. Indeed, the Danforth shooter, who had a stolen handgun, was legally able to buy the magazines with which he shot his victims.

It should be noted that in addition to banning existing assault weapons through OICs, the minister has promised to amend regulations regarding magazines to ensure current "legal" limits are actually respected. (We hope he is referring to anything over the 5/10 limits for long guns and handguns respectively, as an array of loopholes and exemptions render magazines over these limits "legal". We have been [asking to eliminate these flaws](#) for years. Prohibiting large-capacity magazines must be [comprehensive](#) to be effective.)

4) Smuggling, ghost guns

We generally support the measures to combat gun smuggling and trafficking, including those that take on "ghost guns" (which are also the result of amendments).

5) Assault weapons

Unfortunately, the government withdrew amendments G-4 and G-46 which would have introduced a comprehensive ban on assault weapons, a measure that has repeatedly been promised to survivors and families of victims of mass shootings for years. Instead, the Liberals and the NDP agreed on a new definition of prohibited weapons that is easily circumvented and only applies to models that have not been invented yet. As a result, hundreds of [models of military-style weapons](#) remain legal and even non-restricted. The

minister has promised to prohibit such weapons by Orders in Council in the fall, but the scope of these regulations remains to be seen.

F) DETAILS RE TWO MEASURES: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & HANDGUNS

1) Further protecting victims and potential victims of stalking or intimate violence

Apart from criminal convictions spelled out in [section 106 of the Criminal Code](#)², the Firearms Act requires authorities to *consider* a relatively limited list of risk factors and other convictions³. However, nothing in the law prevents judges or firearms officers, if they choose to do so, from allowing access to guns for people who clearly display any of the risk factors on this list, including domestic violence. So while there is need for discretion, there are too many cases that show the system is not working as it should. Indeed, there have been numerous tragedies where authorities had knowledge of risky behaviour but did not make any (serious) attempt to remove a potential abuser's guns. For example:

- [Raymond Papatie](#) of Val-d'Or (Quebec) had a well-known history of violent and suicidal incidents spanning years. The police had had many interactions with Papatie and confiscated his weapons in late 2015. In fact, it was Thierry himself, on the orders of his superiors, who returned Papatie's firearms to him, including the one that ended up killing him a few months later. Before the murder-suicide, Papatie had even acquired two new weapons, including an SKS assault rifle.
- [Bryce McDonald](#) from B.C. had a criminal conviction for uttering threats and suffered from a major head injury that erased all his childhood memories. Despite this, he was approved for a restricted firearm licence and eventually purchased [49 restricted weapons, mostly handguns](#). He was arrested in 2013 and convicted various firearm offences. At least five of his guns have been involved in [crimes in B.C. and Alberta](#).
- [Adrian Clavier](#) of Saskatchewan had a long history of depression. He had been under psychiatric care for 35 years and was on heavy medication, information that he disclosed on his gun licence application. Members of his family tried, unsuccessfully, to warn the RCMP and asked for his guns to be confiscated, but their concerns were "blown off". He shot and killed himself in 2015.
- [Éric Bergeron](#) of Chicoutimi was able to legally recover his firearms despite them having been confiscated following a 2013 standoff with the police during which he barricaded himself with his

² An indictable offence involving violence that carry a minimum 10-year sentence, the use of a firearm in commission of a crime, firearm-related offences and drug trafficking: "109 (1) Where a person is convicted, or discharged under section 730, of (a) an indictable offence in the commission of which violence against a person was used, threatened or attempted and for which the person may be sentenced to imprisonment for ten years or more, (a.1) an indictable offence in the commission of which violence was used, threatened or attempted against (i) the person's current or former intimate partner, (ii) a child or parent of the person or of anyone referred to in subparagraph (i), or (iii) any person who resides with the person or with anyone referred to in subparagraph (i) or (ii), (b) an offence under subsection 85(1) (using a firearm in commission of offence), subsection 85(2) (using an imitation firearm in commission of offence), 95(1) (possession of prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition), 99(1) (weapons trafficking), 100(1) (possession for purpose of weapons trafficking), 102(1) (making an automatic firearm), 103(1) (importing or exporting knowing it is unauthorized) or section 264 (criminal harassment), (c) an offence relating to the contravention of subsection 5(1) or (2), 6(1) or (2) or 7(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, or (d) an offence that involves, or the subject matter of which is, a firearm, a cross-bow, a prohibited weapon, a restricted weapon, a prohibited device, any ammunition, any prohibited ammunition or an explosive substance and, at the time of the offence, the person was prohibited by any order made under this Act or any other Act of Parliament from possessing any such thing". Section 109 of the Criminal Code. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/FullText.html>

³ "(a) has been convicted or discharged under section 730 of the Criminal Code of (i) an offence in the commission of which violence against another person was used, threatened or attempted (ii) an offence under this Act or Part III of the Criminal Code, (iii) an offence under section 264 of the Criminal Code (criminal harassment), or (iv) an offence relating to the contravention of subsection 5(1) or (2), 6(1) or (2) or 7(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; (b) has been treated for a mental illness, whether in a hospital, mental institute, psychiatric clinic or otherwise and whether or not the person was confined to such a hospital, institute or clinic, that was associated with violence or threatened or attempted violence on the part of the person against any person; or (c) has a history of behaviour that includes violence or threatened or attempted violence on the part of the person against any person." Section 5(2) of the Firearms Act. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-11.6/FullText.html>

guns. In September 2017, Bergeron was charged with four counts, including making death threats against high school students and School Board employees.

- In 2018, Burk's Falls hunter and gun club member [Mark Jones](#) killed his neighbour, her son, her mother and himself, despite the fact that the main victim (Ulla Theoret) reported to police that she had been violently sexually assaulted by him and despite his driver's license being revoked because of his dementia.
- [Lionel Desmond](#) of Nova Scotia was allowed to keep his licence [despite](#) extensive mental health issues, including PTSD, and despite his wife warning the police that he would harm himself. One morning in 2017 he bought an SKS and shot his family and himself in their rural Nova Scotia home: his 31-year-old wife, their 10-year-old daughter Aaliyah, and his mother Brenda, 52, before killing himself.
- In 2013, Lindsay Wilson was murdered by an [obsessive ex-partner](#) who was given a firearms licence despite convictions for forcible confinement and assault. He bought five guns in a private sale in 2007 and was charged with theft after being accused of stealing jewelry during the sale. Yet his gun licence was renewed in 2009 and he was allowed to keep it despite being hospitalized after threatening suicide in 2012. The coroner's found that her killer had 16 different risk factors for intimate partner homicide, including obsessive behaviour, unemployment, drug and alcohol use, a history of controlling behaviour, sexual jealousy, access to firearms, and the "victim's intuitive sense of fear of the perpetrator."
- [Corey Lewis](#) of Alberta was known to have been violent towards his family, to have suffered severe bouts of depression and to have experienced periods of wanting to kill himself. While he disclosed much of this information on his application, he was granted a licence anyway, including one for restricted weapons. In 2010, he assaulted his wife and stepson and then barricaded himself with his five legal guns. A tactical unit was called in to deal with the shotgun-wielding Lewis, a situation which ended with his "suicide by cop". Even though he disclosed that he was under investigation for an alleged assault involving his stepson, [the licensing officer didn't](#) bother to talk to Lewis' wife nor did he check publicly available court documents that would have detailed his issues with police.
- Multiple witnesses told police they knew about [Gabriel Wortman's](#) weapons and that they assumed he had a licence. Former neighbour Brenda Forbes said she reported his illegal guns, but police didn't take her complaints seriously or make efforts to properly investigate the accusation.

That is why the changes brought in by C-21 (some through amendments) are critically important and why we specially want to mention:

a) The automatic prohibition to own guns for people subject to a protection order related to domestic violence.

This will bring Canada in line with comparable controls for domestic abusers that have been in place for years in the United States, where the law [explicitly bans gun ownership](#)⁴ for individuals

⁴ "Federal Restrictions on Gun Ownership by Convicted Felons", <http://www.shestokas.com/general-law/federal-restrictions-on-gun-ownership-by-convicted-felons/>; "It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or otherwise dispose of any firearm or ammunition to any person knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that such person-- (1) is under indictment for, or has been convicted in any court of, a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year; (2) is a fugitive from justice; (3) is an unlawful user of or addicted to any controlled substance (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802)); (4) has been adjudicated as a mental defective or has been committed to any mental institution; (5) who, being an alien... (6) who has been discharged from the Armed Forces under dishonourable conditions; (7) who, having been a citizen of the United States, has renounced his citizenship; (8) is subject to a court order that restrains such person from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner of such person or child of such intimate partner or person, or engaging in other conduct that would place an intimate partner in reasonable fear of bodily injury to the partner or child ... or (9) has been convicted in any court

subject to a restraining order involving a [spouse or ex-spouse](#). The measure is fully justified by the fact that [abused women are](#) five times more likely to be killed if their abuser owns a firearm, and domestic violence assaults involving a gun are [12 times more likely to end in death](#) than assaults with other weapons or physical harm. The introduction of this measure comes seven years after the Manitoba government [considered](#) including a mandatory gun ban in all restraining orders in cases of domestic violence.

- [Kevin Runke](#) was the subject of a restraining order, granted at the request of his estranged wife Camille Runke. That order did not include a prohibition to own guns, despite the fact that when she applied for the order, she noted that he had access to guns, and she was afraid he would use them against her. He shot and killed Camille in October 2015 at her St. Boniface workplace. Unfortunately, the government's attempt to implement the mandatory ban in all restraining orders failed, as the [revised Manitoba Domestic Violence and Stalking Act](#) only makes such a ban optional.
- Calgary resident [Robert Leeming](#) had a restraining order against him, to protect his ex-wife, yet he was allowed to keep his guns. In 2019, he used one of them to shoot and kill his more recent ex-girlfriend Jasmine Lovett and her two-year old daughter (Aliyah Sanderson).

b) The obligation of a chief firearms officer (CFO) to revoke the licence within 24 hours of an individual where the CFO has reasonable grounds to suspect that the licensee may have engaged in an act of domestic violence or stalking.

For all the reasons mentioned above, this is a crucial measure for the safety of women. The addition of the "24 hour" delay or "if that is not possible, within any extended period established by the chief firearms officer" is a net improvement. There is a very real possibility that, as soon an individual knows that they may lose their guns, they might hide them or commit irreparable harm against their partner or ex-partner. It is therefore critical that administrative measures are enshrined into law to ensure timely and effective removal of guns.

c) The expanded definition of 'domestic violence' that includes all intimate and family violence as well as non-physical forms of violence like coercive control and threats of suicide.

A comprehensive definition of domestic violence has been added to the bill. This will prevent the possibility that some CFOs will adopt a limited definition that only includes physical assault. [Experts know](#) that sexual, psychological and financial abuse are central to domestic abuse and control. Threats against a third party, sexual control, violence against a pet, property damage, threats of self-harm to induce compliance, surveillance are all forms of "coercive control" and should be considered as risk factors that can lead to fatal violence.

d) The expanded definition of "protection order".

While the definition of "protection order" is to be set out in accompanying regulation, the bill was amended to indicate the intent of the legislator, which is for the term "to include any binding order made by a court or other competent authority in the interest of the safety or security of a person; this includes but is not limited to orders that prohibit a person from: (a) being in physical proximity to an identified person or following an identified person from place to place; (b) communicating with an identified person, either directly or indirectly; (c) being at a specified place or within a

specified distance of that place; (d) engaging in harassing or threatening conduct directed at an identified person; (e) occupying a family home or a residence; or (f) engaging in family violence.”

- e) **The possibility of prohibition orders for individuals cohabiting with someone prohibited from owning firearms.**
- f) **The exclusion of “employment” as a justification for exempting an individual from licence revocation linked to a protection order.**

The exemption for employment in cases justifying revocation of a licence has been removed, with good reason. Security guards and especially police officers are just as likely (or more, according to American research) to be engaged in domestic violence. The life of a potential victim should be paramount and not superseded by employment preferences. (It should further be argued that anyone engaged in domestic abuse should definitely not be employed in a job that consists of protecting people and that requires firearms.) There are over 100,000 private security guards and over 70,000 police officers in Canada.

- In 2017, [Martin Nguyen](#) was arrested for the violent kidnapping of a Montreal resident and was suspected of having threatened other victims in recent months. Despite this, a court allowed him to possess a firearm as part of his job as a security guard.

- g) **The removal of the ability of individuals subject to a prohibition order to dispose of their guns in a manner of their choice.**

There is no justification to allow a gun owner under a prohibition order to dispose of their guns themselves as the risk of such a privilege goes counter to the whole purpose of removing the guns. An owner could give or sell his gun to a friend or family member with the understanding that he would still have access to it. The focus should be the swift and safe removal of firearms by police. The provision in C-21 was rightly removed.

“Ex-parte” measure (“red flag”)

That being said, we thoroughly regret that the *ex-parte* (or “red flag”) measure was retained, and this despite [opposition from a coalition of women’s groups](#). Not one recognized feminist or anti-intimate violence organizations asked for this type of measure before C-21 was introduced. The measure introduces the option for victims or potential victims to go to court themselves to seek the removal of an abuser’s firearms.

This option goes against the hard-fought principle of removing any responsibility from victims with respect to decisions to charge an abuser, as this can further endanger the victim. The introduction of a new procedure for victims to follow also shows a lack of understanding of the nuances of intimate abuse. Indeed, it is unrealistic to expect victims to have the means and the fortitude to go to court while they face the simultaneous challenges of escaping abuse, caring for children and keeping their jobs.

In Canada, victims or potential victims can call the police and it’s their job to assess the situation and remove firearms if they deem that there’s an immediate risk, and otherwise they are the ones that go before a judge to apply for a prohibition order. This is a far superior system that the proposed measure, even if its implementation needs to be greatly improved. Indeed, instead of adding a new procedure (based on the same criteria that allows many perpetrators to fall through the cracks), the government should focus on strengthening both the criteria in the law and its enforcement by police.

This type of “red flag” measure, where civilians apply to the courts, may be more appropriate in the US context, where gun ownership is a right and where judicial action is more relevant. Even so, [many questions remain](#) regarding the effectiveness of American “red flag laws”.

2) Freeze on handgun purchases

We strongly support the freeze on new handgun acquisitions.

However, the measure is severely weakened by exemptions. We hope that ensuing regulation will limit the damage these exemptions will cause to the objective of capping the Canadian handgun market and progressively reducing the number of handguns through the next generations.

a) Businesses are exempted.

Why should commercial interests be given an advantage over individuals with respect to access to handguns? The bill places no limits on businesses to purchase new handguns. Gun club and ranges, for example, could amass limitless amounts of handguns, thereby sustaining and even sanctioning the expansion of handgun sports or combat shooting - and the associated American-style gun culture that comes with them. We hope regulations will ensure that this exemption applies only to gun retailers that sell specific handguns to policing institutions and security firms. Allowing gun clubs, gunsmiths, museums and any other commercial enterprise to import or purchase new handguns goes squarely against the spirit and objective of law, that is to [cap the market](#) for handguns.

b) Olympics exemption: Who is eligible?

Unfortunately, the bill does not limit the exemption to athletes that [currently](#) compete, train or coach in a handgun-shooting Olympic or Paralympic discipline, nor does it exclude any and all future “beginners”. It is difficult to envision further circumscriptions that can prevent the potential abuse of this exception. As it stands, the exemption for anyone “training, competing or coaching in a (Olympic) handgun shooting discipline” would not disqualify anyone who claims to be interested in one day competing in a handgun-shooting Olympic discipline.

c) Olympics exemption: No limit on the number or type of handguns

In addition, the requirement to providing an annual letter from a shooting sports governing body indicating “that the handgun in question is necessary for training, competing or coaching in those disciplines” opens the door to allow the purchase of models that are not actually used in Olympic disciplines, as coaches can easily justify that other handguns are necessary for training purposes. (It should be noted that “annual” was added via amendment.)

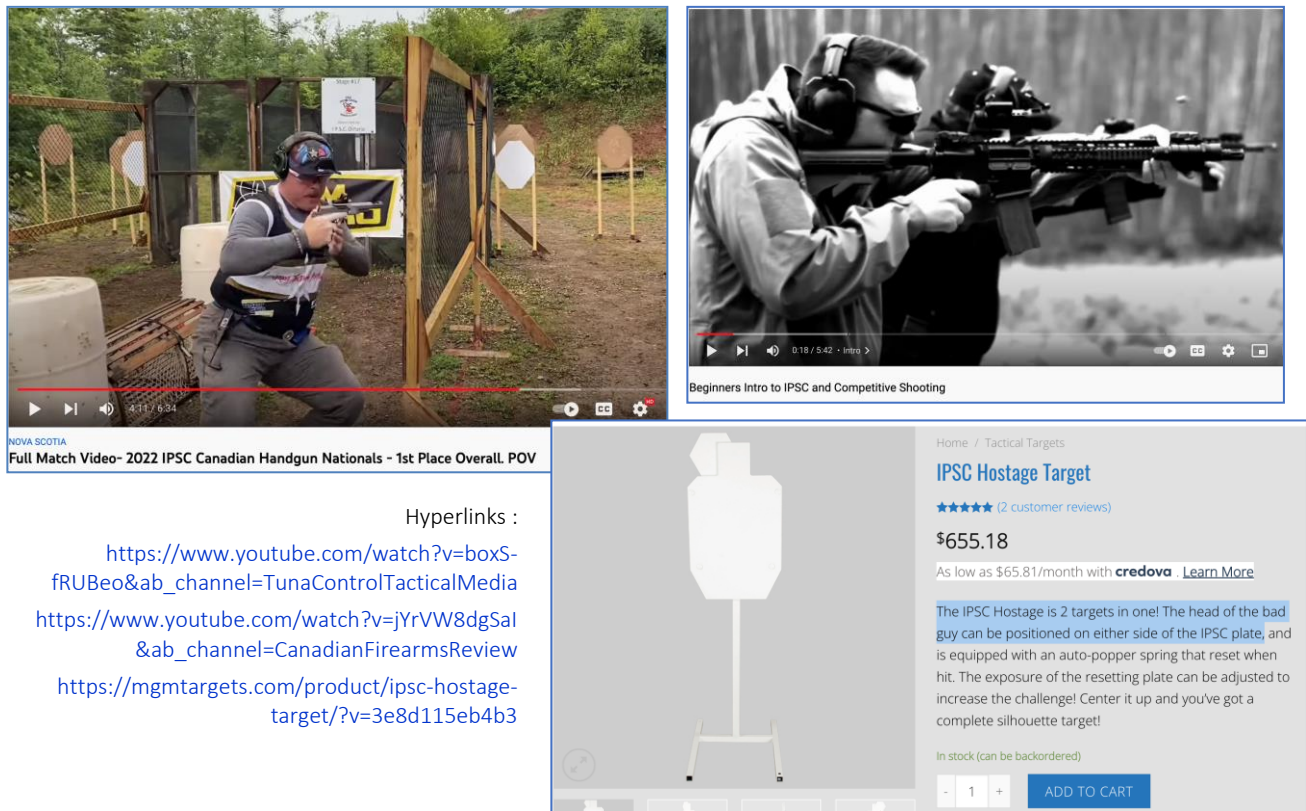
In addition, nothing specifies that the exemption is limited to purchasing one handgun. There is not specified limit on the number of letters justifying an exemption for the purchase of a handgun.

d) Olympics exemption: Future possibility of IPSC being exempted

The most vocal pro-gun groups and enthusiasts have called for the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) to be included in the exemption granted to Olympic or Paralympic disciplines. (Fortunately, the Bloc Québécois member of the Public Safety Committee voted with the Liberals to defeat an amendment exempting IPSC tabled by the NDP.) If IPSC were to be exempted, the freeze would be rendered meaningless. Since the vast majority of handgun owners acquired their handguns based on their stated intention to engage in target practice, and since every gun club could decide to offer IPSC shooting practices, it follows that most if not all gun club members could have been be exempt from the freeze on handgun purchases. [IPSC-BC says](#) that should they have been granted such an exception, “we will be come the gateway to handgun ownership in Canada and can expect a huge

increase in membership.” This would mean that, in practice, nothing would have changed from the status quo.

The US Violence Policy Center [describes](#) practical shooting as the almost complete opposite of traditional target shooting sports. “Competitors conduct their activities over a ‘run-and-gun’ obstacle course where they face a variety of ‘real world’ or ‘practical’ shoot/don’t shoot situations, such as firing at the human silhouette of a ‘hostage taker’ while sparing the ‘hostage.’ Unlike traditional target sports, the weapons used are most often large-calibre pistols, assault rifles, and riot shotguns.”



NOVA SCOTIA
Full Match Video- 2022 IPSC Canadian Handgun Nationals - 1st Place Overall. POV

Hyperlinks :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boxS-fRUBeo&ab_channel=TunaControlTacticalMedia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYrVW8dgSal&ab_channel=CanadianFirearmsReview

<https://mgmtargets.com/product/ipsc-hostage-target/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

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Although enthusiasts publicly refer to this sport as "practical" shooting, among themselves they commonly refer to it as "combat" or "tactical" shooting. Competitions often take place in a landscape of wrecked cars, alleyways, houses and businesses, with titles like "Save the Bank," "The Bodyguard," "Cartel House Raid," and "Carjacked by Gang Members" reflecting the self-defence or hostage liberating fantasies of combat shooters.

To illustrate the kind of gun culture espoused by IPSC, it should be noted that the entity is [heavily funded](#) by the gun industry, including manufacturers of [handguns and assault weapons](#). The Canadian chapter [has donated](#) close to 30 thousand dollars to the Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights' legal challenge fund, which aims to declare the May 2020 prohibition of some 1,500 models of military-style weapons unconstitutional.

Unfortunately, the government did not see fit to protect against the possibility that IPSC could one day achieve recognition by the International Olympics Committee.

The efforts to recognize combat shooting as an Olympics discipline is headed by IPSC. [According to](#) the US Violence Policy Center (VPC), the gun lobby in the USA is engaged in a multi-year international campaign to make "combat shooting" an Olympic sport. The VPC further states that "by establishing combat shooting as an international sport, the gun lobby ... create new legal arguments in favour of

non-sporting firearms, new opportunities to attract children into the gun culture, and new marketing opportunities for struggling gun makers.”

Unfortunately, years of worldwide lobbying has moved IPSC closer to its goal. In the last year, it became a [full member](#) of the [Global Association of International Sports Federations](#) or GAISF - the umbrella organization for all Olympic and non-Olympic international sports federations as well as organizers of multi-sport games and sport-related international associations. It also became a [full member](#) of the [Alliance of Independent Recognized Members](#) or AIRM - an international sports federation representing the interests of sports not recognized by the International Olympic Committee but that is [itself fully recognized](#) by the IOC.

In other words, the eventual IPSC recognition is a very real possibility, especially given the lopsided efforts where multiple worldwide pro-gun networks are actively lobbying the IOC and gun control organizations are generally absent, in addition to being comparatively minuscule, understaffed, and underfunded.



IPSC Practical Shooting one step closer to becoming an Olympic Sports

Posted November 13, 2019 in [Daily News](#), [Shooting Sports](#) by [Eric B](#) with [18 Comments](#)

Tags: [EU gun ban](#), [ipsc](#), [IPSC World Shoot](#), [Olympic shooting](#), [Olympics](#)



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G) MAJOR OMISSIONS

1) No ban on military-style assault weapons not reasonably used for hunting

On the day Bill C-21 was tabled, the Public Safety Minister [committed to amending it](#) in order to include a comprehensive ban on assault weapons.

Indeed, there is no rational reason to justify private ownership of firearms designed to kill humans. All firearms are dangerous, but some are more than others. Studies show that in active shooter situations semi-automatic rifles [wound and kill twice as many people](#) as those using weapons that don't self-load, and fatality rates from gunshot injury [increase significantly with the caliber](#) of the firearm. Research also shows that attacks involving large-capacity magazines [result in](#) a much higher average death toll, with jurisdictions that allow these devices having twice as many mass shootings as those that [ban](#) them. Moreover, the RCMP has repeatedly [alerted the federal Minister of Public Safety](#) as to the risk posed to public safety by the availability of these weapons.

Eighty percent of Canadians consistently favour a ban on assault weapons according to [numerous polls](#), with support predominant in all regions including western provinces. Even a majority of gun owners back the measure, and support is the same in urban as in rural areas.

The May 2020 Orders in Council banned some 1,500 models, with approximately 400 additional ones deemed prohibited since. However, these OICs does not constitute a ban on assault weapons, since many models escaped the list of models and related criteria in the OICs.

For example, the criteria limit the prohibitions to models that are “of modern design.” This excludes weapons like the Russian military weapon, the “SKS.” According to an investigative report, the non-restricted semi-automatic SKS rifle falls under the definition of an assault weapon under the American 1994 Federal Assault Weapon Ban. The SKS has been used in several mass shootings, including murders of police officers (South Simcoe, Saanich, Fredericton, north of B.C.). In September 2021, the Sûreté du Québec possibly prevented a massacre with this weapon in a North Shore high school by arresting a young man who said he wanted to shoot several people.



https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2021/09/27/un-massacre-evite-sur-la-cote-nord?utm_medium=cxense#cxrecs_s

Another problematic criterion is the one that limits the prohibited status to firearms that “are present in large volumes in the Canadian market”, which essentially excludes new models that are not a variant of one of those on the list, as “new” models by definition are not present (or in “large volume”) on the market. This has resulted in a number of new centre-fire military-style semi-automatic firearms having been introduced to the market since the 2020 OICs...



Lockhart Tactical Raven 9 Semi Auto Pistol Calibre Carbine (2022) - non-restricted



Sterling Arms R 18 Mk.2 (2022) – non-restricted



Crusader 9
(2021) – non-restricted



RS-Q2 Osprey
(2021) – non-restricted

... demonstrating the futility of the same failed approach that was implemented in 1991/1995 to ban these same types of weapons. This approach consisted of a list of restricted and prohibited weapons that was supposed to be updated on a regular basis, as gun manufacturers attempt to circumvent the intent of Parliament through minor changes to formerly restricted or prohibited military-style weapons.⁵

The absence of regularly updating the regulations has allowed firearms to enter the Canadian market as non-restricted firearms, but that would have been classified as either restricted or prohibited had they existed in 1995. This poses a risk to public safety by allowing firearms designed for military and para-military purposes to be easily available to the public.

That is why we have been calling for a more comprehensive and permanent (“evergreen”) approach, one that does not rely on successive governments to proactively respond every time a new model hits the market. One way to do this is to amend the definition of prohibited weapons in the Criminal Code to include all military-style weapons, including those that were not captured by the May 2020 OICs. This was achieved – *albeit in an imperfect way* – with amendments G-4 and G-46. However, the lack of explanations accompanying the amendments left the door wide open for a massive disinformation campaign by the gun lobby. They showcased over a dozen hunting rifles that they claimed would be banned to scare hunters into thinking many of their firearms would be banned. This prompted a wave of complaints to MPS, to a point where the government withdrew the amendments. And yet, none of the hunting rifles that were showcased would have been affected by the amendments. Instead, the Liberals and the NDP introduced a new definition that is easily circumventable and only applies to models not yet invested. The minister has promised to ban current assault weapons once a newly reconstituted Firearms Advisory Council tables their recommendations at the end of August.

⁵ [Translation] « Firearms and ballistics expert Alan Voth explained that gun manufacturers study the laws of each country and create adapted versions to suit the laws in each market, to increase sales opportunities”, *La Presse*, Tragédie de Dawson : l'arme du tueur plus accessible qu'il y a dix ans (The Dawson College Tragedy: killer's weapon easier to get than a decade ago), 2016. <http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/justice-et-affaires-criminelles/faits-divers/201609/12/01-5019503-tragedie-de-dawson-larme-du-tueur-plus-accessible-quil-y-a-dix-ans.php> (translation)

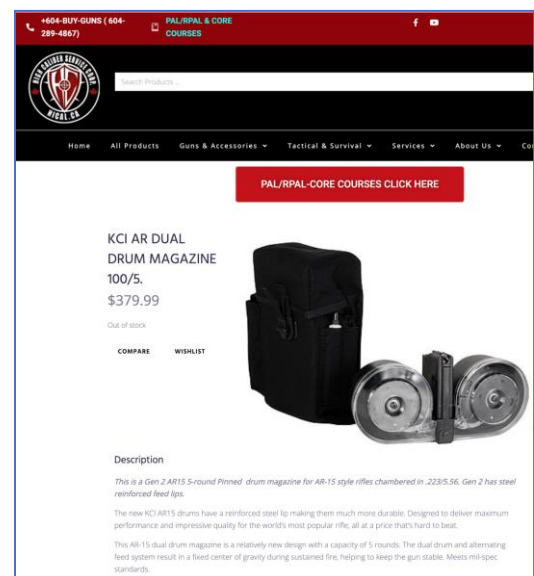
2) **The bill does not remove loopholes and exemptions to the theoretical ban on large-capacity magazines, which fall under regulations.**

Magazines must be part of any effort to ban assault weapons, as they are crucial components for rapid fire. Canada has theoretical limits on magazines – 5 for long guns and 10 for handguns – but an array of loopholes and exemptions greatly undermine these limits.

The Liberal election promise and the minister's [mandate letter](#) state that the government will "[require] the permanent alteration of long-gun magazines so that they can never hold more than five rounds" and "[ban] the sale or transfer of magazines capable of holding more than the legal number of bullets". We understand this to mean that regulatory changes will force the permanent conversion of existing "modifiable magazines" and prevent new ones from being sold. However, no further details have been released. This is long overdue, given the [many mass shooters](#) who modified their legally acquired magazines in order to increase the lethality of their weapons.

Yet, while extremely positive, this one measure is not enough to ensure that large-capacity magazines that surpass the 5/10 limit are actually banned. [Other loopholes](#) also undermine these limits. The government needs to strengthen the regulations by eliminating [all loopholes and exemptions](#):

- a) **Ban the sale and implement a phase out (or permanent conversion) for modifiable magazines that are currently in circulation.** Modifiable magazines are designed to hold 20, 30, 50, even 110 rounds (for AR-15 type weapons: see [imgae](#)) but are "pinned" to block more than 5 for long guns and 10 for handguns. However, according to the RCMP, these pinned magazines are readily restorable to their full (and illegal) capacity, for example by removing the pin, and that is exactly what several [recent mass shooters have done](#) before embarking on their killing sprees. The sale of such devices should be banned and current ones should be permanently modified or taken out of circulation in a timely manner, for example not more than three years.



- b) **Withdraw the official 2011 RCMP interpretation which says that if a magazine is not purposely designed for a specific gun in which it fits, it's exempted from the 5/10 limits.** This loophole was [blamed](#) by the coroner investigating the 2006 Dawson school shooting for allowing the gunman to use 10-round magazines for his long gun (the Beretta CX4 Storm) which otherwise would have been limited to five rounds.
- c) **Eliminate the exemption for magazines designed for rimfire ammunition, for which there are currently no limits** ([magazines that can hold 110 cartridges](#) are for sale online).
- d) **Eliminate the exemption for magazines holding centre-fire cartridges that are designed for a long gun that is not a semi-automatic rifle.**
- e) **Cap all magazines at 5 cartridges, for both non-restricted and restricted.** This is [what most Canadians want](#) as well as what the [Mass Casualty Commission recommended](#): "The federal government should amend the Criminal Code to prohibit the use of a magazine with more than five rounds so as to close the loopholes in the existing law that permit such firearms."

f) Ensure that all these rules also apply to magazines for restricted firearms.

More detailed information is available [in this letter to the Minister](#) regarding all impending regulations.

H) CONCLUSION

As a whole, despite the absence of a comprehensive ban on assault weapons, Bill C-21 is worthy of support and we encourage the Senate to pass it without amendments as soon as possible, specifically before the summer recess. We also hope senators communicate to the government their support for strong regulations aimed at banning current military-style weapons and eliminating all exemptions and loopholes that undermine the so-called "ban" on large-capacity magazines.