

**Excerpts regarding potential expansion of the Olympic exemption
from the freeze on handgun purchases
during the hearings on C-21 before the Senate SECD Committee**

<https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/Sen/Committee/441/SECD/56446-E>

Senator Dagenais: My first question is for Ms. Honour (SFC). When this bill was sent to us, we were told steps had been taken to enable athletes to keep competing in the sport. That's what Minister Leblanc told the committee. What changes could be made to this bill so that it would be acceptable to athletes like you?

Dr. Honour (SFC): There are a couple of changes. When you look at Bill C-21 and clause 43, proposed section 97.1 (b)(i) and (ii), if we could do things like include all the pistols that are commonly used in International Shooting Sport Federation-recognized pistol disciplines, this would allow all of our ISSF — the Olympic organization sports — to be trained and competed with. The other thing is taking that wording of "training, competing or coaching" and changing it to "participation in organized target shooting sports run by government-recognized sport associations." Making that shift could allow people like the IPSC as well. It makes sure that the government recognizes that we have a responsible sport organization and that we have ways to identify those that participate. They couldn't just own a pistol; they would have to participate in our sports. That would be great.

Senator Duncan: Thank you very much to the witnesses who have come before us today.

My question is largely for Dr. Honour and concerns the sport of biathlon. I am not an expert on firearms or on Bill C-21. My understanding is that biathlon does not use a weapon that is currently covered under this legislation. I believe you mentioned an amendment that would ensure that a recognized sports organization would be involved in the licensing or dealing with weapons and the authorization to use them. ...

Dr. Honour (Shooting Federation of Canada - SFC): ... In terms of the proposed change that I'm asking for in Bill C-21, it really is to deal with clause 43 and inserting proposed sections 97.1(b)(i) and (ii), which is about pistols, the firearm type being a handgun, so that it would identify which handguns are allowed and who can own those handguns.

Senator Duncan: If I can follow up, then, if we were to include that amendment, would it provide comfort for future legislators and future individuals involved in biathlon? Yes, they are a separate organization, and their weapons or guns are not covered under this legislation, but forward thinking —

Dr. Honour: Biathlon is not impacted. The problem is that any government can then say, "We don't accept your organization. We will no longer recognize your organization." There is always a threat that our government will not recognize shooting sports. However, I'm trying to find a way in our current government system so that we can find a balance between the government wanting to have control of firearms and our ability to operate our sports.

Senator Duncan: Your suggestion is to have this amendment?

Dr. Honour: Yes.

Senator Duncan: Thank you.

Senator Boisvenu: Do you feel those people understood where you were coming from or were open to amending the bill so as to minimize the impact on your members?

Mr. Smith (IPSC): There was discussion. During the parliamentary amendments at committee, there was certainly some discussion, and actually, some of it came to a vote, and it came down to a tiebreaker by the chair.

Senator Boisvenu: Are your proposed amendments in the bill before us now?

Mr. Smith: No, they are not.

Senator Yussuff: Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

My question will be both to Sandra Honour and, of course, James Smith (IPSC) and is to deal with the concern that you have in regard to the legislation and future membership because of the Bill C-21 ban on handguns and use of handguns. Maybe there are two parts to it. Membership in the organization is a serious responsibility, and obviously, if there were an exemption based on what was proposed in the other place, there would be a higher degree of vigilance as to how you would police that because anybody could join just to get around the handgun restriction. Could you elaborate on some of your thoughts about this? This is an issue that has been raised publicly. I would like to get your thoughts in regard to this.

Senator Yussuff: In regard to the amendment that was proposed in the other place, that amendment deals specifically with some of the concerns that you have that the committee dealt with and, obviously, didn't support, but they did look at it. Were you satisfied with the amendment as it was proposed?

Mr. Smith (IPSC): Yes. It could have gone a little further, but the writing was on the wall and we would take whatever we would get at this point to have our sport survive.

<https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/Sen/Committee/441/SECD/56438-E>

Senator Boisvenu: ... I was shocked by what one witness told us: the very existence of these ranges would be in question, since the bill would deprive them of clientele. Surely, shooting ranges can't rely solely on peace officers and police officers. Is it true that, if the bill is passed as is, unamended, shooting ranges would be at risk of closing their doors, leaving peace officers with nowhere to do their testing and jeopardizing their ability to carry a firearm for their job? Is that a fair statement?

In the House of Commons in May 2023, NDP Public Safety Critic Peter Julian proposed an amendment to extend the exemption to other sports federations:

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/SECU/meeting-67/minutes>

"Peter Julian moved, — That Bill C-21, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing lines 12 and 13 on page 28 with the following:

"gramme of the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, the International Practical Shooting Confederation or the Single Action Shooting Society,"

At 10:54 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

At 11:01 p.m., the sitting resumed.

After debate, the question was put on the amendment of Peter Julian and it was negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS: Randy Hoback, Peter Julian, Michael Kram, Damien C. Kurek, Dane Lloyd — 5;

NAYS: Paul Chiang, Pam Damoff, Iqwinder Gaheer, Ron McKinnon [Chair who provided tie-breaking vote], Kristina Michaud, Peter Schiefke — 6.