

PolySeSouvient / PolyRemembers

Étudiants et diplômés de Polytechnique pour le contrôle des armes
Students and Graduates of Polytechnique for gun control

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For immediate release

Election 2025 - Voting Against Gun Violence: Clear Choices Offered to Canadians

Poillievre promised to dismantle assault weapon ban
and reverse all other meaningful gun control measures passed by Liberals



MONTREAL, April 15, 2025: Today, three days before advance voting begins and two weeks from Election Day, gun control advocacy group **PolyRemembers/PolySeSouvient** joined with representatives of student associations and families of victims of the massacre at the **École Polytechnique** to assess the actions and commitments of all political parties with respect to gun control, especially assault weapons, the type of firearm most used by perpetrators of mass shootings. The evaluation was based on each political party's positions, actions and votes on Bill C-21 in the last Parliament, public pledges by leaders to stakeholder groups and an election survey sent to each party at the start of the 2025 election campaign.

"As always, it is in memory of my sister Annie, as well as the other thirteen young women killed, that I am here representing members of the victims' families - although there are fewer and fewer of us as the decades go by," said **Serge St-Arneault**. *"More than previous federal elections, this year's vote will determine the fate of gun control in Canada for decades to come. Having lost a loved one to gun violence as a result of easy access to an assault weapon, I urge all Canadians to pay close attention to the political parties' commitments on this issue."*

"Thirty-five years ago, Polytechnique students welcomed Justice Minister Kim Campbell to our school to present her with a petition with 560,000 signatures calling for a ban on assault weapons - including the Ruger Mini-14 used to kill 14 of our sisters and to injure 13 others," said **Loïc Goyette, President of the Polytechnique Student Association and spokesperson for the NOT_HERE student movement,**

accompanied by representatives the **Quebec Student Union (QSU)** and the **Fédération des Associations Étudiantes du Campus de l'Université de Montréal (FAÉCUM)**.

“Over those 35 years, Polytechnique students and student associations joined with the graduates that started this movement to fight for this goal. Today we can say that we are half-way there, with nearly all existing models of assault weapons being prohibited. The second half, removing these weapons from circulation, is a key issue in this election.

“Students and young people in general are greatly concerned about the gun control laws the new federal government that Quebecers and Canadians will elect this month will enact. The name of the pan Canadian student movement is ‘NOT_HERE’, referring to the daily school shootings we see south of the border. We do not want American style laws or assault weapons in Canada. We want to feel safe in our schools and communities without needing to participate in active shooter simulations.

“We are therefore happy to highlight the actions and promises of all Canadian political parties on the issue of gun control, and to invite Canadians concerned about public safety to consider this information when deciding which party best represents their values and views on gun control.”

On the basis of a [thorough analysis](#) of the parties’ actions and commitments from 2021 to 2025, here is **PolyRemember’s** assessment of each party’s performance on gun control:

Conservative Party:

The Conservative Party did not respond to our all-party survey on gun control. However, its leader and MPs have been very clear over the past four years on where they stand on gun control. **The Conservative Party refers to the (non-existing) “rights” to own guns that opposed all measures introduced by the Trudeau government.** The Conservative leader, Mr. Poilievre, spent the last few years misrepresenting the Liberal ban on assault weapons, calling it a “[gun grab](#)”, telling crowds “[the Liberals want to ban your hunting rifles](#)” and repeating gun lobby rhetoric that limit “[all gun crimes](#)” to smuggled guns. The prohibited assault weapons the Conservatives call hunting firearms and have vowed to make legal again are guns with “tactical or military design with large capacity magazine ... unsuitable for civilian use and a serious threat to public safety,” like the infamous AR-15. Hunters can still choose from at least 20,000 models of legal rifles and shotguns to use for hunting food and recreation.

Poilievre explicitly promised to repeal all gun control measures passed by the Liberals, including [Bill C-21](#) (removing firearms from domestic abusers and freezing the handgun sales), [Bill C-71](#) (reinstating commercial sales records and ensuring the verification of a potential buyer’s license), and the prohibition of assault weapons.

Liberal Party:

Despite initially mishandling the assault weapon file and allowing indefensible delays with respect to the implementation of several [Bill C-21](#) measures, the Liberal Party ultimately delivered major concrete progress on gun control, on several fronts: (1) prohibiting almost all models of assault weapons, (2) introducing life-saving measures to protect victims of intimate partner violence, (3) freezing handgun sales and (4) bringing in new measures to combat gun trafficking.

The Liberal Party also promises to complete key past commitments: (1) the long-awaited buyback of prohibited weapons, (2) find a solution with respect to the classification of [the SKS](#), and (3) implement outstanding measures including those that are awaiting enabling regulations (e.g. related to domestic violence) or those that were promised but not delivered (ensure the RCMP not US gun manufacturers

or importers determines the classification of new models, ensure magazines can't be altered to hold more than five rounds, and close any loopholes regarding the Olympic exemption from the freeze on handgun sales).

Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois generally supported all the government's efforts, including Bill C-21 and the prohibition of assault weapons. The Public Safety Critic did rigorous work to improve Bill in committee. Unlike all other parties, the Bloc Québécois stood by women's groups, voting against the "ex-parte" measure **they warned** could potentially harm women (the measure passed).

The Party promises to support the several outstanding measures, like the rapid implementation of C-21, a ban on modifiable magazines and a system that ensures the RCMP - not the industry - determines the classification of new models, in addition to addressing the classification of **the SKS**.

New Democratic Party

While the NDP promised to support a ban on assault weapons and some form of ban on handguns, its actions at committee stage were the opposite. The two NDP Public Safety Critics actively undermined the Liberals' attempts to include a ban on assault weapons in Bill C-21, even taking credit for the withdrawal of the amendments to that effect. They also pushed to exempt "practical shooters" from the freeze on handguns purchases, which essentially would have cancelled the freeze, drawing accolades from the gun lobby.

As such, the NDP's promise to fast-track the buyback of assault weapons they fought to keep legal and to prevent Olympic-related loopholes from undermining the handgun freeze lacks credibility.

However, **they also promise to rapidly complete the implementation of C-21, eliminate exemptions and loopholes thwarting magazine capacity restrictions and prevent manufacturers from circumventing gun classification rules.**

Green Party

Both members of the Green Party generally supported Bill C-21, making several common-sense arguments in the House of Commons, including recognizing that the first iteration of Bill C-21 (same name, different bill, tabled in 2021) was essentially an empty shell.

The Party promises to support the main outstanding measures, like the assault weapon buyback, closing gaps related to magazine capacity, clear rules for the Olympic handgun exemption and ensuring the RCMP – not the industry – determines firearm classification.

Heidi Rathjen, Coordinator of PolySeSouvient and witness of the 1989 femicides, summarizes the group's recommendations to Canadians:

"Canadians who side with the gun lobby and its ideology that says gun ownership is a 'right' have a clear choice: The Conservative party. For those who want semi-automatic military-style assault weapons to become legally available again for ordinary citizens and who want to get rid of reasonable safety measures like ensuring guns are automatically removed from domestic abusers and ensuring sellers verify the validity of a potential buyer's firearms licence, the Conservative Party is the party for you.

While the four other parties committed to complete the assault weapons buyback and implement the outstanding measures in Bill C-21, we believe, based on past actions, that only the commitments to that effect of the Liberals, Bloc and Greens are credible.

Given that the Liberals passed three historical Orders in Council prohibiting over two thousand models of assault weapons, despite massive opposition and widespread disinformation, that it instituted a freeze on new handgun purchases and that it passed game-changing measures to protect women and children from gun violence, PolyRemembers believes that the essential outstanding gun control measures (removing assault weapons for circulation, banning large-capacity magazines, implementing the measures related to domestic violence) are most likely to be delivered by a new Liberal government.

That said, a vote for the Bloc Québécois will guarantee strong support from at least one opposition party for the Liberals' commitments.”

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