



April 27, 2010

Open Letter to All Members of Parliament

I am writing to you with regard to Private Member's Bill C-391.

My name is Greg Dionne, and I am the President of Canadian Association of Police Boards (CAPB). CAPB is the national association for police boards and commissions from across the country. Our members provide governance and oversight of more than 75 per cent of municipal police in Canada. These boards and commissions are made up of ordinary residents and elected members of local municipalities. As such, they give voice to and respond to the concerns and expectations of their communities.

One concern that has been expressed by communities right across Canada pertains to violent incidents using firearms, be they handguns or long guns. Firearms have been used in a wide spectrum of violent incidents such as domestic disputes, bystander shootings, homicides as well as drug and gang related activities.

You know well that these criminal acts have cost many innocent lives, including those of young people, women, and police officers.

You know, as well, that not all the perpetrators of these violent, criminal acts were people with criminal records or professional criminals. Many were ordinary people who, for any number of reasons, committed that act.

You know, too, that in many of these instances, the firearms they used were legally owned or had once been legally owned.

The Firearms Registry is an integral component of a regime for controlling and keeping track of privately owned firearms of which Canada can be justly proud. It is based on a very Canadian principle that ownership of firearms by anyone other than law enforcement personnel is a privilege, not a right. And the vast majority of Canadians have come to accept that the restrictions that this regime imposes are reasonable and in the public interest.

Private Member's Bill-391 is an ideological attack on this extremely critical aspect of our gun control system. It is based on misinformation and distortions. And its proponents



have, as we all know, dedicated enormous funds to spread falsehoods in order to manipulate public opinion.

If you are taking a position in support of this bill because you wish to respect the views of your constituents, I respectfully suggest to you that you are paying attention to only a segment of your community, some of whom may have taken the falsehoods as fact.

It may be that the Firearms Registry is not perfect. If so, let us improve, not dismantle, it.

It may be that there are people in your community who have legitimate concerns about certain aspects of the Registry. If so, let us work together to address those legitimate concerns.

It may be that there is need for better public awareness in parts of Canada, including your constituency. If so, let us work together to create that awareness.

Let us not be complicit in doing one thing, and that is, destroy a basically good safeguard that works in the public interest.

I urge you to speak to members of your local police board, police chief or police association and find out how the Registry is of enormous help to their efforts to keep your community safe. In the meantime, I attach a copy of a joint communiqué that we have issued along with the Canadian Police Association (CPA) and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP).

I hope you will give serious consideration to this appeal on behalf of people who have the responsibility for keeping communities such as yours safe.

Please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Lanzon, our Executive Director, if we can be of any assistance. She can be reached at 613.235.2272.

Yours truly,

Greg Dionne