



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 • 604-871-2283, 1-800-663-9163 • www.bctf.ca
TTY 604-871-2185 (deaf and hard of hearing) Executive Offices fax: 604-871-2290

Bill C-391

A brief to the

**Standing Committee on Public Safety
and National Security**

from the

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

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Irene Lanzinger, President

Moira Mackenzie, Executive Director

Bill C-391 Brief BC Teachers' Federation

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The British Columbia Teachers' Federation represents 41,000 public school teachers and associated professionals in Kindergarten to Grade 12 and adult educators in BC. Over 70% of our members are women. As women and men concerned about violence, we are writing to express our grave concern over potential amendments to repeal Bill C-391, the long-gun registry.

The BCTF is proud of its history as a social justice union. As an organization of professionals, we accept and act on our broad responsibility to be involved in the social development of the communities and the province we live in, and we do this in the interests of the children we teach.

Since 1973, the BCTF has been at the forefront of standing up for women's and children's rights. We established a discrete Status of Women (SW) program, which ran successfully for 25 years. Since then, we've continued to advocate and speak out against violence against women.

The BCTF currently works with We Can (We Can End Violence against Women) and other community partners in the global struggle to end violence against women and children in schools, homes, and communities.

The BCTF believes the proposed repeal of the gun registry is a dangerous step backward for Canadian society. The long-gun registry was brought into place in response to the killing of 14 women at Montreal's École Polytechnique on December 6, 1989. We commemorate the memory of those women and the many missing and murdered Aboriginal women across Canada at events throughout the year.

The evidence is clear: stronger gun laws and gun registration have helped reduce gun-related death, injury, violence, and suicide.

- Guns in the home are one of the leading risk factors for murders of women in domestic homicide.
- Every year in Canada, more than 75 women are killed by their intimate partner.
- 1 in 3 Canadian women killed by their husbands is shot, 88% with legally owned rifles and shotguns, the firearms of choice in domestic violence and suicide.
- The gun registry is consulted by police 10,000 times a day and it has helped in efforts to take preventive actions and in several investigations.
- There has been a 50% drop in gun-related spousal homicides since records started being kept.
- Guns in the home continue to represent a particular threat to women and are one of the leading risk factors for murders of women in domestic homicide. Since gun control, the number of women murdered with firearms fell from 85 in 1991 to 32 in 2005.
- 1,441 Canadians were killed with guns in 1991; in 2008 the number was 200.*
- Murders with rifles and shotguns decreased dramatically from 107 in 1991 to 32 in 2008.*

We stand in solidarity with the following organizations in opposition to Bill C-391: the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canada Safety Council, the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, the Dawson Gun Control Committee, and over 300 provincial and local organizations.

We believe that the repeal of the long-gun registry will put more women at risk for domestic violence in Canada. More men will become perpetrators of violent crimes against women and children. Simply put, more lives of women and children will be lost because it will be easier for someone to own and use a gun.

*BC Wildlife Federation Alert #164.2009

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