

The YWCA supports the legitimate use of firearms for hunting, sporting activities and law enforcement. It is the misuse of firearms in domestic violence that poses the greatest threat to women and children. We believe the key elements of the legislation will have a significant impact on domestic homicide and women's and children's safety.

June Mitchell writes from Regina:

I am aware that a resolution opposing the new gun law was passed in the Saskatchewan legislature. I am also aware that less than half the MLAs chose to be in the legislature to vote on that resolution. I believe there are many citizens like myself who support this new gun law which was promised, and has been passed by our democratically elected government.

Of the many mayors and municipalities who have written, I have chosen to quote a very recent letter from Barbara Hall, the Mayor of Toronto:

I understand that the vast majority of gun owners are law-abiding citizens. Clearly, access to firearms is only part of the problem. Restrictions on firearms alone will not solve the problem of crime and violence in our communities. However, it is a significant part of the solution. The firearms restrictions, registration and minimum sentencing requirements as outlined in Bill C-68, along with other investments in our communities will ensure a more sustainable, safer urban environment.

Many health care professionals appeared before the committee, each one with a separate tragedy to report. As individuals who actually see the blood and guts, they all support the bill.

Anna Lovasik and Kathy Belton from the Injury Prevention Centre of the University of Alberta Hospitals in Edmonton write:

The cost of gunshot wounds to the health care system is \$70 million per year. Approximately 40% of the women killed by their husbands are shot, usually with legally-owned guns. Bill C-68 would provide more tools for early intervention in domestic disputes, allowing police to remove guns where there is a risk.

A group of public health and safety professionals from Quebec wrote in an open letter last week:

As representatives of Quebec's major public health and safety experts...we are unequivocally opposed to any amendments at this point in the process. All the experts in crime prevention, public health, domestic violence and criminology who testified before the Senate legislative committee have called on the Senate to pass the bill as soon as possible, without amendments.... You must therefore be

aware of the tremendous importance of this bill for the families of the victims of the Polytechnique massacre, as well as all Montrealers. If this legislation is still not passed on the sixth anniversary of the December 6th tragedy, we expect an outcry of national proportions.

From the New Brunswick Nurses Union-Syndicat des infirmiers et des infirmières du Nouveau-Brunswick, I heard:

We also understand that this Bill is not the whole solution, but it will help prevent injury and death. As health care professionals, we support Police Chiefs, criminal justice experts and women's groups in calling for stronger control on guns.

Law enforcement representatives, both union and management, appeared before us to support Bill C-68. I quote from a recent letter from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police:

We appreciate that individual members of the Senate of Canada may have different views on the details surrounding Bill C-68 and we understand and respect the emotion and concerns raised in the debate. Nevertheless, we wish to impress upon you and your colleagues the importance of this bill to policing and law enforcement and to the communities to which we are accountable. We therefore repeat our request to the Senate of Canada to pass this Bill without amendment.

• (2110)

This bill has also received support from many individuals. For example, George Richards of Castlegar, British Columbia writes:

This bill has received support from many groups: the police, women's organizations, emergency room doctors, suicide counsellors, and a large majority of those Canadians living in cities. In addition, there are those who have a general antipathy to firearms and violence for a variety of reasons; engendered, in my case, by service in the Canadian Army during the second World War.

From Don Mitchell in Moose Jaw, I heard:

There are many of us in Saskatchewan who feel disenfranchised by the position taken by a majority of provincial politicians...The gun owners lobby obviously has a loud voice...but it does not represent a large constituency of informed and caring people at the community level who continue to view gun controls as a sound and progressive measure.

Like many members of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, I listened with particular interest to representations from members of aboriginal communities. There is no question that many of them are unhappy with the bill, and I have done my