

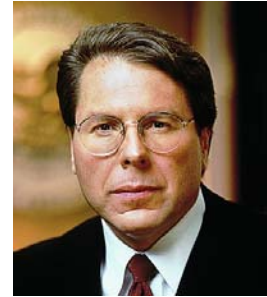


STANDING GUARD

By Wayne LaPierre, Executive Vice President, National Rifle Association

Canada's Reversing The "Irreversible Ratchet" Of Gun Control

If all goes well in the Canadian parliament, Dominion gun owners will be freed from 14 years of living under the crushing weight of a bureaucratic, scandal-ridden, wasteful, invasive, \$2 billion, error-ridden and inarguably worthless long gun registry. The registry has been proven a fraud in regard to promised minimal costs and significant impact on violent crime.



Wendy Cukier—whose Coalition for Gun Control takes credit for the failed registration scheme—explained the pending bill as succinctly as anyone: "It not only eliminates the need to register rifles and shotguns," she bleated, "but requires that the information contained on 7 million registered guns be destroyed."

The stage was set for progress on the repeal with a Nov. 4, 2009, House of Commons "second reading" vote on a "private member's bill," C-391. That measure, passed by a 164-137 margin, was put forward by Manitoba Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) Candice Hoepfner. Included in the win were 20 votes from opposition party members.

That major step was a stunning victory for gun owners. It represents years of work by members of Parliament and by a broad coalition of gun rights, conservation and rural interest groups across Canada—especially in educating non-gun-owning citizens.

Under the Canadian parliamentary system, the legislation will be debated next before a committee, then sent back to the House for a "third reading" tally. It is expected to be cleared by the same MPs who voted in November. The repeal bill will then move to the Senate where support is virtually guaranteed since members of the Canadian Senate are appointed by the government—in this case by Conservative Party leader Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who came to power in 2006 aggressively promising to dump the registry.

Tony Bernardo, head of the Canadian Institute for Legislative Action, told us, "The organized effort has been to make people aware of just how failed the system is. It's the average Canadian out there who's now been educated as to how bad it is. We didn't give up. We pushed back."

From the beginning, the critical issues were cost and benefit. When it was enacted, the fees for registering 7 million long guns were promised to pay for the system with an additional cost to tax-payers not exceeding \$2 million. At the time, noted criminologist Gary Mauser, professor emeritus at British Columbia's Simon Fraser University, warned it would cost taxpayers billions. In fact, it racked up a \$2 billion cost to the taxpayers.

But major credit for the impending demise of the long gun registry is actually due to the gun banners themselves.

It boils down to this: if you promise something you know you can't deliver, sooner or later people will get wise to the scam.

The history of the long gun registry began with a horrific mass murder on Dec. 6, 1989, committed by a 25-year-old psychopath who turned his semi-automatic rifle on himself after killing 14 women and wounding 10 other people at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

After a relentless media firestorm, law-abiding gun owners were told in 1995 they would pay a price for that tragedy with the passage of C-68, a wide-ranging gun control bill. C-68 demanded universal gun-owner licensing, universal registration, bans on certain categories of privately owned firearms and intrusive storage requirements.

At the center of the Montreal Massacre, stirring the pot of genuine public horror and grief into irrational media hysteria, was Professor Cukier's Coalition for Gun Control. Cukier is a major player on the U.N. stage managed by George Soros' protégé Rebecca Peters.

The primary ingredient in Cukier's poisonous media brew was the big lie that gun control was the answer to murderous individual sociopathy and to the plague of violent crime. But as in England, Australia and our own country, all such schemes are ultimately proved fraudulent.

Too many people willingly bought the big myths of gun control in the late 1980s and early '90s, so the proof would be in the long-term results, which are now as starkly visible as they are empty. Time has not been on the side of the gun-ban crowd.

In 1996, Cukier crowed in a magazine article about how she won the battle for gun control in Canada: "One of the strongest appeals was to the polls ... the Angus Reid poll of Sep. 1993 asked more precise questions and revealed that 86 percent of respondents supported registration of firearms. ..."

How times have changed, along with the will of the Canadian people.

Try this from the same pollster Cukier embraced as all-knowing:

On Nov. 19, 2009, the Vancouver Sun in British Columbia reported on an Angus Reid survey showing only 8 percent of respondents in B. C. believed the long gun registry has been effective at preventing crime.

This huge reversal in public support is the result of a whole series of events, unavoidably covered by the media.

All four western provinces and Newfoundland opted out—refusing to participate—which amounted to a kind of state civil disobedience.

From the beginning, the imposition of the registration scheme sparked widespread gun owner civil disobedience as well. An estimated 50 percent of other-wise law-abiding citizens ignored the law. There is even a gun-rights organization aptly named the "Canadian Unlicensed Firearms Owners Association."

Then there were lawsuits by native peoples and Canadian provinces challenging the gun law, and massive opposition by rank-and-file policemen who saw it all as a waste of time and money.

All of this was exacerbated by deepening scandals involving the creation and gross mismanagement of the long gun registry, including a scathing 2002 auditor general report on grossly ballooning costs, bureaucratic lies, stonewalling and coverups.

The promised \$2 million taxpayer cost of the long gun registry ballooned into the largest overrun in Canada's history—in excess of \$2 billion.

Then there is the irrefutable evidence that the system has nothing whatsoever to do with curbing violent crime. The inevitable dumping of the Canadian long gun registry is proof that freedom will ultimately win out.

As my friend and colleague Dave Kopel, research director of the Independence Institute in Colorado, astutely noted, "Repeal of the Canadian registry would be of tremendous global significance. Repeal would also shatter the claim by the Canadian gun prohibition lobby that gun control in Canada is an irreversible ratchet."

This is huge on the world stage and made all the more significant as a backdrop in the pending debate on the United Nations' global gun ban.