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Montreal May 23rd, 2006

The Honorable STOCKWELL DAY
Minister of Public Safety
Bureau 202, 301 Main Street,
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The Honorable Stockwell Day:

We would like to offer our unconditional support with your recent decision to abolish the firearms registry.

Beyond the prohibitory and scandalous costs related to the administration of the program (**946 million dollars**, according to the Auditor General, Sheila Fraser), we should ask ourselves the following questions: **If we had adopted Bill C-362 (Law that modified the Firearms Act and the Criminal Code) back in the 1960s, could we have changed the course of history and the Polytechnique tragedy? The killing at Concordia University? The shootings at the National Assembly?**

PROBABLY NOT!

Have we been living in ignorance all this time? It is well known that Canada has a firearms control system that is very strict and this was in place well before the firearms registry program of the preceding government. Why have we spent all this money in such a naïve way, making the population believe that it was for their own security and protection, while we knew very well that we already had one of the best control systems in the world?

We tried, on several occasions, to sensitize the previous governments on the importance of investing in prevention and education. But we were neither heard nor listened to.

We want to underline the political courage that you are displaying in abolishing this registry which is motivated by the will to consider prevention as a tool of dissuasion against violence and criminality. In spite of it all, I also wish to underline the determination of Wendy Cukier, founder of the Coalition for the control of firearms, in this battle, which, I believe, seems to be taking quite a sensationalist turn. We should not concentrate on the symptoms; we should rather analyze the root of the problems. Isn't prevention the only way, with the help of dissuasive measures, like the three pieces of legislation that the Justice Minister, the honorable Vic Toews is planning to table during the month of June, to reduce and eventually eliminate crime?

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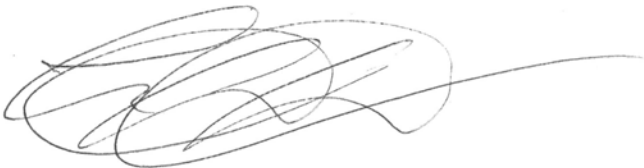
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On the other hand, it is justified to say that firearms, more than any other type of weapon, are three times more likely to cause serious or even fatal wounds. Mrs. Cukier seems to think that with a perfect control of the registry, there would be no more deaths caused by firearms. We believe that it would be utopist to think that criminals *obey* and *abide* to laws. How can we explain that violence still persists and that 67% of homicides are committed with other types of weapons?

More importantly, I am extremely concerned about the harmful effects and the impact of violence on families, and more specifically its effects on the psychological and physical development of children. Prevention and the education of our youth constitute, now more than ever, one of the strategies that we must develop and encourage to prevent crime and violence. In view of the fact that social inequality is rising in Canada, it is important that we act now with the knowledge of the origins of crime, in order to develop a consequent and efficient policy for the short, middle and long term that will benefit the entire population.

In conclusion, if we truly want to help erase this type of malaise in our society, it is most important to **invest**, not only in intervention and repression, but also in prevention. By doing so, we will help to eradicate the problem therefore creating a much healthier and fruitful society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Riccardo Di Done
President