



CACP president Bill Blair chooses registry over more police

Police chief head prefers computers instead of cops

(OTTAWA – June 1) – The president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) claims he would rather spend money on increasing the long-gun registry database than putting more police on the street.

City of Toronto's Chief Bill Blair delivered the bizarre statement on May 26 when pressed for his priorities during the recent long-gun gun registry debate on Private Members' Bill C-391. Blair's preference was contradicted by Sgt. Murray Grismer, a Saskatchewan police officer who testified that hiring more police would help fight crime and the registry does not enhance public safety. Both witnesses appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Parliament Hill.

CSSA spokesman, Tony Bernardo, says Blair's statement demonstrates how detached the police chiefs association has become from the needs of police officers in the field.

"It's beyond belief that the CACP is so blindly supportive of the useless gun registry that its president would invest in it rather than hiring more police officers," says Bernardo. "I expect that police chiefs and front-line officers across Canada are astounded and embarrassed that this association would prefer computers over more cops. The registry can't watch a police officer's back on patrol. That's the job of other police officers, and the more the better."

Blair testified the registry provides accurate, reliable information that keeps police safe on the job.

"We have heard from so many front-line officers who know that the registry is downright dangerous to anyone who trusts the registry data," Bernardo explains. "Even raw cadets are taught to ignore registry information because it can get them killed. Should they believe the registry when it says there's no gun in that house, or there are exactly two guns? Police always assume firearms are present at the scene, so the registry fails utterly as an educational tool.

"The CACP and other chiefs associations want to maintain the registry because they believe it provides them with more information and therefore, more power," adds Bernardo. "They're not even right about that. Fewer than half of the long-guns in Canada have been registered and the existing database is a dog's breakfast of incorrect information. There are certain gun control tools that do weed out the bad guys, but the long-gun registry only pretends to do that."

Sgt. Grismer told the parliamentary committee that he believes it more prudent to invest money in police, rather than continuing to fund the registry.

"I would put the money towards scarce resources, towards more police officers on the street," he told members of Parliament. "We know because of specific targeting we've done in the last number of months in Saskatoon...that by putting more officers on the street, we were able to see a reduction in that crime... By having more members on the street, having a more visible presence, we make our society safer than we do by having a registry which contains flawed, inaccurate data that has been collected...in a manner that just breeds error and inaccuracy."

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