

MP Talking Points

Issue: Bill C-71 Amendments to the Firearms Act

Background

Twenty-four Bill C-71 Amendments to sections of the Firearms Act are going to be implemented after the spring 2020 federal budget. Some of the amendments will require new data infrastructure and technology, and budget allocation to implement.

What's Changing?

Background Checks

Bill C-71 makes it an offence to sell or give a firearm to a person without first checking with Miramichie to verify that their licence is still valid. The government hasn't announced what other information will be required to be confirmed at the time of transfer.

It has long been the case that to purchase a firearm in Canada, you must apply for a Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) and pass a background check by the chief firearms officer (CFO) in your province. It is already illegal to sell a firearm to anyone who doesn't possess their PAL.

Bill C-71 extends the period of background checks from the current five years to a person's entire life and includes a check of their online history.

Transportation

Currently, owners of restricted firearms have the authorization to transport (ATT) attached to your licence. No approval from police is necessary to transport your restricted firearm for routine activities such as target shooting or going to a gunsmith or a gun show. Under Bill C-71, you will require separate ATTs for each transportation activity.

At some point, the government will announce that all ATTs are cancelled so that gun owners will have to request new, more limited ATTs.

Key Messages

- Canada has one of the strictest firearm regimes in the world, but it can't stop criminal violence by drug gangs.



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- Violent criminals get their guns from smuggling, not thefts from PAL holders. Even at the peak of the long-gun registry in 2012, Statistics Canada found that less than 5% of firearms used in homicide were ever registered.
 - Statistics Canada reported that 5,550 criminals -- already prohibited from possessing firearms -- were arrested for violating their Firearm Prohibition Orders between 2014-2018.
 - The public would be better protected if our government would improve its monitoring of the 443,000 individuals with Firearm Prohibition Orders (FPOs) registered against them instead of the screened and licensed law-abiding firearms owners.
 - Requiring PAL holders to request a permit each time they take a firearm to a gun store or gun show will do nothing stop gangsters from shooting at each other.
 - It will not reduce gang shootings to extend background checks for the life of the individual. Still, it will unfairly disarm otherwise responsible Canadians, such as, our returning veterans, as well as bloating the federal bureaucracy and increasing costs to taxpayers.
 - The firearms community supports responsible ownership and use and is opposed to any level of firearms violence.
 - The government should focus on gangsters, not responsible firearm owners. Taxpayer funded activities dedicated to reducing criminal activity should be directed at programs that can and will do so, not on meaningless actions that merely harass law-abiding citizens.