

February 12, 2009
For Immediate Release

M.W.F. supports new firearms Bill

The Manitoba Wildlife Federation (M.W.F.) applauds the introduction of a new firearms bill by Garry Breitkreuz, M.P. Yorkton-Melville. The legislation proposes to eliminate the wasteful long gun registry and remove much of the onerous regulations associated with the act, while having no negative impact on public safety.

The bill proposes a number of changes to the Firearms Act, including: 1) Elimination of the costly, badly flawed and ineffective long gun registry; 2) Streamlining the licencing system; and 3) calling for a cost/benefit of the Firearms Program every five years to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are receiving benefit for money spent.

"We are strongly supportive of the legislation introduced earlier today by Garry Breitkreuz, who has worked tirelessly to help create a rational and cost effective firearms program that focuses the government's efforts on the prevention of crime, not the over regulation of law abiding firearms owners", said M.W.F. President Dale Garnham. "Mr. Breitkreuz and the Harper government should be applauded for their ongoing attempts to focus the firearms debate on the real problem, the acquisition and use of illegal firearms by criminals, not the responsible use of firearms by hunters and recreational sport shooters".

The Breitkreuz bill is the latest firearms bill introduced in Parliament that seeks to scrap the long gun registry, which has cost Canadian taxpayers almost \$2 billion and been strongly criticized by the federal Auditor General for its many inefficiencies and cost overruns. Created by a former Liberal government, the long gun registry was supposed to cost \$2 million and enhance public safety, neither of which was achieved.

"Over the last few years, public opinion polls have made it clear that a majority of Canadians believe that this badly flawed system needs to be eliminated." said Garnham.

The Federation is urging members to contact their Members of Parliament, regardless of Party affiliation, to get behind Breitkreuz's Bill C-301 and pass it.

With over 14,000 members and supporters in 93 affiliate clubs across Manitoba, the Manitoba Wildlife Federation is the oldest and largest conservation nonprofit organization in Manitoba, and the voice of anglers and hunters. For more information, visit www.mwf.mb.ca

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Media Contact:
Manitoba Wildlife Federation
(204) 633-5967 office
mwf@mts.net

Dale R. Garnham, President
(204)482-4881
dalegarnham@prairie.ca

BREITKREUZ BILL – BACKGROUNDER – Draft #1

By Garry Breikreuz, MP (Yorkton-Melville) – February 9, 2009

This Bill accomplishes a number of innovations to lower the excessive costs and unnecessary complexities of the Firearms Act without having any negative effect on public safety:

- **Eliminates the useless Long-Gun Registry for Non Restricted Firearms;**
- **Asks the Auditor General to perform a Cost/Benefit Analysis every five years;**
- **Requires License Verification upon Transfer of Non-Restricted Firearms;**
- **Merges “Authorizations to Transport” for Licensed Individuals;**
- **Combines the “Possession Only” Licences and “Possession and Acquisition” Licenses;**
- **Changes the License Renewal Period to 10 Years;**
- **Changes the Grandfathering Dates for 12(6) handguns.**

Scrapping the Long-Gun Registry:

- No evidence showing registry produced any public safety benefits;
- CBC news reports \$2 Billion Dollars wasted as of February 14, 2004;
http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2004/02/13/gunregistry_rdi040213.html
- \$1 Billion spent as of 2006 – (Auditor General);
(doesn't include enforcement costs, compliance costs, economic costs, all government department costs)
- Information contained in registry is hopelessly inaccurate;
- Firearms owners will still require a License, background checks, continuous eligibility, references, and safety training;
- All licenced owner information is still available to police;
- Bill does not affect restricted and prohibited gun registries. They remain intact;
- Canada Firearms Centre reports that police access the Canada Firearms Registry Online 9,413 times per day however less than 19 queries deal with registrations. Over 9,000 deal with Owner/Address information. That is still available to police;
- Creates multiple License Verifications upon Transfer (artificially inflating the number of hits; (eg. one sale registers three hits)
- Poll after poll reveals the majority of Canadians do not support it;
- Almost every media source and editorial board in Canada has called for it to be shut down;
- Save taxpayers millions of dollars per year to be redirected to real police priorities.

Streamlining Authorizations to Transport (ATT):

- Obsolete document, individually written, has not proven useful in fighting crime;
- Different jurisdictions have unequal application;
- Charter requires that federal legislation must apply equally to all Canadians;
- Almost never refused, as anyone who can apply is already qualified;
- Over half a million ATTs issued since 1999 with no public safety issues;
- Bill makes no changes to lawful transport or storage requirements
- Bill re-establishes the existing reasons for transport in the Firearms Act;
- Provides an increase to public safety by freeing up more funds and resources for law enforcement.

Combining the POLs and PALs:

- Currently: Three kinds of license: Possession and Acquisition License (PAL), the Possession Only License (POL) and the Minor's License. Amendment in bill merges POLs and PALs;
- POLs issued in 2001. POL holders have empirically demonstrated safe and responsible usage;
- Accident rate with firearm is the same for POL holders and PAL holders;
- Saves funds and confusion with no impact on the safety of Canadians;
- Makes no sense to deny POL holders the opportunity to acquire firearms of the type they already own.

10 Year Licensing:

- The RCMP has developed the enormously successful Continuous Eligibility System;
- The Continuous Eligibility System cross-references the individual license holder's name with every police computer in Canada. In effect this amounts to an individual's license being renewed daily;
- High tech data management solution eliminates the costly paperwork system developed in 1995;
- This will save significant costs spent in an unnecessary renewals process; and
- The bill adds a two-year license suspension period to allow owners with expired licenses to renew without inadvertently becoming criminals. Holders may not acquire firearms or ammunition during this suspension period.
- No impact on public safety as police will still receive the same information in a timely manner.

12 (6) Grandfathering Dates:

- Bill implements an amendment already passed by the 37th Parliament (Liberal);
- Unforeseen delays caused previous changes to not be implemented;
- Law-abiding firearms owners left in legal limbo;
- Huge court costs being born by all taxpayers;
- No compromises in safety as the lawful owners still have the firearms in their possession.

Auditor General Cost/Benefit Analysis:

- True costs of the Firearms Program were hidden and remain hidden from Parliament;
- Cost-benefit analysis declared a Cabinet secret;
- Auditor General investigated and disclosed some of the true costs, others remain hidden;
- Government spending must be transparent and accountable;
- Politicians of all Parties have recommended periodic cost/benefit analyses;
- Government programs must be periodically assessed to ensure value to Canadians;
- **The program became excessively regulatory” – A-G’s Report 2002**

A. “10.67 In February 2001, the Department told the Government it had wanted to focus on the minority of firearms owners that posed a high risk while minimizing the impact on the overwhelming majority of law-abiding owners. However, the Department concluded that this did not happen. Rather, it stated that the Program's focus had changed from high-risk firearms owners to excessive regulation and enforcement of controls over all owners and their firearms. The Department concluded that, as a result, the Program had become overly complex and very costly to deliver, and that it had become difficult for owners to comply with the Program.

B. The two letters below show, the Auditor General's 2006 audit of the firearms program never included enforcement costs, compliance costs, economic costs, and all the costs of all federal departments affected and all costs incurred by all provincial, regional, municipal governments (including police services).

June 15, 2006 - AUDITOR GENERAL RESPONDS TO GARRY BREITKREUZ

<http://www.garrybreitkreuz.com/publications/2006/812.pdf>

JUNE 1, 2006 - BREITKREUZ'S QUESTIONS FOR THE AUDITOR GENERAL

http://www.garrybreitkreuz.com/inthehouse/Questions/2006/june_1.htm