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The Hon. David C. Onley
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February 13, 2009

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Parliament Hill, House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Right Hon. Harper:

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is writing at this time in response to your government's direction in initiating a consultative process for the purpose of doubling the firearm licensing period to 10 years or eliminating the registration/renewal of firearms completely. The OPHA formally recognized violence as a public health issue in 1997. A decade later, in 2007, OPHA constituent members overwhelmingly supported and adopted a resolution "Reaffirming the importance of strict firearm regulation in preventing firearm deaths and injuries."

To this end, we purport that firearms imposes a significant burden on the health of Canadians in terms of death, disabling injury and emotional trauma. Research has demonstrated that stringent regulation of firearms, including safe storage, helps to prevent hundreds of firearms-related deaths, injuries and emotional trauma. In addition, effective firearm regulation is also part and parcel of strengthening injury prevention, suicide prevention and domestic violence.

As we face our current national and worldwide economic crisis, I urge your government to preserve Canada's current Firearms Act through the promotion of the safe storage of all firearms, as well as ensuring the law is supported by adequate resources and effectively enforced in communities.

Please do not repeal or dismantle the registration of rifles and shotguns. Unrestricted rifles and shotguns, especially within our current economic crisis will no doubt exacerbate both public health and safety issues. I urge you to ensure your government commits to the ongoing licensing, renewal and registration of all firearms.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Carol Timmings
President

C.C.: Hon. Peter Van Loan, Minister of Public Safety
VanLoan.P@pari.goc.ca
Hon. Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice Nicholson.R@parl.gc.ca