

BACKGROUND

On the Assault Weapons Ban:

- Rather than working with community safety advocates, the current Conservative government has effectively undermined gun control legislation in Canada.
- For example, the list of prohibited firearms maintained by the federal government is now dangerously out of date. The list identifies a particular type of gun and declares it to be prohibited. However, the industry and gun dealers have become very good at circumventing this system. They make tiny adjustments to a prohibited weapon – this adjustment technically makes it a different gun than the one that is prohibited and it is thus legal to own in Canada.
- The result of this is too many military assault rifles – weapons that have absolutely no legitimate connection to hunting or sport shooting – are now legally owned and available in this country.
- Military assault rifles are defined as fully-automatic and selective-fire rifles along with selected semi-automatic rifles designed for military purposes and possessing military features such as: use of a large capacity magazine, folding/telescoping stock, a protruding pistol grip, a bayonet mount, or threaded muzzle or flash suppressor. It is these military features – features whose sole purpose is to render the rifle a more effective tool for killing other people – which make these rifles a threat to public safety.
- While fully-automatic rifles have been prohibited since 1978, many of the semi-automatic rifles with these military features are still not prohibited.
- Banning these weapons would not require additional legislation. They can be added to the current list of prohibited weapons through an Order-In-Council.
- This proposed prohibition would not cover semi-automatic rifles which do not contain these military features. A new Liberal government will not prohibit semi-automatic rifles with a legitimate connection to hunting and sport shooting.
- In his report, published September 4, 2008, Coroner Jacques Ramsay called for a ban on the type of military assault weapon used by Kimveer Gill in the Dawson College shootings on September 13, 2006.

- This prohibition would cover the short-barrelled Beretta CX4 Storm rifle which was obtained legally by Kimveer Gill and used in the Dawson College shootings two years ago and the Mini-Ruger 14, the weapon used by Marc Lepine at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal in December 1989 to kill 14 young women.

On Changes to the Firearms Advisory Committee:

- The Firearms Advisory Committee has existed since the days of Kim Campbell.
- First the Progressive Conservatives and then the Liberals attempted to use the committee to ensure that the Minister responsible for public safety received balanced and informed advice when it came to firearms in this country.
- The previous governments ensured that representatives of legitimate, law-abiding firearms owners sat next to representatives of our national police organizations, health and safety experts and true proponents of gun control.
- Stockwell Day has radically altered the make-up of this committee. He has stacked it with pro-gun advocates and removed from it all of those who advocate in favour of gun control and gun safety.
- Future appointments to the Firearms Advisory Committee will provide balance to the committee. Legitimate gun-owners will work together with community safety advocates to ensure that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness receives advice that is balanced.