

PolyRemembers

Students and Graduates of Polytechnique for Gun Control



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**Press Release
For Immediate Release**

ENGINEERING FOR GUN CONTROL

Engineering associations and institutions join their voices to Polytechnique students and alumni to fight for gun control

Montreal, November 28, 2014 — It's at the **École Polytechnique** in Montreal, the place where fourteen young women were gunned down and thirteen others were injured with a legally acquired firearm, that the students who launched a petition in 1989, instigating a national movement for gun control, gathered once again twenty-five years later. The group — which includes individual alumni who witnessed the tragedy, the student and alumni associations of **Polytechnique** as well as one graduate who survived her gunshot wounds and another who lost his wife in the tragedy — says they still need to fight for tougher gun control, especially at a time when a new bill aimed at further weakening controls (C-42) is being debated in the **House of Commons**.

However, this time, their efforts are supported by an array of engineering institutions and organizations, including the **Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec** (the Quebec order of engineers), the **École Polytechnique**, the **École de technologie supérieure**, the **Réseau des ingénieurs du Québec** (Quebec network of engineers), **Quebec Confederation for Engineering Student Outreach** (QCESO) and several engineering student associations.

Nathalie Provost, a Polytechnique graduate who survived her injuries after having been shot several times and who saw six of her female classmates die before her, says: *"Today, I am proud to be able to count not only on the Polytechnique community, but also for the first time on my profession, on the profession of engineering, which is standing up to support our fight for gun control."*

Christophe Guy, Chief Executive Officer of l'École Polytechnique and vice-president of its board of directors, adds: *"In addition to paying tribute to those who died or who were injured, to faculty members, staff and students who were at the heart of this tragedy, Polytechnique decided to reiterate its support to the group PolyRemembers. We are proud to endorse the initiative of our students and graduates who are committed to fight to improve our gun control laws."*

Françoise Marchand, member of the Study Commission of the École de technologie supérieure (ETS), says: *"The first duty in the Code of Ethics of engineers is for our members to respect their obligations toward human lives and to take into consideration at all times the consequences of their work on the environment and on the safety of all. The goal of these engineers and future engineers is nothing more than to apply what they have learnt in the course of their education, which is to base their efforts to promote public safety on solid scientific foundations."* **Natalia Nuño, a Board Member of ETS**, adds: *"In*

fact, there exists is an international scientific consensus on the effectiveness of gun control to reduce their harmful use. This is why, on this anniversary, we are doing more than remembering. Last November 20th, the board of directors of the École de technologie supérieure passed a resolution to endorse the campaign of PolyRemembers in favour of stricter gun control. We are taking action from this day forth in order to support a cause that saves lives. This is one of the best tributes that we can offer the fourteen victims."

Jean-François Larivée, a Polytechnique graduate who lost his spouse Maryse Laganière, adds: *"The law passed in 1995 represented a true monument to the memory of the fourteen young women who lost their lives, including my spouse, Maryse, because this law, over its 15 years of existence, has saved thousands of lives — at least 300 annually according to researchers of the National Institute of Public Health. Stricter gun control made sure that my Maryse did not die in vain.*

"If I am here today with all those people, twenty-five years after having lost my Maryse, it is because on the issue of gun control, pro-gun ideology continues to triumph over science and common sense. Since April 2012, the Harper Government has destroyed most of our gains and is poised to further weaken those that are left. Except in Quebec, it must be said... The registry is still in effect here, thanks to a court injunction the Government of Quebec was successful in obtaining, because the this government decided to put public safety first and is committed to implementing its own registry."

Heidi Rathjen, Polytechnique graduate and PolyRemembers Coordinator, explains that since taking power in 2006 *"the current government has abolished or weakened most of the measures that were won following six years of mobilization from coast to coast, with the support of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of police, the Canadian Police Associationⁱ, women groups that fight against domestic violence and suicide prevention organizations, in addition to the victims' families."* These measures include simple and basic controls on possession (licensing), controls on firearms (registration) and limits on the destructive capacity of legal guns (prohibition of military-style weapons).

"Our gun control laws are weaker today than they were at the time of the massacre. In addition to having eliminated the long gun registry, gun sellers no longer have to verify the validity of a buyer's license, gun dealers no longer need to keep sales records, and assault weapons, designed to kill human beings, are increasingly accessible," adds **Madame Provost**. *"And now, at the behest of a gun lobby, which will never be satisfied as long as any controls remain, the federal Government is about to further weaken what remainsⁱⁱ."*

Both Polytechnique student association, the **Association des étudiants de Polytechnique (AEP)** and the **Association des étudiants des cycles supérieurs de Polytechnique (AECSP)**, founding members of **PolyRemembers** (with the **Board of the Association des diplômés de Polytechnique**), took part in many debates and parliamentary hearings on the issue. *"Easy access to firearms was a determining factor in the December 6 massacre. Stricter gun control may have prevented it... maybe. But what we know for sure is that gun control reduces the likelihood of such massacre. This is confirmed by scientific evidence from around the world",* says **Raphaël Beamonte, President of AECSP**.

"As young people, but also as a society, we need to take a clear stand against any weakening of our gun control laws, particularly at the request of a powerful but ideological pro-gun lobby, just as we see happening south of the border. As we mark this 25th anniversary of the tragedy, on behalf of the student association of Polytechnique, I invite the public and all students to make a concrete gesture: Contact your member of parliament and let them know that you are against the proposals to further weaken controls

contained in Bill C-42. Twenty-five years later, we need to act once again in memory of the fourteen students who were so brutally assassinated”, concludes **Romain Gayet, President of AEP**.

According to Statistics Canada, the year 2011 — the last year the gun control law was in effect in its entirety – was the year with the “lowest rate of firearm homicides in Canada in almost 50 yearsⁱⁱⁱ”, with much of that decline “attributed to a decrease in homicides involving a rifle or shotgun^v,” the type of firearms that were subject to the new controls adopted in 1991 and in 1995 (ex: handguns have been registered since 1934^v).

Relevant information :

- 1) [List of supporters](#)^{vi}
- 2) [Gun homicide statistics](#) (see page 2 in English)^{vii}
- 3) [Backgrounder - Ruger Mini-14](#)^{viii} (some parts in French)
- 4) [Backgrounder - C-42](#)^{ix} (in French) - (see the Coalition for gun control’s summary in English : <http://bit.ly/1rvCuRm>)
- 5) [Official statement of the 25th Anniversary Committee](#)^x
- 6) [PolyRemembers in action](#)^{xi}

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ⁱ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/police-groups-join-forces-in-support-of-long-gun-registry/article4317937/>

ⁱⁱ C-42 will weaken controls *on the transportation of handguns, on the availability of legal assault weapons and on licensing. It will also eliminate the province’s discretion to make sure the law is applied rigorously.*

ⁱⁱⁱ **Statistics Canada**, Juristat 2012. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11738-eng.htm#a1>

^{iv} **Statistics Canada**, Juristat 2011. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11561-eng.htm#a1>

^v **RCMP** « History of Firearms Control in Canada: Up to and Including the Firearms Act” <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/pol-leg/hist/con-eng.htm>

^{vi} http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/PRSS_14_11_28_ListeDesParticipants_PRESSE.pdf

^{vii} http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/DOCU_14_11_28_StatistiqueCanada_HomicidesArmes.pdf

^{viii} http://www.polysesouvient.ca/Documents/DOCU_14_11_14_RUGER_MINI_14.pdf

^{ix} http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/DOCU_14_10_07_Impacts_C42.pdf

^x http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/DOCU_14_12_06_Declaration25ePoly_ENG.pdf

^{xi} http://polysesouvient.ca/Documents/MONT_14_09_00_PancartePolysesouvient.pdf