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# Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

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Chair: Mr. Ron McKinnon





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Friday, February 17, 2023

• (0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 58 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

We will start by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of November 25, 2021. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Friday, February 3, 2023, the committee is resuming its study of the effects of withdrawn amendments G-4 and G-46 to Bill C-21, an act to amend certain acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms).

Before we proceed, I would like to remind all members of the confidentiality of our working documents, such as notices of motions, briefing notes, working plans and witness lists. According to the rules of the House of Commons, a breach of the confidentiality of our proceedings could be considered a breach of parliamentary privilege by the committee. I thank everyone for their co-operation.

Before we go to our witness panels, we will segue into some other business as we wait for some technical difficulties to be ironed out.

We have undertaken a report, which we collectively call “the Russia study”. We have examined it, and I believe we're ready to approve it. There are five questions for the committee to respond to.

I will ask the committee whether the draft report, as amended, shall be adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the report be entitled “Strengthening Canada's Security Posture in Relation to Russia”?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** I believe that the title is “Up to the Task: Strengthening Canada's Security Posture in Relation to Russia”. I'm not sure what that translates to in French. I just wanted to compare.

**The Chair:** Shall the report be entitled “Up to the Task: Strengthening Canada's Security Posture in Relation to Russia”?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the chair, clerk and analysts be authorized to make such grammatical and editorial changes as may be necessary without changing the substance of the report?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Pursuant to Standing Order 109, shall the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall dissenting or supplementary opinions be in Calibri 12-point font, left aligned and single spaced, and be submitted electronically, in both official languages, to the clerk of the committee not later than 4 p.m. today?

I believe there is one supplementary report, and it's already been submitted.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the chair present the report to the House?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you all for all the great work on the committee.

I thank the analysts for all of their enormous work on the committee as well.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** May I speak?

**The Chair:** Yes, please go ahead.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much

I want to thank SECU committee members, who have worked really hard on this. I know there's a lot that we agree on and a lot that we disagree on, but I think we collectively agree on this very important study. It speaks to the committee's ability to come together and collaborate on issues we're unequivocally united on, and that's certainly putting on a strong front in the face of Russian aggression and showing solidarity with our Ukrainian friends and allies. I'm very proud of the committee for coming together on this.

Also, I'd like to thank the analysts for their excellent work. It's a wonderful read, actually. All of those little changes we talked about a few days ago were implemented perfectly, as were the things that needed to be further explained. The industry jargon was explained really well in the last edits you did. It's really commendable work. You should be very proud of this. Thank you very much for your hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you all, and thank you once again to the analysts, without whom we'd be dead.

We have Madam Damoff, please.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** That's an understatement.

I have something else to deal with very quickly, but before I move on to that, I just want to give a thank you to MP Dancho for bringing this study forward and for her leadership on it. It really is a good study, and we wouldn't have done it without her leadership.

I want to propose that the committee visit the RCMP gun vault here in Ottawa. If members agree, we could use committee time. I'll leave that up to the clerk and to you, Chair, to figure out the best date to do it before we get back to clause-by-clause. I'm hoping there's committee agreement for us to do that.

● (0855)

**The Chair:** Thank you. I'll take that as a motion moved.

Are we all in favour?

Go ahead, Ms. Dancho.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I certainly support committee excursions. I don't think we've done any in the year and a half that I've been on this committee. I think seeing firearms first-hand and getting that knowledge would be important, and I think visiting the gun vault would add to that.

I support the motion, but I'm not sure what the timing would look like. If we include today, we have three consultation meetings. Then I would assume we're going back to clause-by-clause. Would that mean four more meetings and then clause-by-clause? Would we use existing committee time to do that excursion? How would that work?

**The Chair:** I think we would take extra time to do that excursion and fit it in wherever it is reasonable to do so.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That may be short timing, then, because if we end our consultations on a Friday, our next meeting is the following Tuesday. Monday I'm unavailable in the evening. I'm not wanting to put us in a box, but we are supportive of going.

**The Chair:** My concept of this was that we would take, say, a Tuesday meeting slot and do this. These facilities are nearby. Hopefully we can arrange transport through the House if we approve it as a committee, and maybe the House can approve lunch, but I'm making no commitments.

We have Ms. Damoff, please.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** It could be a \$10 Uber ride, so we can all share an Uber to get there.

Also, we come back the week of the 20th, and we still have one hour with the minister. In my head, I was thinking that on the 21st we could go and then have the minister on the 24th, but I don't want to box us in on that. We can leave it to the chair and clerk to figure that out. If the House can't provide transportation, I think it's a pretty short trip to get there.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I suppose our caveat is that we use a committee time slot to do it. I think we're all available at that time.

**The Chair:** I'm led to understand that excursions of this kind while the House is sitting are kind of problematic, and the House may or may not approve it, but I think we should ask.

I'm going to propose the motion that I believe Ms. Damoff has offered:

That, in relation to the study of the effects of the withdrawn amendments (G-4 and G-46) to Bill C-21, the committee visit a Royal Canadian Mounted Police's facilities located in the National Capital Region and that the Clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, prepare a draft budget for consideration by the committee on March 7.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That sounds just like what I said.

**The Chair:** Exactly. That's what I heard.

Is everyone in agreement with this?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I haven't seen the motion, but it sounds fine.

**The Chair:** I'll share it with you.

I keep hurrying to the vote and forgetting the debate.

[Translation]

Ms. Michaud, you can speak if you wish.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** No thank you. That's good of you, Mr. Chair, but I agree with the proposed wording.

On the other hand, I'm unsure as to whether a date had been set.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but I missed everything you said.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I'm assuming you're giving me the floor to ask whether I had any questions.

Has a date already been set? I agree that it's a very good idea. Was it for March ??

[English]

**The Chair:** I mentioned March 7 for signing off on a budget. Otherwise, there is no specific date in the motion, the idea being that we would schedule in whatever works for the schedule and whatever works with the House.

Is there any further discussion? I see none. Are all in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you all.

Now we can proceed to our business. I thank our witness for hanging in there with us.

We are short a witness. Maybe the clerk could fill us in on the situation here.

• (0900)

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Simon Larouche):** Ms. Wendy Cukier has an issue with connecting right now. I'm waiting to hear from her. Mr. Langlois can deliver his testimony this morning, but apparently the sound is not perfect. I may get a sign from the interpretation service that we have an issue, but I think we can go ahead with Mr. Langlois.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

We will carry on with our study. If technical difficulties make it impossible to continue, we will have to consider suspending and possibly rescheduling this particular witness.

Today we have two panels of witnesses. We will probably have time for about 45 minutes per panel. For our first hour, our witness Madam Cukier, president of the Coalition for Gun Control, is having trouble connecting. Online we have, as an individual, Mr. Francis Langlois, professor and associate researcher, Observatoire sur les États-Unis of the Raoul-Dandurand chair of strategic and diplomatic studies.

Monsieur Langlois, let's start with your five-minute statement.

[Translation]

**Mr. Francis Langlois (Professor and Associate Researcher, Observatoire sur les États-Unis of the Raoul-Dandurand Chair of Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, As an Individual):** I'd like to thank the committee members for having invited me. I don't know whether the document that contains my recommendations was distributed, but in any event, I will now present them to the committee.

I have two recommendations to make. The classification of firearms needs to be changed to avoid semantic debates over whether a gun is an assault weapon or a hunting gun.

To accomplish that, I am proposing a new way to classify firearms based on how they are handled, by which I mean how they are held, and on the type of firing mechanism. I assume that I could go into details about this classification a little later.

I propose broadening the definition of a firearm to prevent the proliferation of ghost weapons. At the moment, weapons are identified by a serial number on the gun stock. Unfortunately, that component of the firearm is relatively easy to print or engrave. If the

definition of a "firearm" is extended to other components of the weapon, like the breech or the barrel, then it would be possible to limit the spread of ghost weapons, particularly those from the Polymer 80 company, which are widely sold in the United States.

That's what I'd like to present this morning. I also have pictures for those who might be interested. Essentially, my intent here is to present the committee with a new way of classifying firearms. That gets me back to my first point. This classification is based on two criteria.

The first is handling. If a firearm is held with one hand, or with two hands on the stock in the same location, we are talking about a handgun. If a weapon is held with two hands, one holding the stock and the other generally placed on the forward portion of the weapon to stabilize it, it's a long gun. That's the first way to classify them.

The second criterion is the firing mechanism.

Some weapons have a manual reloading mechanism. With long guns, this could be either lever action or pump action. For revolvers, it's a cylinder activated by the user.

Other weapons have an automatic reloading system. In weapons like these, the firing cycle occurs automatically for as long as you hold the trigger down, or semi-automatically, every time you pull the trigger.

If firearms were classified in this manner, the act would firstly be more consistent, and secondly, would avoid semantic debates of the kind we've heard in recent weeks, and which have undermined Bill C-21.

Thank you.

• (0905)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll start our round of questions now.

I believe we'll start with Mr. Lloyd for six minutes, please.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Langlois, you retweeted a New York Times article recently. The title was "A Smarter Way to Reduce Gun Deaths". I took a read through the article, and the thesis seemed to be that governments need to focus less on the firearms themselves and more on the people using them. Liberals—in the case in the United States—are focused too much on banning certain kinds of firearms and less on a "panoply" of other interventions that could be more effective at reducing gun violence.

Do you agree broadly with the thesis of this essay?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Yes. The main thing is that prevention is more efficient.

That being said, it depends on the objective of the government. If the objective is to reduce mass shootings and perhaps terrorism too.... I would say that what the government calls at the moment “military-style assault rifles” are the preferred weapons used by mass shooters. If you prefer, self-loading weapons like semi-automatic pistols or rifles are the most used weapons to do mass shootings. If the government wants to reduce mass shootings, reducing the accessibility of those weapons is a way.

That being said, I think you are right. As a society, we have to address the causes of violence in Canadian cities and issues of mental health. I agree. However, again, it depends on the objective of the government.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Thank you for that.

I'll quote from the article, and this is for the committee. This is in the American context. It said, “What we call assault rifles probably account for fewer than 7 percent of guns used in crimes and only a small share of suicides, and they have repeatedly proved difficult to define.”

Mr. Langlois, you might be aware that a recent Statistics Canada report that came out in December, a couple of months ago, said that in violent crimes in Canada, a rifle or shotgun—a long gun—was present in only 0.47% of all violent crimes.

Would you agree that long guns in the Canadian context are far less involved in violent crimes than in the American context, and that they form a small minority of crimes committed in Canada where they're present?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I think you are right. Long guns are not usually used to commit crime. Again, it depends on what the government wants to do first.

Also, what I propose here is classifying weapons differently. You used the expression “assault weapon”. It's very difficult to define an assault weapon. I think the law should categorize weapons or firearms by the way they are handled or manipulated, if you want, and the way they shoot. Semi-automatic weapons and self-loading weapons with detachable magazines are way more dangerous in the case of mass shootings.

● (0910)

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** If a government were trying to create as much political blowback as possible, would that government go after hunting guns and long guns? Is that something you agree would create the most political division in a country like Canada?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I think you are the politicians. I'm not, so I'm giving you my opinion on how we should categorize the weapons.

Of course, I think a lot of people will not be happy. That being said, with the current law and categorization, a lot of people are not happy, so it's up to you to decide. I think politics is the art of choice.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** On the choice to go after long guns, which could include hunting guns, do you think this choice is more of a

political choice, or would this actually have a significant impact on public safety?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** It would have a significant impact on public security, even if the weapons we are talking about are not used very often in crime. Mass shootings are lower-frequency but high-intensity events. That's the main problem with those weapons.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** You're an expert in American gun culture. We've had some witnesses who say that if we don't pass these amendments, we're going to become just like the United States. We know at this committee and Canadians know, as gun owners know, that Canada has a far more robust and restrictive firearms policy than the United States does. Wouldn't you agree with that?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** You're absolutely right. The law is way stronger here than it is in the United States.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Would you agree that there's really no risk of us becoming similar to the United States just because of the amendments this committee didn't pass?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I think you're probably right. That being said, the industry is pushing for new models of weapons to be sold here and everywhere in the world, and those weapons may be quite dangerous. We know what happens south of the border, and a lot of those weapons are going to Mexico and South America. We see what is happening over there. Let's not permit the industry to distribute those semi-automatic long rifles.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lloyd.

Ms. Cukier is online. However, I'm going to suggest to her—we can't get hold of her by phone—that she join the next panel, because we've started this one.

I see assent there. Good. We'll move Madam Cukier to the next panel.

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*].

**The Chair:** It's because you guys had your question slot already.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** We're fine with that.

**The Chair:** In that case, since everyone's okay with that, Madame Cukier, if you would like to give your five-minute presentation, go ahead.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier (President, Coalition for Gun Control):** Thank you very much.

My apologies. The test went perfectly and the real performance did not.

I represent the Coalition for Gun Control, which, as many of you know, is a network of 200 health care, violence prevention and community organizations that's been working for more than 30 years to advance stronger gun control. I'm also a professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, formerly known as Ryerson. I've published a book called *The Global Gun Epidemic* and a number of articles focused on the public health perspective.

I want to start by saying that in our view, the proposed legislation, Bill C-21, is groundbreaking and addresses gaps in Canadian gun laws. It's an important step in bringing our legislation in line with that of other industrialized countries by reducing the chances that people who are dangerous to themselves or others get access to guns. That's the strengthening of the licensing provisions. It will also stem the proliferation of handguns, which is critically important, and it supports the ban on military-style semi-automatic firearms.

We note that in Canada and around the world, most mass shootings, killings of police officers, domestic violence incidents and suicides are typically done by legal gun owners or with firearms that were at one time legally owned. The question about long guns is important because we see that long guns are typically used to kill women in domestic violence situations and are more common in suicides and certain other kinds of crime. You don't see them as often, for example, in gang-related violence.

The first point I really wanted to make to the committee is that this legislation is critically important. We really feel that most Canadians are expecting it to be passed as quickly as possible. The proposed amendments, which are the focus of the discussion here, are really intended to fill some gaps that were identified in the use of orders in council to prohibit firearms.

I'll reference a report we did that compared legislation around the world. There are three basic approaches to prohibiting military weapons, which most industrialized countries do. I think comparing us to the United States is a mistake. We need to set our standards higher and compare ourselves to Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Most industrialized countries do prohibit military-style semi-automatic firearms.

They do it in one of three ways or in combination. They define specific characteristics—centrefire, accepts a large-capacity magazine or other military characteristics—and/or they define a list of specific makes and models.

The challenge with the first approach is that often the interpretation varies. That's why having the specificity of lists like in the orders in council is helpful. The limitation of relying on orders in council is that manufacturers are very innovative in coming up with new makes and models to circumvent the lists, so some countries use both. That's partly the reason why I believe the amendment was introduced—to help fill some of those gaps.

Some countries also flip this entirely and put the onus on the manufacturers to get approval. They publish lists of guns that are allowed and legal, and anything else is assumed to be illegal until it's formally approved.

We think the proposed amendments are helpful, and we hope the committee will find a way to address the misinformation by making clear that these are not intended to affect firearms that are reason-

ably used in hunting. In fact, only about 150 of the firearms on the new list are currently unrestricted weapons and likely to be used for hunting.

Also, remember that just because a firearm is used for hunting doesn't make it a hunting firearm. We have lots of evidence over the last 30 years of people saying that a firearm is used for hunting, and then on further investigation it's clear that it has characteristics that would classify it as a military-style firearm.

● (0915)

The final point I want to make is simply that indigenous peoples do have a right to hunt. There are non-derogation clauses, but there may need to be some special considerations with respect to the application of the amendment, as there were with the OICs, and I would ask the committee to make public safety the priority.

It's true that military-style semi-automatic firearms are not often used in crime, but when they are used, the impacts are devastating. Most Canadians, most experts and, in fact, most industrialized countries around the world recognize that these firearms serve no legitimate purpose in the hands of civilians.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Cukier.

We'll go now to Madam Damoff for six minutes.

Go ahead, please.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

My question is for both of you.

Professor Cukier, you brought up indigenous peoples. The 2020 order in council prohibiting assault-style firearms included an exemption for indigenous people exercising their section 35 hunting rights. I'm just wondering if both of you could comment on whether you think it would be a good idea for us to include something similar in Bill C-21.

● (0920)

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Yes.

I think there has been some misinformation. I think indigenous peoples, unlike other segments of the population, obviously have a right to hunt. One might question whether they have a right to hunt with semi-automatic military-style firearms, but I think it would be prudent to make clear that this is not intended to infringe upon their rights.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Go ahead, Professor Langlois.

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I agree with Professor Cukier. It should be clear that there is no intent to infringe on first nations' hunting rights.

That being said, it should also be clear that military-style assault rifles should be more regulated if they are not, and should at least be registered in the name of the owner if, at the end of this process, they are still available in Canada. This is not an issue of discrimination. Australia doesn't have a special regime concerning firearm regulations for their first nations. I think it is important to apply the law to everyone.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

This is for both of you again, and I'll start with you this time, Professor Langlois. Do you think the government should have what we call an "evergreen definition" of these military-style assault weapons, or whatever you want to call them, in the Criminal Code?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I think so, yes.

I wouldn't call them military-style assault weapons. I would call them self-loading semi-automatic or automatic weapons. I would use the way they work, the mechanics of the weapons, to classify them instead of using the length of the barrel. It would be clearer and easier to amend and to work with, because to define "military-style assault weapons" is a bit elastic for some and too restrictive for others. The law should be amended.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Go ahead, Professor.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** There is, as other witnesses have mentioned, less clarity around semi-automatic military-style weapons than there is, for example, around fully automatic weapons, although there have been court cases indicating that even this term is subject to interpretation, and the courts have interpreted the ban on fully automatic weapons as including firearms capable of fully automatic fire.

These definitional issues are not new, and my caution is to ensure precision. That's why we like the language about "not reasonably used for hunting". We know there are semi-automatic firearms that are widely used for hunting, that were designed as hunting rifles and that don't have large-capacity magazines associated with them and so on. Our concern is to not spread too wide a net but at the same time fulfill the obligation to the Canadian people to protect them from firearms that serve no legitimate purpose in the hands of civilians.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

I'm going to turn my remaining time over to Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Thank you, MP Damoff.

Good morning. I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us here today.

My question is directed to both of you, if you can answer me.

When creating a definition for "assault weapon" here in Canada, we have heard concerns about guns reasonably used for hunting getting caught up in the amendments. How do you propose we address firearms that seem to be on the wrong side of whatever definition we create moving forward?

Professor Cukier, would you start?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Sure.

As I mentioned, we reviewed the list of the new firearms that will be affected by this definition and identified about 115 or 117 that are currently unrestricted. That means those 117 firearms are perhaps currently used for hunting, because they have not been restricted or prohibited in the past. Certainly those firearms require some additional scrutiny.

We've observed with sniper rifles—for example, the Ruger Mini-14—that there are unrestricted firearms not reasonably used for hunting that have been unrestricted simply because of failures to address gaps in the legislation. I think the only legitimate arguments that can be brought forward relate to that set of firearms. There may be a different approach required for them.

I want to underscore that we have seen, as you heard from other witnesses, many cases of people posing with their hunting rifles and saying, "This law is impeding my livelihood" or whatever, and on further investigation it's clear that the firearm is not in fact caught up in this definition or on the list.

• (0925)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for having accepted our invitation and taken the time to come here and testify.

Mr. Langlois, the first time I heard you speak about a different way of classifying firearms, I found it compelling. I'll come back to that.

On February 4, following the withdrawal of amendments G-4 and G-46 by the government, you wrote, in an article published in *La Presse*, that you were not surprised by the withdrawal of these amendments and that you felt the government had made two mistakes.

Can you tell us more about the mistakes you mentioned?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Thank you for your question, Ms. Michaud.

The first mistake was how the government introduced its amendments, I believe on second reading of the bill. It was as if a magician had pulled a rabbit out of a hat. The public was clearly surprised, as were perhaps the committee members, and lots of other people.

I think it was ham-fisted, even though, in the government's defence, it had been announced in 2020 following the Portapique tragedy, when the government decided by an order in council to withdraw access to 1,500 models of military-style assault rifles, to use the nomenclature of the day. So it was expected, but perhaps not the way it was actually done.

The other problem, in my view, was that both amendments introduced by the government were difficult to enforce, challengeable and rather complex. The purpose of the first amendment was to provide a definition of what a military-style assault rifle was, and the second consisted of all long list of several hundred pages, which I found, by the way, to be extraordinarily exhaustive and impressive. It was obvious that a lot of work had been put into this. However, the problem with this kind of list is that the industry is always looking for ways to get around it while sticking to the letter of the law. New models could be introduced to get around the classification and the list would have to be continually updated, which of course amounts to a lot of work.



Those were my two main criticisms with respect to these two amendments.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you.

I more or less agree with you on the list. By asking the officials who appeared before this committee some questions, I understood that every time a new model was introduced, it would have required an amendment to the Criminal Code. The purpose of the exercise is to include this list in the Criminal Code.

According to what I was told, this was not necessarily the case because whenever the police have to deal with a new firearm, in order to determine whether it's legal or not, they have to update the RCMP list, and that's the list that has to be relied on.

I wondered about why one would include a list in the Criminal Code unless it was up to date and whether the RCMP list was the one that would be updated. Why waste time making a list when you're going to end up with several of them? There were also criticisms of the fact that some exempted weapons were on the same list as the weapons that had already been prohibited since the 1990s, or since the 2020 order in council.

If there are several lists, it will only confuse people, and that's understandable. If I were to compare the reaction of people to the introduction of these amendments to their reaction when the 2020 order in council was announced, it was very different. The reason is that firearms owners did not consult the list in 2020.

If the government is going to propose new amendments, should it continue to use a list or should there be a better definition that would cover not only existing weapons, but others that might enter the market in future?

• (0930)

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Thank you for your question.

I was going to talk about that. You're right in saying that the government should create a way of classifying weapons that would include not only those that are currently available, but also new models that will enter the marketplace. The industry always has all kinds of workarounds, and we need an instrument that would make it possible to classify everything.

I'm not saying that everything needs to be banned. I'm just saying that once it's possible to classify weapons in a certain way, exceptions could be made or they could be considered from different standpoints, such as whether they are restricted or non-restricted, depending on the definition. As Professor Cukier was saying earlier, it would then be possible to see whether certain weapons would be exempt from a specific status, even though they might fall into a particular class. When that happens, it would be possible to decide. But first, weapons have to be classified.

The second thing is the extremely important problem that you put your finger on: the proliferation of lists like the RCMP list and the Criminal Code list. There could be others. This only creates confusion about the act and also opens the door to measures like the one taken by Mr. Harper's government. I believe that in 2015, after seeing the RCMP list, the government more or less unilaterally removed weapons models produced by Swiss Army or SIG SAUER,

I think. I can't remember which. In short, he put them back in the non-restricted weapons class.

The proliferation of lists opens the door to this kind of manipulation. If there has to be a list, there should be only one for everyone. That would eliminate ambiguity and confusion.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Langlois.

Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Mr. Boulerice, you have the floor now for six minutes.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm pleased to be here with the committee today to discuss this important question, particularly as I am a Quebecker and an MP from Montreal. We've had tragedies in the past, and even within the past few months. There's a lot of violence in some Montreal neighbourhoods. There are shootings, some near schools; parents are extremely worried. We must never forget that we're talking about the health and safety of our communities and our fellow citizens.

I mostly agree with Mr. Langlois when he says that the amendments came out of left field, at the last minute. From a procedural point of view, it was not very skilful and caused a lot of doubt and confusion, particularly among first nations and legitimate hunters. Unfortunately, they felt somewhat targeted by it all. Given how extremely serious this matter is, it wasn't handled very well.

Mr. Langlois, I'd like to get back to your two proposals. The first was to change the classification of firearms as a function of how they are handled and fired. I'd like to know how the new classification you are proposing would yield results that are different from the existing ones.

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Thank you for your question, Mr. Boulerice.

I am indeed suggesting that the classification be based on handling, which makes it possible to begin by distinguishing handguns from long guns. What I proposed in the document I sent is essentially that all handguns, if the Canadian government decides that they are to remain admissible, or let's say available in Canada, would continue to be included in the restricted weapons class, and checks on their use would continue. Irrespective of firing mechanism, all handguns would remain in this class.

The problematic area at the moment is long guns. Long guns are indeed weapons generally used for hunting. At the moment, weapons that might be called civilian versions of military assault guns are available. These are the ones causing the problems, in part because they are the preferred weapons of mass murderers and also because they can provide any individual with a huge amount of firepower, given the ergonomics, and generally the calibre, of these weapons.

Thus long guns held with two hands and generally placed against the shoulder should generally be classified by firing system. Weapons with a manual system, like rifles or shotguns that require action by the user—there are several, such as pump action and lever action—should remain in the non-restricted class. They contain fewer rounds and it takes more time to fire several rounds. Weapons with a semi-automatic or automatic mechanism should all be classified by the government into the restricted weapons class. If it wanted to prohibit them afterwards, it could do so. That remains to be seen.

There is of course the whole issue—Ms. Cukier explained it very well—of weapons frequently used by hunters, which are semi-automatics, hence automatic loading. Once all of these firearms are classified, the government could then determine that those whose firing system allowed for a specified number of rounds are legal, and those exceeding that number of rounds are illegal.

The government could also decide to prohibit the sale of automatic loading weapons in Canada with a detachable magazine, because they are too easy to modify, and can be readily 3D printed or otherwise obtained illegally.

Once the new classification has been established, it could be used as a way of prohibiting or allowing certain models of weapons by mechanism. This makes much more sense than barrel length.

• (0935)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Okay.

If there's enough time, I'll ask you a final question.

Are you concerned about 3D printed homemade handguns or revolvers? It would appear that this changes everything. Or are these simply not a part of our legislative and regulatory traditions.

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Yes, it's a growing problem in North America. The problem is not the objects themselves, but their regulation, given that they leave no traces. For the time being, Canadian and American legislation identifies firearms on the basis of the stock. The serial number is printed on the stock. As it's possible to print or make these parts, it's possible to circumvent the legislation. The solution might be to identify all components of a firearm, whether a handgun, a rifle or anything else. The definition of what constitutes a firearm should thus be expanded and perhaps include the barrel, the breech and other components unique to firearms. That, to some extent, is what's being done in Germany.

It is of course difficult to prevent everything, but it would reduce their proliferation and, most importantly, make the importation of Polymer 80 products completely illegal. These are weapons that are not complete. Under American law, they are not considered firearms, but rather scale models. They are legal in the United States. They can therefore be carried and made there. They seem to be very popular here among people who want to obtain unmarked guns.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen.

[English]

We have time now for an abbreviated second round. We'll do four minutes each for the Liberals and the Conservatives, and two minutes each for the Bloc and the NDP.

Go ahead, please, Ms. Dancho. You have four minutes.

• (0940)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Ms. Cukier, I have a few questions regarding some of the remarks you made. I appreciate your testimony. I recognize and appreciate the work you've done throughout your life regarding these issues.

You mentioned that most mass killings, police officer murders and spousal homicides are by legal gun owners. Can you provide where that data is from?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Yes. It's legal gun owners or legal firearms. If you look at the police officers killed over the last 40 years, you will find that most of them were actually killed in contexts where the guns were legally held—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I don't mean to interrupt you. I'm just having a hard time hearing you.

I can hear you now with my headphones.

I'm sorry. I didn't hear the beginning of what you said.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** I'm sorry.

I can provide the information. If you look at the incidents of police officers shot and killed in Canada over the last 50 years, you will find that most of them were killed with guns that were either legally owned or that originated with legal owners. For example—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** You mentioned police officers, but what you said was that legal gun owners were the primary source of murders—

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It was either legal gun owners or with guns that were legally owned.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** So you're saying they were stolen from a legal owner.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Yes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** So where—

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** The point is that the legal supply of firearms—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Pardon me. Where did you get that information? Was it Stats Canada? Where is that information from, so we can look at it?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** If you review, case by case, police officers shot and killed in Canada, which I've provided to previous committees, and the same is true with mass shootings in Canada—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I'm sorry. Are you saying that it's your personal research that found that?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It's research based on the list of police officers shot and killed in Canada—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** You personally did that yourself. Is that correct?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Yes.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Was your research peer-reviewed by anybody?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It's been submitted to the committee. It was prepared—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

Was your personal research peer-reviewed by anyone?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It was prepared for the Mass Casualty Commission—

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay. Thank you very much.

Just to continue, you also mentioned that legal gun owners are most responsible for spousal homicide. Do you have that data that you can provide to us?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Yes. That data is from the femicide observatory.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I'm sorry; it's from where?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It's from the femicide observatory.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay. What information do they use? Is that from Stats Canada? Is that a Canadian company?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It's based on the data with respect to spousal homicides, looking case by case at the weapon that was used and the circumstances.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Is it from Stats Canada?

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Stats Canada doesn't have that data or provide that data, because they don't have information on the legal status of the firearm. You have to do a case-by-case analysis to get this information.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Is that observatory a peer-reviewed organization? Where are they getting their information?

My point is that I'm just reviewing all the remarks you've provided to the committee and I'm not seeing that you've provided statistically sound evidence. I find that concerning, given the claims you're making. You said that, first of all, legal gun owners are most responsible for mass homicide, spousal homicide and the killing of police officers. I'm not satisfied, based on what you're sharing with me today, that your information has been peer-reviewed or is supported by evidentiary and sound statistical data.

I'm looking at some data from Stats Canada myself that said—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Four minutes sure goes fast, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Ms. Cukier, if you'd like to make a very quick response, go ahead.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Chair, I'd be happy to provide the references and the citations to the committee.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That would be greatly appreciated.

**The Chair:** If you have that information and would like to send it to the committee, that would be very much appreciated. Thank you very much.

We go now to Mr. Noormohamed for four minutes, please.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Given the shortness of the time, I will try to be brief in my questioning.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here.

Dr. Cukier, I want to go back to you, because you were cut off a couple of times when answering very interesting questions from my colleague Ms. Dancho. I want to give you the opportunity to finish the answer that you were trying to give.

What evidence did you use to come to the conclusion that it was a legal supply of firearms that resulted in the types of murders you spoke of? Can you speak specifically to the type of data and the quality of that data, to allay any fears or concerns that folks might have that somehow these are just made-up numbers or that somehow people are pulling stats that are convenient out of the air? Can you just speak to the strict facts of the matter?

● (0945)

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Sure.

There are different sources of data that you can use as a researcher. One that you rely on is Statistics Canada data. We have certainly pulled that data and analyzed it for overall patterns. But Statistics Canada data does not provide contextual information about specific cases or sources of firearms in specific cases.

If you're interested in doing that kind of research, you have to go through the painstaking process of pulling the cases and doing research case by case on the information that's available about the source of a firearm, the context and whether the gun was legally owned or not. That's the work that we've been doing for very many years. That's the work that was presented and requested by the Mass Casualty Commission that recently concluded. We have all that data. It was presented to the commission along with other expert reports.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** It has not been published yet or peer-reviewed.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Understood. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Professor Langlois, I'd like to ask you some questions about the research you've done into ghost firearms and the need to ban them.

As you pointed out, they present a growing threat to our communities, and they were covered by the amendments that were withdrawn.

I want to make sure that we're dealing properly with ghost handguns, and in particular the parts that are being legally imported for the purpose of making handguns.

[*English*]

I don't know the words in French, but we've heard a lot from our police officer friends about making sure, in the prevention of the building of ghost guns, that barrels, slides and trigger assemblies are regulated.

Can you speak a little bit about why that's important and what you think the best vehicle is for us to make sure that happens?

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Yes, the slides, the barrels and other components of firearms should be regulated because the most popular types of handguns right now, unless they are fully printed or with a unique design, are copies of Glock pistols or similar pistols. All the other components besides the lower receiver are easily available legally either in Canada or in the United States. Those pistols that have the lower receiver printed with polymers are called "polymer 80s" because they are [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. According to the American law, they are not ready at a sufficient level to be considered as a firearm. Anyone can take this kind of unfinished weapon and send it through the mail. It seems they are very popular here in Canada.

A young man was arrested near Dundee, Quebec. He had with him 249 polymer 80 pistols. They were imitations of Glock pistols. The idea is to bring them in and then buy or get the other components that are made of metal. This can be bought separately and is not considered as a firearm.

What I would recommend is that all those—

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Langlois.

Ms. Michaud, you now have two minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have several questions, but I'm only going to ask two of them. That will give Mr. Langlois all the time he needs to answer.

Do you think it would be possible to introduce an amendment in favour of your firearms classification method based on handling and the firing mechanism, even though the Firearms Act itself is based on a weapons classification system whose classes are: prohibited, restricted, and non-restricted? Would it confuse everything? Do you think it's doable? I think it is, but I'm not an expert in that area. That's why I'd like to hear your opinion.

I don't think the definition of a prohibited firearm suggested in amendment G-4 was entirely bad. It's true that a number of aspects may have been confusing, including the fact that in the French version the term "fusil de chasse semi-automatique" was used.

Do you think that was a problem and that it might cause confusion?

Amendment G-4 referred to "a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges". There was a lot of disinformation about this, and we thought that it would be better to say "six or more cartridges", to avoid confusion, because there were already five-cartridge magazines.

You can no doubt see where I'm headed, Mr. Langlois. I'll give you some time to comment on this.

● (0950)

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** Thank you for your question, Ms. Michaud.

I believe it's possible to amend the act, or the Criminal Code, by maintaining the same classes: prohibited, restricted, and non-restricted weapons. For example, classifying weapons by barrel length, among other things, can be based on very minor differences. Let's look at the CX4 Beretta, the weapon used at Dawson College, for example. Its long version is non-restricted, but the short version, which is only a few centimetres shorter, is restricted. The firing system is the same, a semi-automatic firearm that uses 9 mm bullets, with a detachable magazine. The weapon's ergonomics are also distinctive.

Classifying weapons in terms of the firing system, whether for a handgun, a long gun, a manual weapon or a weapon with a high-capacity magazine makes much more sense. It avoids the problem of having some versions of weapons falling into the non-restricted class and others ending up in the restricted class. At the very least, it brings clarity.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're now going to give the floor to Mr. Boulerville for two minutes.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerville:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Earlier, the problem about permanent lists was mentioned, given the manufacturers' ability to ingeniously have different models of firearms with a variety of characteristics. The manufacturers can find loopholes to circumvent the act and stay off the lists.

Ms. Cukier, could you remind us on whether we should make ongoing adjustments or simply use a less precise, more comprehensive, list? Each option has its problems.

[*English*]

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Whom was that directed to?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerville:** To Ms. Cukier first.

[*English*]

**Dr. Wendy Cukier:** Thank you.

In my view, you need a combination. You establish the principle in the legislation, and you provide the list. As I said, we have a firearms reference table that was developed many years ago. I don't know if it's been kept up to date, but even though Internet access may be a problem, I think there are easier mechanisms to allow gun owners to search and find out how their gun is categorized.

I think we need both the list for the specificity and the language in the legislation to articulate the principle that we're not addressing guns reasonably used in hunting. We're looking at centrefires, semi-automatics that were designed to accept a large-capacity magazine or that have other military characteristics, which is consistent with definitions in many countries around the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulgerice:** Thank you.

Mr. Langlois, I'd like to end with what you have to say on this. There are only a few seconds left.

**Mr. Francis Langlois:** I think Ms. Cukier is right. The more effective and available the tools are, the better things will be.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulgerice:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen.

[*English*]

That wraps up our questions for this panel. I would like to thank both of our witnesses for their excellent assistance today. It's most helpful for our study.

With that, we will suspend and bring in the next panel.

Thank you all.

• (0955)

(Pause)

• (1000)

**The Chair:** This is our second panel. With us today in person we have, from Aventure Chasse Pêche, Mr. Martin Bourget, president; and Kate Nadeau-Mercier, general manager.

With us by video conference we have, as an individual, Mr. Matthew Hipwell, president of Wolverine Supplies.

Welcome to you all.

We will start with five-minute statements from each group.

I would invite Aventure Chasse Pêche to make a statement of up to five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Bourget (President, Aventure Chasse Pêche):** My name is Martin Bourget, and I'm the president of Aventure Chasse Pêche. We mainly produce hunting and fishing television programs and a magazine. I'm also a columnist who specializes in that field, particularly on firearms, in which I do technical reviews. I have published hundreds of articles in my career, in audiovisual and print media, for companies like Browning, Mossberg and CANEX, as well as most of the manufacturers in the industry.

Our production work takes us to various sites in the field all over Canada, South Africa, the United States and elsewhere, in city, ru-

ral and remote communities, 52 weeks a year, with hunters and fishers who are legitimate firearms owners.

On the subject at hand, we feel that our sampling rate for analyzing more or less what's happening in the field is quite substantial. Our community is confused about all the crime statistics quoted by the authorities, who tell us about the criminal path that weapons lead to and how they end up being used for mischief on the ground. That's what they tell us. Forensic doctors report individual cases of psychological distress, mental disorders and intoxication that will lead to crimes with weapons described by other witnesses as domestic and legitimately-owned weapons.

The government is proposing a definition that is creating an enormous amount of confusion, with amendments G-4 and G-46. These two amendments contain arbitrary statements that we believe could in the long run make it difficult to apply and maintain measures that would genuinely protect the streets of Canada against armed criminality, particularly when the source is known. Then there are the lists of weapons, and criteria like barrel length and the number of joules, which create yet more confusion, because there are a lot of inconsistencies.

Legitimate gun owners in Canada are deeply puzzled about the very legitimacy of the process set out in Bill C-21 and the enforcement of these measures. They are asking for nothing less than a study of the bill's true impact on the safety of Canadians and on traditional hunting and harvesting, and sport shooting.

**Ms. Kate Nadeau-Mercier (General Manager, Aventure Chasse Pêche):** The way I see it, the hunting and fishing environment in which I work finds itself in a very unusual anxiety-producing climate given the people involved. This community finds itself unjustly targeted, handcuffed and potentially criminalized.

In addition to my role as general manager, and as the host and producer of a television program that has more than 869,000 viewers every week, as well as a hunting and fishing magazine, I head up a community made up exclusively of women, 20,600 women hunters, fishers, gatherers and nature lovers. This gives me an everyday appreciation of the values these mothers share in terms of their gathering activities, and the role they play in the education of our children and the entire community.

I would also like to mention my concerns about the disastrous economic impact of amendments G-4 and G-46, and emphasize how important it is to be as careful as possible in the development of new amendments.

Since the early days of Bill C-21, the industry has been hit hard, and then came the freeze on handguns in October 2022.

The paradox between the government's desire to protect citizens and the measures it is attempting to introduce to get there makes me truly worried for the community of legitimate gun owners. Bill C-21 should be reviewed in its entirety, or voluntarily abandoned and replaced by a new approach.

• (1005)

**The Chair:** We are now moving on to the next speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Hipwell, go ahead for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell (President, Wolverine Supplies, As an Individual):** Good morning, Mr. Chair and committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before all of you regarding Bill C-21 and the amendments G-4 and G-46.

I'd like to go back a little bit in time. I'm an immigrant to Canada. I moved here in early 1982 with my parents and grew up in the Virden area. I've always been a Manitoba resident, primarily in the rural area.

I grew up in a shooting family, a hunting family. That involved competitive pistol shooting at a younger age and all the way through. It has led me to compete and shoot across western Canada. I've represented Manitoba in the sport of biathlon at the Canada Winter Games.

Shooting has always been a part of my life, my family's life, and now my own family's life. Following college, I spent a short stint in the Canadian Armed Forces. Then I spent the first part of my career with the RCMP. I spent 16 years in the RCMP across Manitoba. That included uniform policing and plainclothes policing in the drug unit, where I encountered various firearms in drug-related offences, firearms in different communities, depending on the type of policing work that I came across.

I specialized during my career in the emergency response team. Obviously, that deals with high-risk situations where you're dealing with people who are armed and barricaded and all types of other violent offences, firearms included but not necessarily just firearms.

On the training side, as part of that, I became a use-of-force instructor and a firearms instructor. That led me to teach various police officers across the country in pistol, shotgun and rifle use and patrol carbine use, and I was even a guest instructor at the Canadian Police College on search warrant execution.

Following a transfer and a relocation to western Manitoba, I was approached by my family, my parents, to take over Wolverine Supplies, and that brings me to today. Wolverine Supplies is a rural business. We're located in the country. We're not actually even in the community of Virden itself. We have approximately 18 employees and we service Canadian sport shooters, hunters, and the law enforcement and military market from coast to coast with products to suit their needs.

When we talk about Bill C-21 and the impact on our business, it has not made business a simple process. To go back to the OIC, we had over 15 firearms listed. Then, FRT changes by the RCMP in the months to follow added more firearms to the list. Now, our industry is dealing with the ramifications of Bill C-21, the freeze on

handgun transfers, in addition to the amendments that were just recently tabled and then removed.

That doesn't even begin to.... In business, you're dealing with your regular business issues, from supply and demand to product shortages, costs of shipping, overhead, staff—your typical business practices. Now, we're wondering what the government is going to do next. Instead of improving the firearms industry, it seems that we're second-guessing. I don't believe it's doing anything to enhance Canadians' public safety at this time.

The government has increased the uncertainty to the businesses across the country, which are forever wondering if their products will be available to sell to their customers, what will happen next, what will be prohibited, what may not be prohibited, what's changing, and what they do with inventory. There are thousands of dollars.... When you talk about mental health and stress, this is just compounded when all that legitimate firearms businesses and owners are trying to do is follow the laws as they're written today.

In the meantime, we have incidents like the ones we heard of earlier where firearms are being smuggled into the country. Those are the ones primarily being found on the streets, and they are the sources of our crime today.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

We'll start our questioning now with Ms. Dancho.

You have six minutes, please.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to both witness groups for being here.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much for being here with us.

Ms. Nadeau-Mercier and Mr. Bourget, you represent thousands of hunters and sport shooters. PolySeSouvient has accused Conservatives and people defending hunting of spreading disinformation. How would you reply to that?

• (1010)

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** These charges of disinformation are often related to firearms identification. We are directly addressing the vague definitions that cover a very large number of hunting firearms. That's where we see an enormous problem in terms of the information being presented to the committee.

For example, at a meeting between the Minister of Public Safety and the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs, we asked Mr. Mendicino a very specific question. We asked him whether the government, when it targets centrefire semi-automatic weapons with a detachable magazine, classifies them in terms of magazines available in Canada or higher-capacity magazines marketed in other countries.

Mr. Mendicino's press secretary sent us an email confirming that if a Browning-BAR or a Remington 742 Woodmaster were sold here with a 3-round magazine, it would meet the definition and be legal, whereas one available in the United States with a 7-round or 10-round magazine would be illegal under the definition.

That's not disinformation, but rather data provided in response to questions we ask the people in government who implemented the provisions.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much.

Monsieur Bourget, you've reviewed about a thousand firearms for manufacturers, have you not?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I would say that in the course of my video-making career that I've reviewed several hundred weapons.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** In your expert opinion, what would be the impact of amendments G-4 and G-46 on hunting guns? Could you give me a few examples?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** There are major repercussions arising out of the poor cohesion in the definitions and the lists, and we quickly saw how incompatible these definitions were and the poor information that went into developing this infamous list.

The problem in these definitions and lists, at least in the state they were in before being abandoned, was the number of weapons. There were thousands of them. I don't think the definition for the five or more cartridge magazine that I mentioned to correct the existing information was something the committee was familiar with, given Mr. Mendicino's response. Several of the unknown, unwritten and confused criteria used in the definitions on the list included a very large number of hunting guns.

I will let Ms. Nadeau-Mercier comment on the impact of these amendments afterwards.

In our hunting and fishing activities, as ecosystem stakeholders, we are involved in a number of government management programs. This seriously restricts access to weapons that could be described as "accessible weapons" in the marketplace, given what's excluded. We're talking about lengthy lists, including common weapons that are widely used.

I'll give you an example. If a single parent mother participated in the buyback program for a weapon she had inherited from her father or grandfather, and which is unfortunately excluded by the system, it's not hard to come to the conclusion that she'd have a great deal of trouble acquiring a new weapon. We've seen a summary of the suggested amounts to be used in the buyback programs, for what remains available under the definitions and lists. At the moment, Canada has a major firearms and ammunition supply problem. Owing to the amount of money it would cost to acquire a new

weapon, the person in question would probably give up hunting venison for her family.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Bourget.

I also have a question for Ms. Nadeau-Mercier.

You're the head of a community of 20,000 women who are members of the Filles de bois group.

**Ms. Kate Nadeau-Mercier:** I am.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Can you tell me about the repercussions these amendments would have on your group?

**Ms. Kate Nadeau-Mercier:** These women are very much aware of the issue. They are seriously involved in hunting now, particularly in recent years. In Quebec, 24% of women are hunting, which is a significant figure. Barely a few years ago, it was 7% to 8% of women. The pandemic probably contributed to this growth, and we have certainly seen an increase in membership.

We haven't yet seen the new numbers from the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs, but it had a huge impact on these women. Very often, they inherited the firearms or received them from friends or from their spouse. This meant that they were limited to using certain types of weapons. When they found that the firearms had been made illegal by the amendments, it generated a lot of concern and anxiety.

All kinds of questions came up and women began to get involved in the issue.

• (1015)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much.

I have 30 seconds of speaking time left. Do you have any other comments to make about the amendments?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Definitely.

Given the nature of our hunting activities, people ask a lot of questions about us, and that's only to be expected. We will definitely return to this in the round of questions, but it's important not to forget about sport shooting weapons and collectible weapons, which are also covered by these amendments. All legitimate gun owners in Canada feel stigmatized by the implementation of these measures, which are inconsistent. At least that's what we found when we read the lists and definitions given in amendments G-4 and G-46.

It's not just hunters, but a whole community. When Myriam Bédard stood on the podium as a Canadian Olympic athlete, this kind of amendment would have been very poorly received when we and the media were celebrating our Canadian pride. Our sport shooters were also stigmatized. We mustn't forget that.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bourget.

[English]

Thank you, Ms. Dancho.

We'll go now to Ms. Damoff for six minutes, please.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** It's Mr. Noormohamed.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Noormohamed. You can have the same six minutes.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of you for being here with us.

Mr. Hipwell, I'd like to start with you.

One thing we are really trying to do—though some have spoken to the contrary—is strike a balance here between what is important in terms of protecting victims and communities and making sure our communities remain safe, and ensuring that indigenous communities, hunters, farmers and northern Canadians are not adversely or materially impacted and prevented from being able to go hunting or protect their farms and so on.

I want to touch on a couple of things. In your previous testimony, you said that you don't believe that registering firearms reduces crime. Do you believe that any type of gun legislation or registering of guns is helpful, or do you think that we should just not be in the business of registering or legislating which guns should be on the street?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Good morning.

When did I say that registering firearms would not make Canadians safer? I don't believe I said that this morning. Is that correct?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** No, it was in your previous testimony.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** What previous testimony was that?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** It was your testimony from 2018, sir.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** I didn't realize that we were having a discussion about that this morning.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Sir, anything that you have said is part of this important conversation, so I just wanted to clarify if you believe that to be true.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Could you give me the full context of my previous testimony? I don't recall that. It was over four years ago.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Your entire quote was, "I do not believe the registering of firearms will decrease crime. Criminals do not register their firearms. That point has been brought up in many avenues over the past while."

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That's correct. We're talking about legal firearms owners here, legal firearms owners who follow the laws as they're written today—the storage regulations, the transportation regulations, the safe handling and use of firearms—

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** My question to you is, do you believe that any type of gun registry or gun legislation is important?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** I believe that clear classification of firearms is important. Building a trust between firearms owners, the industry and the government is important. In order not to be on an ever-changing scale here, we need clear and concise definitions.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Okay.

I just want to chat about something that is on your website. One of the guns that you sell is called the KelTec SUB2000 Gen2 semi-

auto. It's currently a non-registered long gun, but it's advertised as being configured for use with Glock magazines in a 10-round capacity.

Gun enthusiasts who have reviewed this model have called it the "home defender". It's been called the outstanding choice for a "pistol-caliber-carbine for the critical role of 'home defense gun'", "The Kel-Tec Sub 2000 is a great carbine for carry in the vehicle for an emergency and practically an ideal home defense firearm.... The 9 mm carbine isn't well suited to...shooting [or hunting] and it certainly isn't a varmint rifle. But what it can do, it does very well."

Would you consider this to be a hunting gun? Do you think this is the type of gun that ordinary Canadians should own?

• (1020)

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Can I ask for the source of that comment on that specific firearm? Where did that information come from?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** This is coming from your website, sir. It's a gun that you sell.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Does my website clearly define exactly what you read? I don't recall that off the top of my head.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** My question to you is, would you consider this to be a hunting gun?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** In a certain application for varmint and predator control, I would, yes. A KelTec in that configuration is suited for varmint and predator control.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** But it says that it's not for shooting or hunting. It isn't a varmint rifle. I'm curious to understand how people who are using your website assert that this is a gun that is not for hunting or particularly good at being a varmint rifle. I'm trying to understand. For the folks out there who are watching this, who think we are going after hunting rifles and guns that people ordinarily use for hunting, I'm struggling to understand how a gun that is not actually for hunting or for varmint control would somehow be a good hunting gun.

Walk me through that.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Can you just repeat your question, please? I'm trying to source and find what you're stating on my website, so I have that reference so I can respond appropriately.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Okay.

Would you recommend this gun for someone who wanted to go hunting?



**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Yes. I said that for someone who was looking at varmint or predator control, it would be a very viable option.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Okay, and on what basis would you make that assertion, given that the many reviews of this gun in the public domain from hunters say that this is not a gun that is particularly good for shooting or hunting and is not a varmint rifle? I'm just curious about how you make that determination.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That determination is an opinion. It's an absolute opinion.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** I'm asking how you would reach that opinion, sir.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** I just responded to you, sir, by saying that, yes, it is an option for an individual who would choose to use it in varmint or predator control.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Noormohamed.

[Translation]

Ms. Michaud, you have the floor now for six minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Mr. Bourget, you said that your organization did a lot of work in the field and that it represented a large community of gun owners.

According to surveys published in recent years, by Environics, Léger and other firms, between 70% and 77% of Canadian owners of firearms supported the ban on assault weapons. According to more recent data, they also supported the prohibition on detachable magazines, the buyback of assault weapons and the ban on handguns.

Given these numbers, is it fair to say that you do not necessarily represent the majority of gun owners?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** The response to a survey question depends on the question and how it was asked. We saw that, for example, when we answered Mr. Noormohamed's questions a few moments ago. The wording of a question and the possibility of obtaining information change everything in survey results.

No matter what the sample size may be, people only have access to the government's definition of what an assault weapon is, a definition, by the way, which has not yet become law. On television, you can see weapons which, in some instances, have been prohibited for 30 years. And yet we are being asked about weapons used for hunting in the woods. In that instance, you are absolutely right.

In a climate of disinformation and fear, Canadians give us the kinds of answers that you are giving now. We're here today precisely to clear up this confusion.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** So gun owners would not be able to answer a survey by saying they are against the ban on assault weapons, but they would be able to determine which types of weapons are used for hunting and which are military-style assault weapons. The list of these firearms was established in amendment G-46.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I would agree with what you said, but only if it's assumed that a hunter is also a gunsmith.

I'd be curious to know who was in your survey sample, specifically...

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** It's not my survey, Mr. Bourget.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** We could stop right here, easily.

I'd like to know whether this survey was intended for experienced hunters or...

• (1025)

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** The survey was of gun owners in Canada. The surveys were carried out by Léger and Environics, both of which are well-known survey firms.

You are the president of the *Aventure Chasse & Pêche* magazine, but you are also a spokesperson for the National Firearms Association. Is that correct?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Would it be wrong to say that you generally agree with the positions taken by this organization?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I am a spokesperson insofar as I'm the intermediary between francophone users and the National Firearms Association, the NFA. I act as a go-between. There are significant anglophone resources at the NFA, but not nearly as many francophones. I help francophones who need assistance from people who have information that is only available from the NFA.

I'm not the association's official spokesman, and my mandate is not to spread its mission in French. What I do is act as a go-between to help people who are looking for assistance from the NFA.

For example, I provide administrative assistance to them when there are criminal charges.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** There are several different ways of explaining the concept of a spokesperson. For example, I'm the spokesperson for the Bloc Québécois on matters of public safety. So I naturally share the positions of the Bloc Québécois, because those represent our values.

So if you are the spokesperson for this association, it seems to me that you would adhere to its positions, including the following: the legalization of all firearms, the elimination of the prohibited weapons category, ownership permits, limits on magazines and secure storage rules.

If all of that were to happen, can you tell us how it would improve public safety in Canada?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I can definitely not explain that to you, and that's your definition.

In my company, I call the person responsible for fully transmitting the company's message a representative. A spokesperson, in my case, is someone to whom instructions are given so that the information is transmitted. It doesn't mean that person supports all of the company's positions, because that's not their mandate.

It can be interpreted in many ways. I'm neither a representative nor a director. They have what are called field officers.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I don't have much time left, Mr. Bourget.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Go ahead.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** You said that you are record technical reviews. You would therefore appear to be an expert in this area. You must have analyzed what was being proposed by the government in the amendments.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** In those, did you find firearms that could reasonably be used for hunting? If so, how many? Could you give us some examples?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I can't give you a number. It depends on what's available in the market. It would require a much broader study.

However, I could mention a few specific examples. I mentioned the Browning-BAR earlier. This is a semi-automatic firearm that is very popular in Canada. I also mentioned the Remington 742 and the Remington 740 Woodmaster, semi-automatic weapons widely used in Canada. On the basis of Mr. Mendicino's answer, they were on the list because they were available or marketed in other countries with higher-capacity magazines.

So I don't have a number for you, but there are a lot of them.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Are there hunters in Canada who use firearms with a calibre of 20 mm or more and that fire projectiles whose initial energy is 10,000 joules or more?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Oh yes? What does someone kill with that?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** There are all the Parker Brothers firearms, which are hinged frame action double barrel shotguns, with 12 gauge shells.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** What animal does someone kill with that?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** They are used to hunt partridge, ma'am.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** So you need 10,000 joules or more to hunt partridge.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** No. There we're talking about 20-millimetre calibre firearms.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** That was the question.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I'm answering your question. The first part of your question was about the diameter of the barrel.

On the second part of your question, about the number of joules, I would answer that this is absolutely the case. We need only think of all calibres of the Cheytac and Wildcat firearms, which are used

in Africa as well as in western Canada to hunt what is called big game.

The problem is that the lack of knowledge has caused confusion on this issue. There is an entire definition for armour piercing firearms that differs enormously in terms of the number of joules required and the type of ammunition needed, which is not available on the market. However, for hunting big game, those firearms are entirely necessary. If you have even a little respect for the life you are preparing to take, to harvest game for your family, yes, it's absolutely necessary.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Michaud.

Thank you, Mr. Bourget.

Mr. Boulerice, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, I represent people in Montreal who are extremely worried, particularly about their children's safety. We have had tragedies in Montreal. Obviously, the Polytechnique and Dawson College come to mind, but also in Quebec City, where Alexandre Bissonnette obtained an AR-15 and a revolver to kill people at the Quebec City mosque. He had been radicalized online by extremist, racist and Islamophobic groups.

Mr. Bourget, I don't want to talk about the definition of spokesperson, but your involvement in the National Firearms Association amounts to more than just being a parrot that repeats the lines taught to it.

Is it correct that you produce the French-language newsletter of the National Firearms Association on YouTube?

• (1030)

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes, absolutely. My role is to provide a bridge between francophone users and the NFA.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** The positions taken by the National Firearms Association are quite extreme and libertarian. It actually would like there to be no rules: it wants to legalize all firearms and eliminate the prohibited weapons categories, possession licences, magazine size limits, and safe storage rules.

Do you support the Association's positions on these subjects?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** To answer your question, I have to look at the context for each of those cases.

For safe storage, I definitely take the same position. We were talking just now about remote regions, among other things, where sometimes people have to defend themselves against dangerous animals. In fact, a woman and her child were killed in those circumstances a few years ago.

For restrictive measures, which involve just seizing firearms owned by an individual, and registries and various licences, I would say absolutely, yes.

If we contextualize what you are putting to me in its entirety, the way that the use of firearms is restricted and the fact that they are not recognized in the history of crime in Canada, on that part, I entirely agree. That does not mean that firearms regulation is not still necessary in order for the industry, the business, and the various activities associated with them to function properly.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** If I understand correctly, you do not agree with legalizing all firearms.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I don't have a list in hand of all firearms, but I believe that certain firearms should be reserved for military or industrial use, and not for use by citizens.

I think I would have to know the context in which the NFA made those statements.

I'll give you an example: a Flak gun, which generally has to be installed on the turret of a military vehicle. Obviously, common sense tells us that it isn't necessary to address that. Personally, I certainly would not consider legalizing the use of the Flak gun for hunting grouse.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** The example you are giving us is a bit much. It doesn't make a lot...

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** It answers the question, which is also quite a bit much.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** In the NDP, we agree that the rights and traditions of the First Nations and the rights of people who hunt for fun or food have to be respected.

In your opening statement, you talked about the mental health issues that this raises; we often hear people who defend the carrying of guns use the same argument.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Is the effect of suspending or eliminating all firearm possession licences not going to be precisely to complicate the problems of people who have mental health problems, since everything would be permitted and there would be no rules?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** That is a social problem.

Firearms are a great banner for talking about a problem by [*technical difficulties*] the events of the past. In...

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Bourget, firearms are more than a banner. People are being killed for real in the streets.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** In recent weeks we have proved that vehicles and drowning also kill people. In fact, there was even a father who drowned his children.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** There are rules...

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Those are cases for which laws have been made. The forensic pathologists have given a diagnosis. You and I are not certified professionals, but they are. The forensic pathologists and coroners have ruled that these people were in a state of psychological distress or intoxication, in a majority of cases.

That is why we strongly advocate for more to be heard about mental health problems and prevention, because this is not just about tragedies caused by firearms, it is about all tragedies. There is

psychological distress in the streets. We believe this would really be a way to eradicate gun crime or any other form of crime.

We know how much is spent by committees like yours and the resources put in place for gun buybacks. Of course we would prefer that those investments be used for mental health prevention and to strengthen police forces instead.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Bourget, can you not admit that if a person who is in crisis, or a person with a mental health problem, is not required to have a licence to possess a firearm, that opens the door to the commission of other crimes?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Let's base what we say on the data.

After major tragedies, which are regularly brought up at this committee, the coroners have ruled that gun control or creating a registry, among other things, would not have changed anything about the situation.

I am basing what I say on data when I say that the money and energy invested are not going to the right place. If this is the value we put on the lives we say we want to protect, I see a problem when all of the resources are being tied to a piece of paper or that kind of method of control.

What we are not doing is dealing with a lot of people in crisis and thugs who are going to keep making blood run in the streets. In fact, that has been the case since this issue was first debated.

• (1035)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Bourget, the National Firearms Association and some of its representatives advocate civil disobedience, if military weapons or assault weapons, which are used only to kill other human beings, were to be banned. I'm not talking about hunting weapons here.

Do you, personally, agree with that position?

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I in no way agree on any promotion of civil disobedience whatsoever. I would like to know the context that what you are telling me happens in, because I would have to report it to the people in the organization.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** This was a statement made by Charles Zach of the National Firearms Association, Mr. Bourget.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Very honestly, as a service to the community, we may give ourselves that kind of information when the mics are off. That is the kind of thing I would like to report. I am absolutely against any proposal for civil disobedience.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Boulerice and Mr. Bourget.

[*English*]

I think that wraps up our first round. We'll go to our second round.

We'll have to abbreviate this round also, as we did before. It's four minutes each for the Conservatives and the Liberals. It's two minutes for the NDP and the Bloc.

Thank you all.

Go ahead, Ms. Dancho, for four minutes, please.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have a few questions for Mr. Hipwell concerning the AR-10s. Can you explain briefly the relation between the AR-10s and the AR-15s? Is it a variant? Is it a bear calibre? Just be brief.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** The simplest way to explain an AR-10 is that it's in a larger calibre—most commonly in a .308 calibre.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** In layman's terms, the AR-10 has bigger bullets than an AR-15. Is that correct?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That's correct.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** You'll recall the May 2020 OIC. Since that time, the Liberal government has used the AR-15 as the poster child of what is a military-style weapon. I think that's universally agreed on. I don't think that's a controversial thing to say.

You can confirm this if you'd like. My understanding is that the AR-10—which is a variant, a bigger-bullet version of the AR-15—was used by the Yukon government. They bought a bunch of these, after they were prohibited in the May 2020 OIC, for their conservation officers, because they were deemed as the best defence against wildlife. Do you recall this? There are news stories about it.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Yes, that's correct.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** I think Ontario has also done this for their conservation officers. Is that your understanding?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Yes, that's correct. Ontario has also used a similar firearm in that calibre.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That's right. The Ontario and Yukon governments have decided that those firearms are the best defence against wildlife, which is interesting.

Moving on, I want to ask you specifically about the definition, given your technical expertise on firearms. It's specifically in proposed paragraph 1(1.2)(g) in G-4. I'm just going to read it out for the record. This is going to be prohibited. This is the big issue, in addition to the list. It says:

a firearm that is a rifle or shotgun, that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed

Can you think of any semi-automatic centrefire rifles that have a magazine that's exclusively five or less? Is that a common firearm? Basically, what I'm asking is whether there are going to be lots of these semi-automatic centrefire rifles with magazine capacity left after these are prohibited as per this definition?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** There would be very few, from my understanding. On that, I'm familiar with a Browning model 1900, a Ruger 44 Deerfield, and the first Browning BARs, which is a common semi-automatic hunting rifle. Only the Mark I would fall into that category. Those are the only few that I am aware of.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much. A very limited number would not be included in this.

Your expertise is second-generation. You have policing expertise. You've trained others on how to use firearms, and you are a second-generation firearm retailer. For all intents and purposes, this definition bans semi-automatic centrefire rifles that have magazine capabilities.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That's correct.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Okay.

There have been numbers thrown around by the Liberal government regarding 19,000 available firearms. I have a lot of confusion about this.

The list they've provided is not complete. The experts who came to the table said that it was not complete. In fact, I asked them about the definition that I just read out to you. I asked them where the list was for these, because it wasn't included in the 300 pages. They said they didn't have one. The bureaucrats who wrote this have actually no list available. It is unknown. The government does not know how many exist that they are banning.

I find it difficult to understand. You know firearms really well. What are your thoughts?

• (1040)

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** It's interesting that they said there's a number left. What's left? Are they all available? If those are all of the options available for Canadian hunters, sport shooters, farmers and legal firearms owners, well, what are they? Are they all available in Canada?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** That's right.

With my last moment here, my understanding is that guns that are not designed to do 10,000 joules can do that if you put enough gunpowder in them. Is that correct? Guns that could be caught under this definition of what's prohibited may be caught because in an extreme circumstance they could be forced to do 10,000 joules. Is that correct?

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That's correct. If you increased the amount of powder and a different weight or type of bullet was used, then yes, many other calibres could create 10,000 joules.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Those would be ones that aren't listed yet.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** That's correct. Absolutely.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Thank you very much, Mr. Hipwell.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

We'll go now to Ms. Damoff for four minutes, please.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you.

I didn't have an opportunity in the last panel to clarify that the Canadian Femicide Observatory.... There were some questions as to the validity of research that they do.

I want to put on the record that it is a very well-respected, non-partisan organization that was established in 2017 at the University of Guelph. I get their monthly newsletter. I encourage anyone watching to sign up for it. It's an interdisciplinary, multisectoral panel of experts from across the country, and one of their objectives was regarding the need for a single location for justice and accountability for femicide victims in Canada. Given the rise of femicides in our country, I think it's important that this organization exists and provides information for us.

Turning to you, Monsieur Bourget, there's been a fair amount of conversation about you being a spokesperson for the National Firearms Association. I'm happy to hear that you don't agree with their comments about mass non-compliance.

Something else that I know they post about and feel strongly about is that citizens should be armed for self-defence. How do you feel about that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Very honestly, I think that idea comes much more from the American associations than from the Canadian associations.

Connections have actually been made...

[English]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm sorry. To clarify, it absolutely comes from the Canadian National Firearms Association.

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Yes, connections have been made and we have analyzed what was going on in the United States in order to respond better to what is going on in Canada in relation to gun crime and users' rights. We gave the example of the drop in crime in certain American states that have adopted open carry or concealed carry.

When the various actors in an association like the National Firearms Association, the NFA, meet, some of them are going to come out in favour of policies like that, and others not. It's a bit like what happens in a committee like this one.

There are actors in the NFA whose definition...

[English]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Sir, their executive director posts quite often—

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** Go ahead.

[English]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** One of the posts was a picture of me clutching pearls. Women with firearms.... Whenever I bring up femicides, they're implying that I would be able to protect myself if I only had a firearm.

Do you agree with that kind of mentality?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I agree on the kind of comparison that is made to show the totally decentralized way in which the issue of firearms is handled.

I agree on the comparison, which comes from a very specific saying, which is:

[English]

“There is nothing better than a good man with a gun to defend against a bad man with a gun.”

[Translation]

That saying comes directly from the United States. I agree on the use of this comparison in connection with the theory that is applied to gun control, which, in our view, does not protect lives in the street.

[English]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm going to turn the rest of my time over to Mr. Chiang.

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to bring your attention to a website in the U.S.A. called Gun Violence Archive, which states that, to date, there have been 71 mass shootings in the U.S., as a result of which 106 people have been killed.

As far as I can see, the last mass shooting we had in Canada was in York Region, Vaughan, in December 2022, when five people were killed in Canada.

I want to bring that to your attention as a comparison between the U.S. and Canada. In my background as a police officer for 28 years, when I worked on the front line as an officer, I worked on homicides, suicides and many shootings.

As far as I'm concerned, every loss of life is a huge loss. I understand that we respect the rights of hunters, sport shooters and indigenous people for hunting and the airsoft community, but what we're looking at doing is preventing further deaths of innocent people, and I think we should be looking at this more clearly. I understand your rights as hunters and sport shooters, but we also have to look at the rights of average Canadians like myself and my family. We want to make sure we keep all of us safe.

Thank you.

● (1045)

**The Chair:** You can give a quick response if you wish.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I totally agree.

[Translation]

What worries me is that you have invited experts, in consultation with whom you could have obtained a lot of tools to help you as this matter moves forward. However, you have just spent half that time confronting and discrediting the experts.

You call that working to keep Canadians safe. You have wasted your time with expert witnesses here who could have provided you with tools. I don't know how to answer you except to say that I completely agree with you, Mr. Chiang.

That said, we are not going in the right direction if that is how the expert witnesses and the tools that might be important for continuing to protect Canadian citizens get treated.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Michaud, the floor is yours for two minutes.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With all due respect, Mr. Bourget, the committee's plan for this study is to have four additional meetings to allow the witnesses, the people, the groups who would be affected by amendments G-4 and G-46, to be heard here. We want to question them to find out what they are afraid of. Some fears have been spread all over social media and everywhere in society. We want to know what people are afraid of, what should be changed, and how to do better next time.

When I asked you the question just now, that is, whether you had identified firearms in the list of firearms that are reasonably used for hunting, you were not able to name a single one for me.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I answered you very clearly; I named the firearms made by Parker Bros, Browning-BAR and...

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** You are talking to me about hunting bears and polar bears in northern Canada.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** That is when you cite 10,000 joules and over.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** To my knowledge, those people use a Lee-Enfield with 3,000 joules of energy. That is far from 10,000 joules.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** This firearm that...

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I would like to invite you, here, and have the benefit of your expertise, but you are using kind of the same technique.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I think you are going to have to watch the video of my testimony again.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** You persist with the definition of what a spokesperson is, and yet you adopt the positions of an association that is against gun control. It is hard to get anything substantial from this and do better next time.

Basically, what we understand from listening to you is that we should take Bill C-21 and the amendments to ban assault weapons and throw it all in the garbage. Nothing good can be done with it.

**Mr. Martin Bourget:** I think you should watch the video of this meeting again when it is available online. You will see that when you asked me the question, I answered clearly by naming firearm models. When we talked about firearms with 10,000 joules and over, I answered your question about firearms with 10,000 joules and over very clearly.

We still have a huge number of firearm models on the list. Obviously, when we talk about creating categories and about this list, I point out that there is a pressing, glaring need for a lot of experts.

There is a very obvious lack of knowledge when it comes to implementing and proposing ways to protect Canadians.

It isn't firearms that I am mostly afraid of; it is the feasibility and sustainability of the methods that are being put in place to genuinely protect Canadians in the streets. We see weapons coming from the criminal world...

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I think my speaking time is up, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Boulerice now has the floor for two minutes.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to note a certain degree of frustration and hostility on the part of the witness Mr. Bourget toward certain members of this committee. I find that quite deplorable.

Mr. Hipwell, if amendment G-4 had been adopted, how many types of firearm would now be banned, out of your merchandise?

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** Which level of ban are you talking about? If we go back to the order in council, starting there, quantity-wise we're talking about hundreds of firearms in total and many different models across the board. The government said at the time that you can dispose of them. Well, there are lots of other complications with that. Once they're imported into a country, they can't simply be exported back to the originating country. There are a lot of other rules that the government obviously overlooked and felt it was simple to pass on to the businesses.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Mr. Hipwell, you would have lost the opportunity to sell dozens or even hundreds of types of firearm since they would have been banned. So those are hundreds of customers and hundreds of sales, since you are a firearms dealer.

When a bill is introduced to limit access to semi-automatic firearms and assault weapons, are you not, in a way, in a financial conflict of interest, since your job is selling those weapons?

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** It would be a huge cost for my business. We're talking about—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Are you not in a conflict of interest?

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** How am I in a position of conflict of interest?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** When we talk about banning certain types of firearms that you have in stock, and your job is selling those firearms to your customers, you have a financial interest in the law being as minimal as possible.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** How am I in a position of conflict of interest?

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** On a point of order, Mr. Chair, Mr. Boulerice is making a pretty significant accusation. Perhaps he can clarify whether he is suggesting that small businesses impacted by the three bans, four bans actually, brought forward by this government do not deserve to be consulted in a public way.

Can he confirm whether that's what he's doing, or is he making a legal accusation?

**The Chair:** I do not believe that's a point of order.

Mr. Boulerice can ask his reasonable questions, and Mr. Hipwell will have a chance to respond.

I believe your question has been asked, Monsieur.

Mr. Hipwell, if you would like to respond, please go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Hipwell:** I will do my best, because I do not feel there is a conflict of interest here.

I am here to speak on behalf of many—all—firearms owners and firearms retailers about the classifications in the proposed legislation here. Yes, my business does sell those types of firearms, but I'm not the only business in the field that sells those types of

firearms. I believe that if the government were more open to working with the industry, this legislation and the firearms community would be much further ahead.

However, the firearms industry and community seem to be blacklisted. It has been a challenge for organizations to work with the government in order to come up with common-sense, simple firearms legislation that works for the firearms owners, the retailers, the industry, the manufacturers, the importers, and the government and that in turn will enhance Canadians' public safety. That's where we feel the government has fallen short.

If you think, sir, that I am in a conflict of interest, I'm not. I'm here representing many hundreds and thousands of Canadians.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Boulerice.

[*English*]

That wraps up our panel and our questions. Thank you, all.

To our witnesses, thank you for your expertise and your time today. It's been a big help to our study.

With that, we are adjourned.

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