

Gun group wants women to fight for permits

Vancouver school trustee featured in campaign for right to carry concealed guns

Last Updated: Monday, December 18, 2006 | 8:43 AM PT

[CBC News](#)

A national firearms lobby group is urging Canadian women to obtain concealed gun permits in the United States and then use those permits to seek the same right in Canada, in order to protect themselves and reduce crime.

"Women will be able to protect human life from criminal violence," David Tomlinson, president of the National Firearms Association, told CBC.ca in an interview on Monday.

Canadian law does have a provision for certain individuals to carry a gun, Tomlinson noted.

"But if a woman applies for one she is absolutely guaranteed that she will be refused one regardless of the circumstance," he said.

"What we want to see happen is a sorting out of the unholy mess that government has made of law in this area," Tomlinson said from his office in Edmonton.

"The problem with gun control is that it has no effect on violent criminals," he said.

Vancouver NDP activist the face of the campaign

Vancouver school trustee Sharon Gregson posed with her handgun on the cover of the latest issue of the Canadian Firearms Journal, as part of the campaign for concealed weapon permits.

The NDP activist told CBC News she has qualified for a concealed firearm carry permit in Utah — a permit that's valid in 30 U.S. states. However, the permit is not valid in Canada and Gregson wants the law changed.

"I have sent the prime minister an e-mail to say that I find it curious that, as a woman, I'd be allowed as a visitor into the United States, I'd be allowed to carry a weapon — a concealed firearm to protect myself and my children — but that I don't have that same right in Canada," she said.

Aim is to deter criminals, group says



Vancouver school trustee and NDP activist Sharon Gregson wants Canada to change the law to allow people to carry concealed handguns.

Sheldon Clare, president of the NFA in British Columbia, told CBC News his group believes that arming even a few women in Canada will deter assailants.

Allowing women to carry guns, he said, will send a message to would-be criminals that "what they might perceive as formerly defenceless women ... might now not be so easy of a target."

Gregson also noted that she might be the only school trustee in Vancouver with a gun.

"I'd put money on it," she said. "There aren't a lot of people on the left who are pro gun. Put it that way."

Currently in Canada a federal handgun registry remains in place, as do bans on automatic and assault weapons.

However, Stephen Harper's Conservative government has introduced legislation to abolish the long-gun registry.

Last June, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day introduced a bill to amend the Criminal Code and Firearms Act so that owners of non-restricted rifles and shotguns will not have to register their weapons.