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Evaluating Canada's 1995 Firearm Legislation

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Abstract

In 1995 Canada introduced amended its firearms law to require owner licences and to create a universal firearm registry. Despite costing at least C\$ 1 billion so far, the firearms program has failed to win the trust of the public or the police. This paper examines the organizational problems of the firearms program and evaluates its effectiveness in improving public safety. Ten years after its inception, with virtually unlimited budgets, the firearms registry remains significantly incomplete and contains an unacceptably high number of errors. The most appropriate ways to evaluate public safety are general measures, such as homicide, suicide, or violent crime rates, not gun deaths or gun crime. There is no discernable impact on public safety by the firearm program. It is recommended that efforts be focused on more serious threats to public safety, such as terrorists or violent criminals, not normal citizens who own firearms.

Key words: gun control, firearm registration, cost effectiveness, violent crime, public safety