

Martha Hall Findlay Leadership

Comment

Gun Registry – December 3, 2012

I have been on record, many times, as saying that the idea of a gun registry was a worthy thing. The original, laudable, goal of the gun registry was to obtain and maintain information on firearms, with a view to preventing or reducing gun violence, especially domestic violence. It was never expected to be a panacea - we always knew, for example, that illegal guns would never be registered. But to the extent that the information was valuable for safety and other crime fighting purposes, many of us, including most police forces, supported it. I have also said, as someone who spent half of my growing up in rural Ontario -- (I can handle both a .22 and a shotgun just fine, thank you) -- that the government of the day made major mistakes in communicating it and implementing it.

We should have, /right from the beginning/, engaged the stakeholders, including those in the hunting and farming communities. Most importantly, /we should have asked for the advice and help of firearms users/ as to how best to collect the information – instead, it was forced onto those who had legitimate concerns. We should never have told firearm owners who had expressed concerns that if they didn't comply, they would be the ones treated as criminals. No wonder people objected. And without that advice, the government ended up spending far, far more that it should have.

There were clear problems with the implementation. But the idea of a gun registry, including for long guns, had and still has merit.