

BANNING HUNTING RIFLES WON'T SOLVE OUR GUN PROBLEM

EXPANDING BILL C-21 NOT THE ANSWER, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

Last May, the federal government introduced a bill that would ban handguns, Bill C-21.

Last month, the Liberals extended the scope of their bill. They introduced an amendment to extend the ban to include a number of rifles and shotguns, including hunting rifles.

If the amendment and bill pass, many popular hunting rifles that have long been used in Canada would be banned.

Many of these hunting rifles are commonly used by hunters and Canada's Indigenous Peoples, including many who use these rifles to hunt for food. Many have voiced their opposition to the bill and its amendment, including the premiers of Canada's three northern territories and the chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations.

This month, the chiefs passed an emergency resolution opposing the government's proposed ban on hunting rifles. This is quite the rebuke to a government that has made Indigenous reconciliation a central priority.

More importantly, any

ban on hunting rifles misses a bigger point.

Canada has a problem with illegal handguns in large cities, not legal hunting rifles in rural communities.

Violent crime is surging in Canada. Statistics Canada's violent crime severity index, which tracks violent crime, rose from 75.34 in 2015 to 92.50 in 2021 — a shocking 23 per cent increase. Gang-related homicides have increased 29 per cent during the same period.

Going after law-abiding hunters in rural and Indigenous communities won't reduce the handgun violence in large cities. Common-sense policies that keep guns out of the hands of criminals is what is needed.

Rather than targeting hunting rifles, Criminal Code penalties should be increased for illegally smuggling handguns. Locking up the most violent, repeat offenders should be priority; too often they are released when they should be incarcerated. In addition, law enforcement should be beefed up to stem the flow of illegal handguns coming across the Canada-U.S. border.

For all these reasons, I am opposed to Bill C-21 and its amendments.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills, and the shadow minister of foreign affairs for the official opposition. He can be reached at michael.chong.a3@parl.gc.ca.

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SNAPSHOT



Tony Fortunato photo

A white-throated sparrow visits a backyard on Trafalgar Road. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

INTEREST RATE HIKES PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY

INCREASES NEEDED TO HELP STABILIZE ECONOMY, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

There's a whole lot of financial pain being inflicted on Canadians.

This comes from the Bank of Canada raising interest rates again by one half of one per cent. This is the seventh time in 2022 the central bank has raised interest rates.

In my opinion, the BOC is not to blame. An expression I have used in past articles is this is an example of the BOC exerting "tough love."

Most Canadians understand inflation has been far above the target rate of two per cent.

tion or cope with increasing interest rates inflicted by our central bank.

Higher interest rates to control inflation is a necessary evil. Yes, it inflicts pain on many, but the pain would be higher over time without the decisive action of increasing interest rates.

There are signs that previous interest rate hikes have started to control inflation. That is a positive sign because the more quickly inflation is under control, the quicker interest rates can start to be reduced.

This will be good news for the economy and for the many coping with the strains of high interest rates are on their debt.

Peter Watson, of Watson Investments MBA, CFP®, R.F.P., CIM®, FCSI offers a weekly financial planning column, Dollars & Sense. He can be contacted through www.watsoninvestments.com.

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