



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER

FIREARMS CONTROL

Statement by:
The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

THE SENATE

[*Translation*]

FIREARMS CONTROL

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Honourable senators, I rise today in this chamber to pay tribute to the four teenagers who were killed on the streets of Montreal since the beginning of the year.

Hani Ouahdi, a young man just shy of his twentieth birthday, was killed last Thursday in Anjou. Thomas Trudel, age 16, was killed on November 14 in Saint-Michel. On October 18, Jannai Dopwell-Bailey, also age 16, was stabbed to death in front of his school, and last February, Meriem Bendaoui, an innocent bystander, was killed in a drive-by shooting. She was only 15 years old.

I extend my sincere condolences to the victims' families and friends.

As a mother and a Montrealer, I am very concerned and deeply troubled by all of this gun violence.

On November 19, the Union des municipalités du Québec unanimously called on the federal government to do the following, and I quote:

. . . quickly enact legislative changes to put an end to tragedies involving handguns while strengthening controls on illegal weapons crossing the Canada-U.S. border.

On Sunday, Quebec announced that it will invest \$52 million to do more to prevent this type of crime. Premier Legault is also calling on the Trudeau government to take action.

We need to work harder for gun control. People are losing their lives to gun violence not just in Quebec but also in many major Canadian cities.

I agree that this is a sensitive and polarizing issue. However, we have the right and the duty to call for meaningful action from our leaders. What I would like to see, in memory of the victims and on behalf of Canadians who are affected and appalled by this violence, is our governments taking the initiative to talk with each other. It is absolutely necessary to take action and immediately start focusing on this societal issue. A collaborative structure coordinating the efforts of all levels of government is absolutely essential to reducing gun violence in this country.

Finally, in these early days of December, I would be remiss if I did not mention the 1989 femicide at the Polytechnique, 32 years ago now. In memory of the 14 women who were brutally killed, PolyRemembers is lobbying to have handguns and assault weapons banned in Canada. I commend your courage and your perseverance over the years to advance this important cause. Let us never forget.

Thank you.
