

Stephen Harper on Bill C-68
January 19, 2002

There has been some confusion as to my position on gun control. I would like to make it clear that I would repeal the Liberal's gun registry. I personally have always opposed bill C-68 and the Liberal approach to gun control.

The confusion comes because in the first vote in the House of Commons on Bill C-68 I voted in support, because an initial poll suggested that a majority of my constituents supported it. I discussed this vote with Mr. Manning and he agreed that my constituency's wishes needed to be respected.

I conducted a second, larger and more scientific poll of my constituents following much public and media discussion and found things had changed – 60 per cent of respondents in my riding opposed the Bill. I therefore voted against Bill C-68 in the final vote in the House of Commons.

I was and still am in total agreement with the statement made in the House of Commons by former Reform Leader Preston Manning on June, 13, 1995: "Bill C-68, if passed into law, will not be a good law. It will be a bad law, a blight on the legislative record of the government, a law that fails the three great tests of constitutionality, of effectiveness and of democratic consent of the governed. What should be the fate of a bad law? It should be repealed..." C-68 has proven to be a bad law and has created a bureaucratic nightmare for both gun owners and the government.

As Leader of the Official Opposition I will use all the powers afforded to me as Leader and continue our party's fight to repeal Bill C-68 and replace it with a firearms control system that is cost effective and respects the rights of Canadians to own and use firearms responsibly.