



Hon. Marco Mendicino, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Hon. Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

December 8, 2021

Dear Ministers,

We are writing to you regarding reports that a street gang in Montreal fraudulently obtained taxpayer dollars via the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to purchase illegal firearms.

In a recent ruling by Quebec Superior Court Judge, the Honourable Yvan Poulin, he found that a street gang in Montreal fraudulently obtained over \$100,000 from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit program to fund illegal firearm smuggling operations. In addition, a recent La Presse article stated, "a few months ago, a source close to the criminal community told La Presse that members of a street gang in northeast Montreal - which are not the STL's - had found a flaw in the attribution system of the CERB and thus fraudulently obtained tens of thousands of dollars which would have been used to buy firearms on the black market."

There are a number of questions regarding the issue of CERB being used by gangs to purchase illegal firearms. Were you aware this was taking place? If so, how long were you aware? If you were aware, why did you not take action on this issue sooner?

It is unacceptable that under your watch, illegal firearms were purchased with taxpayer money in the form of CERB, especially with the surge of deadly shootings taking place across Montreal.

This situation must be urgently addressed to prevent it from happening again, and to hold the criminals responsible. Canada's Conservatives are calling for your government to launch a complete and thorough audit of the taxpayer dollars your government provided to criminals in the form of pandemic benefits, and that you make the Auditor General of Canada aware of your findings as their office continues to audit inadequate post-payment verification of the CERB program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raquel Dancho". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Raquel Dancho
Conservative Shadow Minister for Public Safety

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pierre Paul-Hus". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Pierre Paul-Hus
Conservative Shadow Minister for Public Services and Procurement

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Kusie". The signature is cursive and clearly legible.

Stephanie Kusie
Conservative Shadow Minister for Employment, Future Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion