

Lethbridge Public Opinion Studies

Capital Punishment

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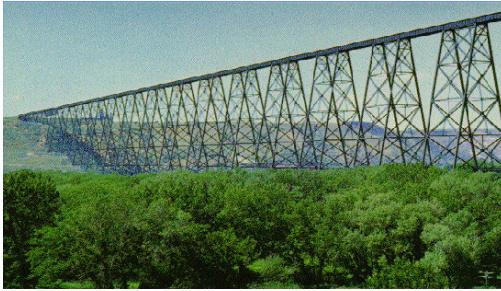
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City of Lethbridge

Located in southwestern Alberta, the city of Lethbridge is home to 72,717 residents, 57,674 of which are 18 years of age or older.



The city is divided into six census areas, two each for its South, North and West geographic areas. It is divided north and south by Alberta highway 3, and east west by the Oldman River.

South Lethbridge's 27,941 residents represent 38.4 of the city's total population. West Lethbridge (22,429) and north Lethbridge (22,347) represent 30.8 and 30.7 respectively.

Methodology

The primary information in this report is based on data collected by students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods and PSC150 – Local Government at Lethbridge Community College in the Fall of 2003. Students interviewed 769 adult residents by telephone over a two-week period from October 1 to 15, 2003 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the Fall 2003 sample yields a margin of error of $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

Other sample sizes are as follows:	Winter	2001	501 respondents	($\pm 4.4\%$, 19 times out of 20)
	Fall	2001	408 respondents	($\pm 4.8\%$, 19 times out of 20)
	Winter	2002	484 respondents	($\pm 4.4\%$, 19 times out of 20)
	Fall	2002	576 respondents	($\pm 4.1\%$, 19 times out of 20)
	Winter	2003	470 respondents	($\pm 4.5\%$, 19 times out of 20)
	Winter	2004	488 respondents	($\pm 4.4\%$, 19 times out of 20)

Analysis of the demographic data indicated that, within acceptable limits, the samples accurately represent the demographic distribution of the voting age population within the city of Lethbridge. The data have been statistically weighted where necessary to better reflect the actual distribution of the population.

These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC.

What follows is a selection of our findings based on the levels of agreement or disagreement with the statement below.

Paul Lund
Faron Ellis, Ph.D.
Citizen Society Research Lab

Q. Canada should re-introduce capital punishment for first-degree murderers.

Capital Punishment (October 2003)

Overall, and over time, a consistent majority of Lethbridge residents support Canada reinstating capital punishment for first-degree murderers.

Although a majority of both genders are in favor, men (66.7%) are more likely to agree with reinstating capital punishment than are women (55.1%).

North Lethbridge residents (66.8%) are more supportive than are South (57.4%) and West (57.0%) Lethbridge residents.

Middle-income residents (62.4%) are most supportive while lower-income earners (56.6%) are least supportive.

Level of formal education impacts on opinion more than does any other demographic variable. Residents with a high school education or less are most likely to support a return to capital punishment. (76.7%) while university graduates are least likely to agree (46.2%). In fact, those with a university degree are the only non-political demographic subgroup to indicate majority opposition.

Interestingly, age has less of an impact on opinion than does education. Although the youth are least supportive of a return to capital punishment (55.7%), gen-xers are the most supportive (66.5%) while boomers (60.9%) and seniors (62.6%) are slightly less supportive.

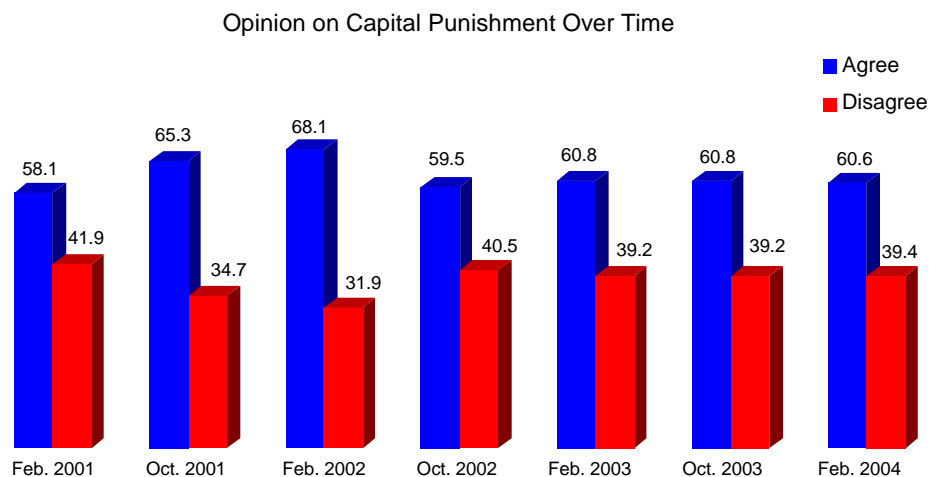
Opinion on Capital Punishment Over Time

Opinion is relatively consistent over time with majorities supporting a return to capital punishment in sample.

An interesting but temporary surge in support for a return to capital punishment occurred in the fall and winter immediately following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the USA, peaking at 68.1% in February of 2002.

Capital Punishment by Over Time (%)

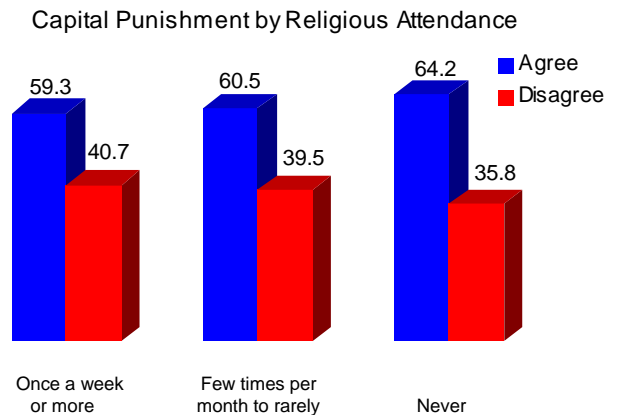
	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04
Agree	58.1	65.3	68.1	59.5	60.8	60.8	60.6
Disagree	41.9	34.7	31.9	40.5	39.2	39.2	39.4



Effect of Religion on Opinion (October 2003)

Religion is not an important determining factor in influencing opinion on capital punishment. Only slight differences exist between the various denominations with majorities in categories expressing support for a return to capital punishment. United Church members (52.6%) are the least supportive (68.4%) while Anglicans and LDS members (68.2%) are most supportive.

Interestingly, people who never attend church services or functions are most supportive (64.2%) while those who attend church most are slightly less likely (59.3%) to support a return to capital punishment.



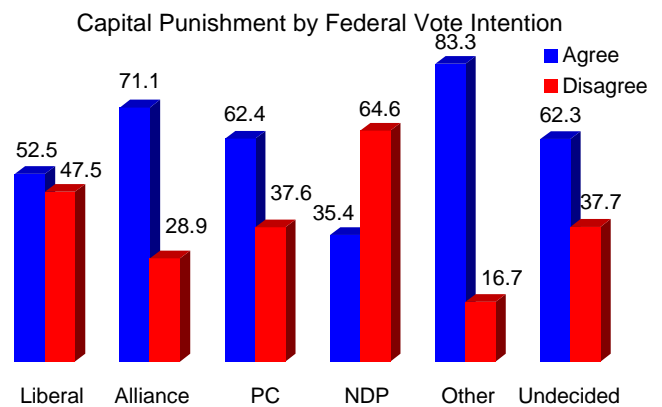
Opinion by Political Party Preference (October 2003)

Opinion differences between supporters of the various federal political parties are significant and predictable.

Alliance supporters (71.1%) are most likely to agree with reinstating capital punishment while NDP partisans are the least supportive (35.4%), and the only group where a majority is opposed (64.6%).

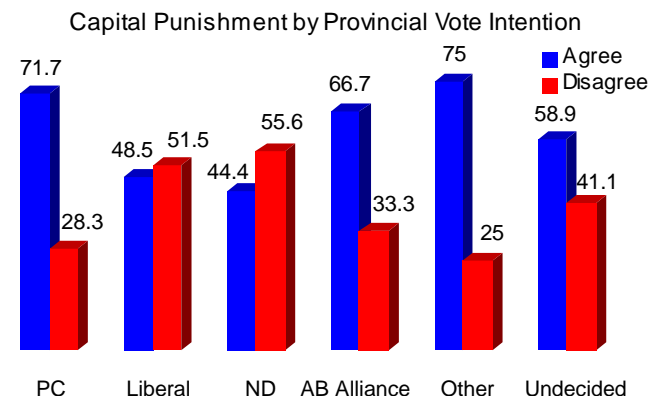
Liberal voters are the most divided with a bare majority supportive (52.5%) and almost as many opposed (47.5%).

Undecided voters' opinions (62.3%) are closer to the average Lethbridge opinion than are the opinions of any group of partisans.



Provincially, Progressive Conservative voters are among the most supportive of a return to capital punishment (71.7%), while Alberta New Democrats are least supportive (44.4%) but not as opposed as are their federal counterparts.

Provincial Liberals are again the most divided (48.5% support vs. 51.5% opposed) and undecided provincial voters' opinions are closest to the mean Lethbridge opinion.



Snapshot of Differences (%) (October 2003)

Capital Punishment by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Agree	66.7	55.1	60.7
Disagree	33.3	44.9	39.3

Capital Punishment by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Agree	57.4	66.8	57.0
Disagree	42.6	33.2	43.0

Capital Punishment by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Agree	56.6	62.4	59.6
Disagree	43.4	37.6	40.4

Capital Punishment by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Agree	76.7	55.7	65.1	46.2
Disagree	23.3	44.3	34.9	53.8

Capital Punishment by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Agree	55.7	66.5	60.9	62.6
Disagree	44.3	33.5	39.1	37.4

Capital Punishment by Religious Participation (%)

	Once/week or more	Few/month to rarely	Never
Agree	59.3	60.5	64.2
Disagree	40.7	39.5	35.8

Capital Punishment by Religious Denomination (%)

	Anglican	LDS	Non Christian	Lutheran	No Religion	Catholic	Other Christian	United
Agree	68.4	68.2	65.0	65.2	64.2	58.1	60.0	52.6
Disagree	31.6	31.8	35.0	34.8	35.8	41.9	40.0	47.4

Capital Punishment by Federal Vote Intention (%)

	Alliance	PC	Liberal	NDP	Other	Undecided
Agree	71.1	62.4	52.5	35.4	83.3	62.3
Disagree	28.9	37.6	47.5	64.6	16.7	37.7

Capital Punishment by Provincial Vote Intention (%)

	PC	AB Alliance	Liberal	ND	Other	Undecided
Agree	71.7	66.7	48.5	44.4	75.0	58.9
Disagree	28.3	33.3	51.5	55.6	25.0	41.1

Full Tabular Data

Capital Punishment (%) (October 2003)

Q. Canada should re-introduce capital punishment for first-degree murderers.

Capital Punishment by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	26.4	19.4	22.8
Agree	40.3	35.6	37.9
Disagree	25.8	30.1	28.0
Strongly Disagree	7.5	14.9	11.3

Capital Punishment by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly Agree	24.1	23.5	17.3
Agree	33.3	43.3	39.7
Disagree	29.4	24.6	30.4
Strongly Disagree	13.2	8.6	12.6

Capital Punishment by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly Agree	25.0	22.4	21.0
Agree	31.6	40.0	38.9
Disagree	33.0	26.3	26.3
Strongly Disagree	10.4	11.4	13.8

Capital Punishment by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly Agree	30.6	18.8	27.7	15.2
Agree	45.7	37.1	37.2	31.0
Disagree	16.2	33.3	28.7	33.2
Strongly Disagree	7.5	10.8	6.4	20.7

Capital Punishment by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly Agree	22.1	23.0	23.2	24.3
Agree	33.8	43.5	37.5	38.3
Disagree	32.5	21.1	27.2	30.8
Strongly Disagree	11.7	12.4	12.1	6.5