

## Opinion on Six Policy Items

### Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2020

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Faron Ellis PhD, Research Chair  
*Citizen Society Research Lab*

faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ca

Lethbridge College  
3000 College Drive South  
Lethbridge AB T1K 1L6

[www.lethbridgecollege.ca](http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca)



# Lethbridge Opinion Structure on Six Policy Issues

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## Methodology

### *Population*

The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 101,482 residents (2019 census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (81,165). A total of 51,419 Lethbridge residents are male (50.7%), 49,552 are female (48.8%) and 511 (0.5%) prefer not to identify. South Lethbridge is home to 32,412 residents (31.9%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 40,898 residents (40.3%). There are 28,172 north Lethbridge residents (27.8%).

### *Sample*

*Data* Collected by Lethbridge College students in the winter of 2020. Students interviewed 624 randomly selected adult Lethbridge residents by telephone from February 8 to 11, 2020 under the supervision of CSRL Research Chair, Dr. Faron Ellis. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes and results from previous CSRL Opinion Studies can be accessed by visiting CSRL web pages at: <https://lethbridgecollege.ca/departments/citizen-society-research-lab>.

### *Representativeness*

Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted to even better reflect that of the population (sex, age, and area of the city of Lethbridge).

### *Confidence*

The sample yields a margin of error of  $\pm 3.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

### *IB Commons Call Centre*

The CSRL operates as a division of the Centre for Applied Arts and Sciences. Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre with support from the Lethbridge College Facility Management, Instructional Technology, and Audio Visual teams.

### *Sponsorship*

These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions was derived from student, faculty and community interest in the topic.

## Policy Issues - Summary

### *Same-sex Marriage*

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (80.4%) support same-sex marriages having equal legal status with traditional marriages. Support for same-sex marriage has increased significantly from only 33.5% in 2002 when we first asked Lethbridge residents about this issue. Women (81.9%), the non-religious (89.1%), university graduates (87.6%) and provincial NDP voters (86.0%) are most supportive. Highly religious residents (72.6%), seniors (74.2%), men (78.8%) and provincial UCP voters (74.4%) voters are less supportive, although significant majorities of each of those groups is supportive.

### *Abortion Choice*

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (80.7%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (81.0%) are just as supportive as are women (80.3%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in all demographic categories demonstrate strong support. Seniors (83.5%) are more supportive than are young Lethbridge adults (74.5%). Religion, however, is the most important determinant of opinion. But even here, two-thirds of Lethbridge's most religious residents (67.1%) are supportive of a woman's right to choose. Support climbs to 88.0% among the somewhat religious, peaking at 90.5% among the non-religious. Some partisan differences are measured with provincial UCP voters (75.0%) somewhat less supportive than are NDP voters (86.5%), but strong majorities of all provincial partisans support a woman's right to choose.

### *Capital Punishment*

Three fifths of Lethbridge residents (60.6%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first-degree murder. Income, education, and provincial partisanship are the most important determinants of opinion on this issue. For example, the most highly educated (48.1%) and the wealthiest (50.5%) residents are less supportive than are other residents. A majority of provincial NDP voters (57.1%) is opposed, while a substantial majority of UCP voters (71.3%) is supportive.

### *Legal Medical Cannabis*

An overwhelming majority of Lethbridge residents (90.3%) support cannabis remaining legal for medical purposes. Strong majorities in all demographic categories are supportive.

### *Legal Recreational Cannabis*

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (56.9%) support legal recreational cannabis. Support has fluctuated over past few years after steadily increasing from only 31.5% in 2005. Support is strongest among men (61.9%), the non-religious (65.1%), middle-aged residents (61.4%), and provincial NDP (69.2%) and Liberal (63.5%) partisans. Opposition is strongest among seniors (54.5%), provincial UCP supporters (51.0%) and the very religious (51.5%).

### *Legal Medical Assistance in Dying*

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents support legal medical assistance in dying (81.2%). Religion is the most important predictor of opinion. Although a clear majority of the very religious are supportive (69.4%), support climbs to 94.0% among the non-religious. Substantial majorities of all other demographic groups are supportive, including all groups of provincial party partisans.

## Opinion on Six Policy Items 2002–2020 (%)

Same-sex Marriage	2002	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	33.5	39.4	51.7	52.2	54.1	58.7	62.3	64.2	67.7	71.0	74.3	76.0	74.2	78.9	77.3	78.5	80.4
Disagree	66.5	60.6	48.3	47.8	45.9	41.3	37.7	35.8	32.3	29.0	25.7	24.0	25.8	21.1	22.7	21.5	19.6

Abortion Choice	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	69.9	70.3	73.0	77.9	75.0	76.2	79.2	74.1	76.6	80.2	77.7	77.0	79.7	81.8	81.7	81.8	80.7
Disagree	30.1	29.7	27.0	22.1	25.0	23.8	20.8	25.9	23.4	19.8	22.3	23.0	20.3	18.2	18.3	18.2	19.3

Capital Punishment	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	60.8	56.4	62.9	60.9	57.6	58.1	62.1	54.8	57.8	66.8	60.8	60.3	59.4	62.7	64.0	66.8	60.6
Disagree	39.2	43.6	37.1	39.1	42.4	41.9	37.9	45.2	42.2	33.2	39.2	39.7	40.6	37.3	36.0	33.2	39.4

Cannabis-medical	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	73.1	70.4	73.7	75.8	74.8	74.7	80.1	73.0	74.4	78.6	82.4	82.5	81.2	84.4	89.5	91.4	90.3
Disagree	26.9	29.6	26.3	24.2	25.2	25.3	19.9	27.0	25.6	21.4	17.6	17.5	18.8	15.6	10.5	8.6	9.7

Cannabis-recreation	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	36.1	31.5	37.9	33.4	35.4	35.8	39.0	38.9	38.6	42.0	47.3	51.1	43.9	46.6	50.0	57.2	56.9
Disagree	63.9	68.5	62.1	66.6	64.6	64.2	61.0	61.1	61.4	58.0	52.7	48.9	56.1	53.4	50.0	42.8	43.1

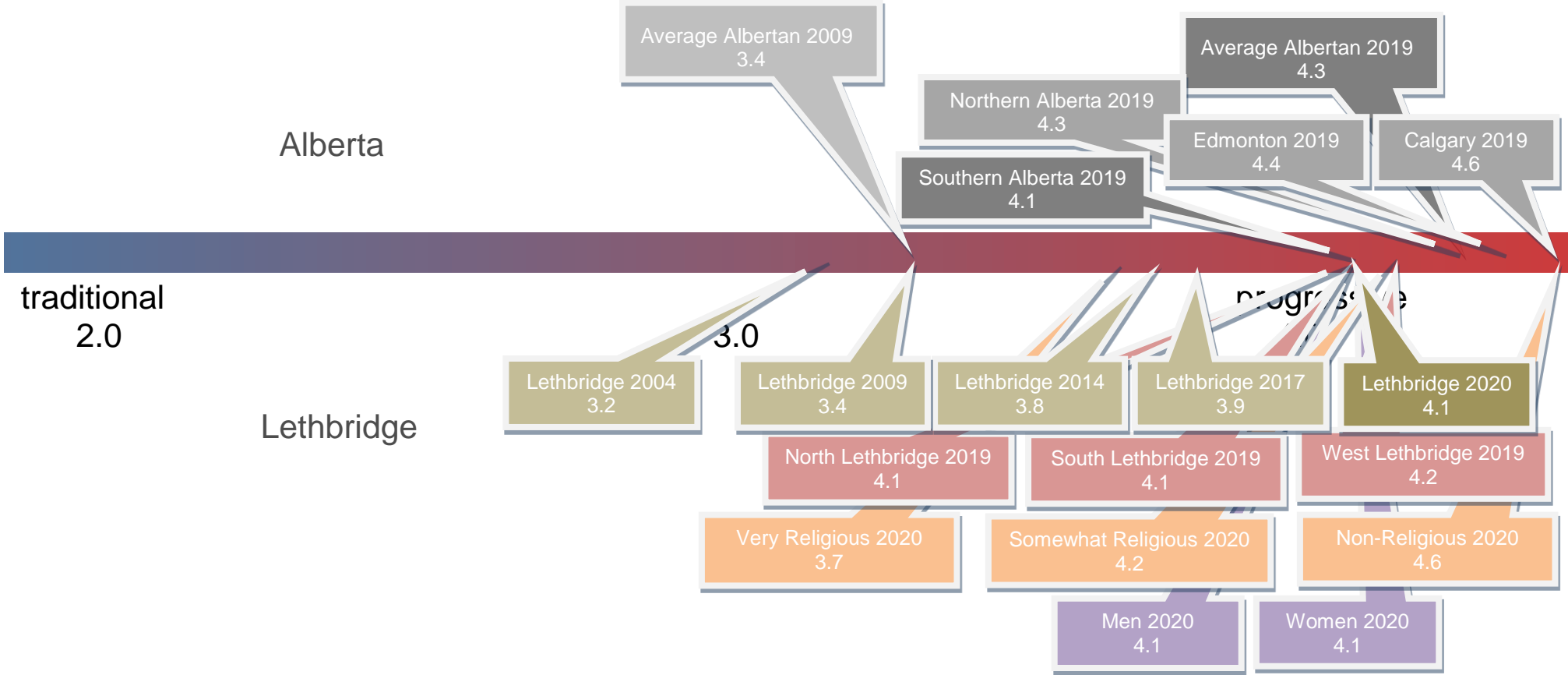
Medical Assist Dying	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Agree	60.7	59.2	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.7	67.0	61.9	66.4	74.4	77.5	80.5	76.9	79.5	79.5	83.1	81.2
Disagree	39.3	40.8	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.3	33.0	38.1	33.6	25.6	22.5	19.5	23.1	20.5	20.5	16.9	18.8

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Policy Issues Index (means)

An index of opinion structure was created by summing the responses to the six questions thereby allowing for easier regional and demographic comparisons. The index scores range from a possible “0.0” for the most traditional respondents, to “6.0” for the most progressive. A score of 3.0 represented the midpoint of the range. The graph is organized with Alberta-wide data featured above the bar and Lethbridge data below the bar.

As the data demonstrate, over time, Lethbridge public opinion is becoming more progressive on this basket of issues, as is public opinion in the province as a whole. Over the course of the past couple of decades, Lethbridge public opinion has moved considerably towards the progressive end of the spectrum (3.2 in 2004, to 3.4 in 2009, to 4.1 in 2020).



## Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	78.8	81.9	80.4
Disagree	21.2	18.1	19.6

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	79.6	76.8	85.6
Disagree	20.4	23.2	14.4

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	81.0	83.3	81.3
Disagree	19.0	16.7	18.8

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	72.6	80.4	89.1
Disagree	27.4	19.6	10.9

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	73.7	76.6	80.8	87.6
Disagree	26.3	23.4	19.2	12.4

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	80.3	80.4	85.9	74.2
Disagree	19.7	19.6	14.1	25.8

Provincial Vote	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	74.4	86.0	81.4	85.7	71.4	85.7
Disagree	25.6	14.0	18.6	14.3	28.6	14.3

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

## Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	81.0	80.3	80.7
Disagree	19.0	19.7	19.3

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	77.1	80.6	84.4
Disagree	22.9	19.4	15.6

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	80.1	81.2	86.0
Disagree	19.9	18.8	14.0

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	67.1	88.0	90.5
Disagree	32.9	12.0	9.5

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	77.7	72.9	83.6	84.4
Disagree	22.3	27.1	16.4	15.6

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	74.5	81.7	82.7	83.5
Disagree	25.5	18.3	17.3	16.5

Provincial Vote	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	75.0	86.5	78.8	79.3	80.0	88.6
Disagree	25.0	13.5	21.2	20.7	20.0	11.4

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05



# Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	63.9	57.0	60.6
Disagree	36.1	43.0	39.4

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	57.7	67.9	56.3
Disagree	42.3	32.1	43.8

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	67.3	58.3	50.5
Disagree	32.7	41.7	49.5

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	56.3	61.8	58.8
Disagree	43.7	38.2	41.2

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	67.3	69.6	61.6	48.1
Disagree	32.7	30.4	38.4	51.9

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	67.6	55.8	54.6	61.7
Disagree	32.4	44.2	45.4	38.3

Provincial Vote*	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	71.3	42.9	65.0	58.6	55.6	75.8
Disagree	28.7	57.1	35.0	41.4	44.4	24.2

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

# Medical cannabis by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	90.5	90.0	90.3
Disagree	9.5	10.0	9.7

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	88.1	92.9	91.6
Disagree	11.9	7.1	8.4

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	89.5	89.0	94.7
Disagree	10.5	11.0	5.3

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	90.6	81.8	94.2
Disagree	9.4	18.2	5.8

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	89.5	88.4	89.8	92.7
Disagree	10.5	11.6	10.2	7.3

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	88.9	90.6	94.4	86.4
Disagree	11.1	9.4	5.6	13.6

Provincial Vote	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	90.2	87.2	95.3	93.5	85.7	91.7
Disagree	9.8	12.8	4.7	6.5	14.3	8.3

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

# Recreational cannabis by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	61.9	52.2	56.9
Disagree	38.1	47.8	43.1

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	51.5	62.4	58.0
Disagree	48.5	37.6	42.0

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	60.4	52.1	68.8
Disagree	39.6	47.9	31.3

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	48.5	55.7	65.1
Disagree	51.5	44.3	34.9

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	44.1	62.6	56.2	62.8
Disagree	55.9	37.4	43.8	37.2

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	59.9	61.5	61.4	45.5
Disagree	40.1	38.5	38.6	54.5

Provincial Vote*	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	49.0	69.2	63.5	45.2	34.5	57.1
Disagree	51.0	30.8	36.5	54.8	65.5	42.9

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

# Medical assistance in dying by demographic group (February 2020) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	85.5	77.3	81.2
Disagree	14.5	22.7	18.8

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	82.3	81.8	81.7
Disagree	17.7	18.2	18.3

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	78.2	85.6	83.0
Disagree	21.8	14.4	17.0

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	69.1	83.5	94.0
Disagree	30.9	16.5	6.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	78.4	75.3	82.6	85.4
Disagree	21.6	24.7	17.4	14.6

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	78.5	75.0	85.5	84.3
Disagree	21.5	25.0	14.5	15.7

Provincial Vote	UCP	NDP	Liberal	AB Party	Other Party/Cand.	Undecided
Agree	75.0	86.2	82.7	80.0	77.8	85.7
Disagree	25.0	13.8	17.3	20.0	22.2	14.3

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; \* sig < 0.05

## Demographics

Area of City (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
South	33.1	Male	47.2	Under \$40,000	33.9	H-School/less	20.0	18-29	25.2
North	28.1	Female	51.9	\$40-100,000	43.5	Some P-Sec.	16.4	30-44	16.9
West	37.0	Other	0.9	Over \$100,000	22.5	Col-Tech-Grad	30.6	45-64	34.3
Farm-Acreage	1.7					University Grad	33.0	65 or older	23.5

Church Attendance (%)	
2-3/month/more	44.5
Several per year	20.4
Rarely or never	35.1

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

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## Questions

The federal government should continue to recognize same-sex marriages giving them equal legal standing with traditional marriages.

Abortion is a matter of choice that should be decided by a woman in consultation with her medical professionals.

Canada should re-introduce capital punishment for people convicted of first-degree murder.

Cannabis should be legal for medical purposes.

Cannabis should be legal for recreational purposes.

People with terminal illnesses should be allowed legal access to medical assistance in dying.

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know (unprompted)
- Refused (unprompted)