

Opinion on Six Policy Items

Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2019

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Contents

Methodology	2
Policy Issues Summary	3
Opinion on Six Policy Issues, 2002-2019	4
Policy Issues Index	5
Tabular Data	
Same-Sex Marriage	6
Abortion Choice	7
Capital Punishment	8
Medical Cannabis	9
Recreational Cannabis	10
Medical Assistance in Dying	11
Demographics	12
Questions	12

Methodology

Population The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 99,769 residents (2018 census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (79,800). A total of 48,883 Lethbridge residents are male (49.0%), 50,697 are female (50.8%) and 18 (0.2%) prefer not to identify. South Lethbridge is home to 32,109 residents (32.2%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 39,960 residents (40.1%). There are 27,700 north Lethbridge residents (27.8%).

Sample Data Collected by Lethbridge College students in the winter of 2019. Students interviewed 882 randomly selected adult Lethbridge residents by telephone from February 9 to 13, 2019 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 ± 3.3 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 clear majority of Lethbridge residents (78.5%) 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 (84.3%), the non-religious (88.8%), upper income residents (82.9%), provincial NDP (94.4%) and Liberal (83.0%) voters are most supportive. Highly religious residents (58.9%), seniors (74.5%), men (72.3%) and provincial UCP voters (65.6%) voters are less supportive, although majorities of each of those groups is supportive.

Abortion Choice

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (81.8%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (82.7%) are just as supportive as are women (81.6%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories demonstrate strong support. Middle-aged Lethbridge residents (84.5%) are more supportive than are seniors (80.9%), those 30 to 44 years of age (80.0%), and the youth (80.1%). Religion, however, is the most important determinant of opinion. But even here, nearly two-thirds of Lethbridge's most religious residents (64.1%) are supportive of a woman's right to choose. Support climbs to 78.2% among the somewhat religious, peaking at 93.7% among the non-religious. Some partisan differences are measured with provincial UCP voters (70.6%) somewhat less supportive than are NDP (92.9%) and Liberal (89.8%) voters, but strong majorities of all provincial partisans support a woman's right to choose.

Capital Punishment

Two-thirds of Lethbridge residents (66.8%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first-degree murder. Gender, income, education, and provincial partisanship are the most important determinants of opinion on this issue. For example, the most highly educated (53.0%) and the wealthiest (55.4%) residents are less supportive than are other residents, although majorities are still in favor. A majority of provincial NDP voters (51.4%) are opposed, while substantial majorities of all other education provincial party voters (73.3%) are supportive.

Legal Medical Cannabis

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (91.4%) support cannabis remaining legal for medical purposes. Strong majorities in all demographic categories are supportive.

Legal Recreational Cannabis

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (57.2%) now support legal recreational cannabis. Support has fluctuated over past two years after steadily increasing from only 31.5% in 2005. Support is strongest among men (60.0%), the non-religious (70.7%), the youth (68.5%), and provincial NDP (71.8%) and liberal (66.3%) partisans. Opposition is strongest among seniors (56.3%), provincial UCP supporters (55.1%) and the very religious (65.5%).

Legal Medical Assistance in Dying

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents support legal medical assistance in dying (83.1%). Religion is the most important predictor of opinion. Although a majority of the very religious are supportive (57.2%), support climbs to near unanimity among the non-religious (97.6%). Substantial majorities of all other demographic groups are supportive, including all groups of provincial party partisans.

Opinion on Six Policy Items 2002–2019 (%)

Same-sex Marriage	2002	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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
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

Abortion Choice	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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
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

Capital Punishment	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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
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

Cannabis-medical	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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
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

Cannabis-recreation	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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
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

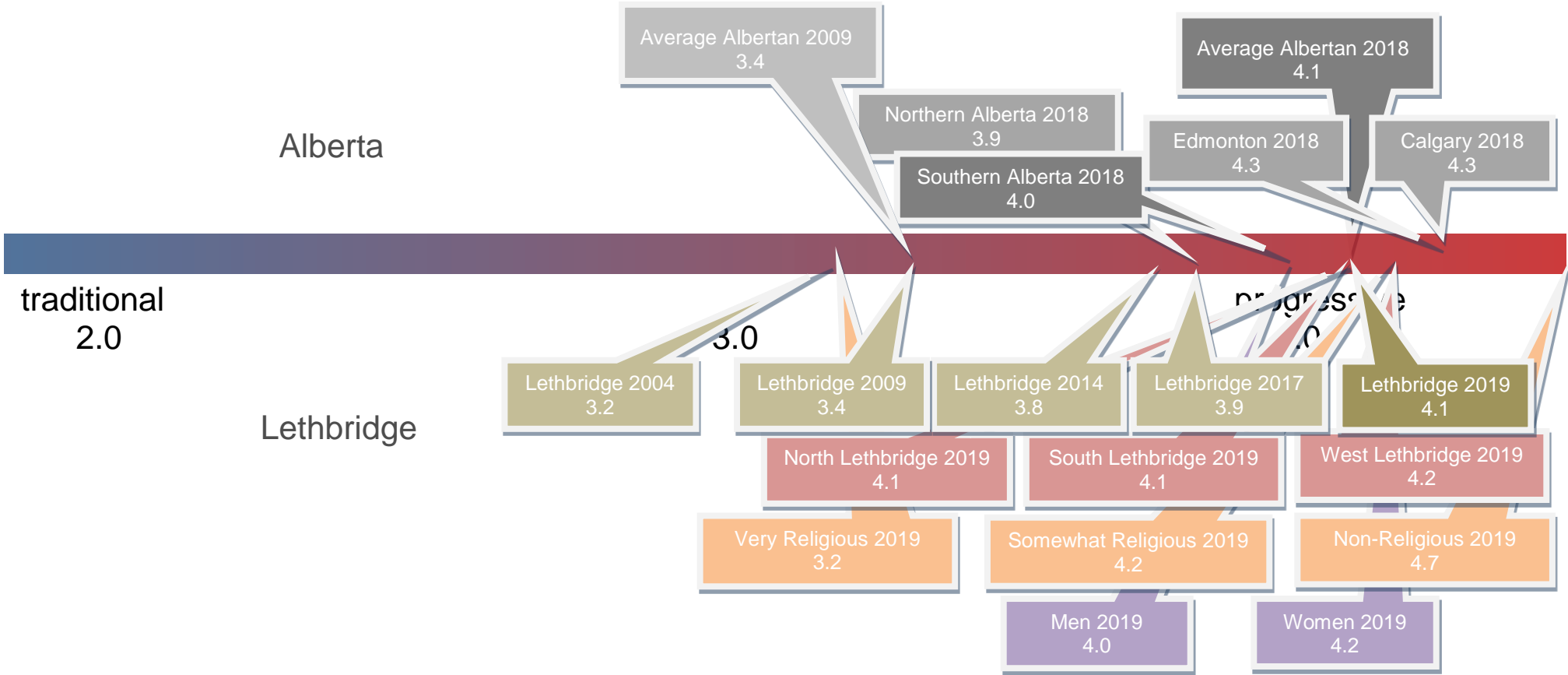
Medical Assist Dying	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Agree	60.7	59.2	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.7	67.0	61.9	66.4	74.4	77.5	80.5	76.9	79.5	79.5	83.1
Disagree	39.3	40.8	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.3	33.0	38.1	33.6	25.6	22.5	19.5	23.1	20.5	20.5	16.9

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 2019).



Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	72.3	84.3	78.5
Disagree	27.7	15.7	21.5

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	78.0	75.5	81.6
Disagree	22.0	24.5	18.4

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	73.7	78.2	82.9
Disagree	26.3	21.8	17.1

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	58.9	83.0	88.8
Disagree	41.1	17.0	11.2

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	77.6	76.2	82.2	77.3
Disagree	22.4	23.8	17.8	22.7

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	79.8	79.4	80.3	74.5
Disagree	20.2	20.6	19.7	25.5

Provincial Vote*	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	94.4	65.6	83.0	50.0	41.4	88.6
Disagree	5.6	34.4	17.0	50.0	58.6	11.4

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	82.7	81.6	81.8
Disagree	17.3	18.4	18.2

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	83.0	85.2	79.5
Disagree	17.0	14.8	20.5

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	80.3	79.7	87.6
Disagree	19.7	20.3	12.4

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	64.1	78.2	93.7
Disagree	35.9	21.8	6.3

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	79.5	78.7	84.4	82.7
Disagree	20.5	21.3	15.6	17.3

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	80.1	80.0	84.5	80.9
Disagree	19.9	20.0	15.5	19.1

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	92.9	70.6	89.8	92.9	72.7	85.1
Disagree	7.1	29.4	10.2	7.1	27.3	14.9

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	74.2	58.6	66.8
Disagree	25.8	41.4	33.2

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	66.5	70.8	64.9
Disagree	33.5	29.2	35.1

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	72.2	67.8	55.4
Disagree	27.8	32.2	44.6

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	67.3	69.0	65.0
Disagree	32.7	31.0	35.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	75.8	66.3	75.3	53.0
Disagree	24.2	33.7	24.7	47.0

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	67.9	69.1	64.0	68.2
Disagree	32.1	30.9	36.0	31.8

Provincial Vote*	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	48.6	74.7	67.4	60.0	84.8	73.3
Disagree	51.4	25.3	32.6	40.0	15.2	26.7

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

Medical cannabis by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	89.5	93.1	91.4
Disagree	10.5	6.9	8.6

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	93.1	89.0	93.3
Disagree	6.9	11.0	6.7

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	88.0	91.5	91.8
Disagree	12.0	8.5	8.2

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	86.7	88.3	95.3
Disagree	13.3	11.7	4.7

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	87.0	90.9	93.2	93.1
Disagree	13.0	9.1	6.8	6.9

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	89.4	93.5	92.6	90.4
Disagree	10.6	6.5	7.4	9.6

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	93.4	92.3	84.8	80.0	87.9	94.4
Disagree	6.6	7.7	15.2	20.0	12.1	5.6

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

Recreational cannabis by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	60.0	53.8	57.2
Disagree	40.0	46.2	42.8

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	54.4	58.3	59.3
Disagree	45.6	41.7	40.7

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	56.9	55.6	64.1
Disagree	43.1	44.4	35.9

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	34.5	58.3	70.7
Disagree	65.5	41.7	29.3

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	61.0	57.9	54.5	57.0
Disagree	39.0	42.1	45.5	43.0

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	68.5	60.7	58.3	43.2
Disagree	31.5	39.3	41.7	56.8

Provincial Vote*	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	71.8	44.9	66.3	73.3	33.3	60.1
Disagree	28.2	55.1	33.7	26.7	66.7	39.9

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

Medical assistance in dying by demographic group (February 2019) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge
Agree	84.1	82.1	83.1
Disagree	15.9	17.9	16.9

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	79.9	86.4	84.5
Disagree	20.1	13.6	15.5

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	82.3	81.3	89.5
Disagree	17.7	18.7	10.5

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	57.2	88.5	97.6
Disagree	42.8	11.5	2.4

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	82.0	79.9	84.9	84.0
Disagree	18.0	20.1	15.1	16.0

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	79.0	84.4	86.8	81.4
Disagree	21.0	15.6	13.2	18.6

Provincial Vote	NDP	UCP	Liberal	AB Party	FCP	Undecided
Agree	95.1	72.8	78.9	78.6	81.8	92.3
Disagree	4.9	27.2	21.1	21.4	18.2	7.7

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

Demographics

Area of City (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
South	32.9	Male	49.6	Under \$40,000	27.4	H-School/less	19.2	18-29	23.5
North	28.2	Female	49.8	\$40-100,000	47.7	Some P-Sec.	20.1	30-44	15.7
West	38.9	Other	0.6	Over \$100,000	25.0	Col-Tech-Grad	30.6	45-64	34.1
						University Grad	30.1	65 or older	26.6

Church Attendance (%)	
2-3/month/more	36.3
Several per year	19.8
Rarely or never	44.0

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

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)