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Fall 2005 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study








Lethbridge Social Issues Report

October 15, 2005

Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 77,202 residents (2005 municipal census) approximately 79% of which are 18 years of age or older (61,250 est.). A total of 37,546 residents are male (48.6%) while 39,656 are female (51.4%). South Lethbridge is home to 27,894 residents (36.1%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 26,407 residents (34.2%). There are 22,911 north Lethbridge residents (29.7%).
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge Community College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College. In the fall of 2005 Students interviewed 584 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge on October 1st and 2nd 2005 by telephone using the Western Wats Lethbridge call center facility. Telephone numbers were selected using random predictive dialing from a sample drawn from the Telus Superpages. We sincerely thank Western Wats for their hospitality.
-  **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 where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender and area of the city).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of $\pm 4\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.
-  **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 LCC. This particular set of questions arose out of student interest and our ongoing tracking of Lethbridge residents' opinion on important public policy issues.

Social Issues

-  **Same-sex Marriage** A slight majority of Lethbridge residents (50.8%) now support the continued legalization of same-sex marriages. Women, west side residents, upper income, higher educated and young Lethbridge residents are most supportive.
-  **Abortion Choice** A very strong majority of Lethbridge residents support abortion choice (75.4%). Few differences in opinion are measured between demographic groups although upper income, college graduates, and baby boomers tend to be most supportive.
-  **Capital Punishment** A majority of Lethbridge residents support a return to capital punishment for criminals convicted of first-degree murder (60.6%). North side residents, middle-income earners and seniors are most supportive, university grads and the youth are least supportive.
-  **Legal Medical Marijuana** A strong majority of Lethbridge residents support legal marijuana for medical purposes (71.3%). Middle-income earners, university grads and gen-xers are most supportive.
-  **Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana** Slightly more than one-third of Lethbridge residents support decriminalizing marijuana for recreational purposes (34.2%). Men, the youth, and upper-income residents are most supportive. College graduates and seniors are most opposed.
-  **Get Tough With Serious Young Offenders** A strong majority of Lethbridge residents believe young offenders convicted of serious crimes should receive sentences similar to those given to adult offenders (74.6%). Men, north Lethbridge residents, middle-income, and middle-aged residents are most supportive.
-  **Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide** A clear majority of Lethbridge residents support legalizing doctor-assisted suicide for people suffering from terminal illnesses (67.9%). Men, middle-income, college grads, and gen-xers are most supportive.

Same-sex Marriage	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	–	–	33.5	–	–	38.9	40.5	45.0	39.4	50.8
Disagree	–	–	66.5	–	–	61.1	59.5	55.0	60.6	49.2

Abortion Choice	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	76.8	74.5	73.5	75.7	69.9	71.9	75.3	73.3	70.3	75.4
Disagree	23.2	25.5	26.5	24.3	30.1	28.1	24.7	26.7	29.7	24.6

Capital Punishment	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	58.1	65.3	68.1	59.5	60.8	60.8	60.6	60.0	56.4	60.6
Disagree	41.9	34.7	31.9	40.5	39.2	39.2	39.4	40.0	43.6	39.4

Legal medical marijuana	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	62.0	–	–	70.8	73.1	73.4	72.0	73.3	70.4	71.7
Disagree	38.0	–	–	29.2	26.9	26.6	28.0	26.7	29.6	28.3

Legalize rec.-marijuana	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	24.7	–	–	28.1	36.1	34.2	35.2	37.6	31.5	34.2
Disagree	75.3	–	–	71.9	63.9	65.8	64.8	62.4	68.5	65.8

Tougher with youth crime	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	92.7	–	–	–	–	–	82.0	76.1	74.4	74.6
Disagree	7.3	–	–	–	–	–	18.0	23.9	25.6	25.4

Doctor-assisted suicide	Feb. '01	Oct. '01	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05
Agree	–	–	55.4	–	–	–	–	60.7	59.2	67.9
Disagree	–	–	44.6	–	–	–	–	39.3	40.8	32.1

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

Same-sex marriage by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	49.3	52.2	50.8
Disagree	50.7	47.8	49.2

	South	North	West
Agree	43.7	50.6	58.1
Disagree	56.3	49.4	41.9

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	49.2	51.3	57.8
Disagree	50.8	48.7	42.2

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	35.0	58.4	44.6	61.1
Disagree	65.0	41.6	55.4	38.9

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	65.9	53.0	47.1	25.0
Disagree	34.1	47.0	52.9	75.0

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	76.6	74.2	75.4
Disagree	23.4	25.8	24.6

	South	North	West
Agree	75.8	74.1	76.0
Disagree	24.2	25.9	24.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	70.6	77.5	81.8
Disagree	29.4	22.5	18.2

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	65.9	77.3	81.4	76.9
Disagree	34.1	22.7	18.6	23.1

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	71.1	77.8	78.8	72.4
Disagree	28.9	22.2	21.2	27.6

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	61.5	59.7	60.6
Disagree	38.5	40.3	39.4

	South	North	West
Agree	58.6	67.1	56.5
Disagree	41.4	32.9	43.5

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	58.5	65.5	53.7
Disagree	41.5	34.5	46.3

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	72.6	55.8	74.3	44.5
Disagree	27.4	44.2	25.7	55.5

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	52.8	57.8	66.5	68.2
Disagree	47.2	42.2	33.5	31.8

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

Medical marijuana by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	71.4	72.0	71.7
Disagree	28.6	28.0	28.3

	South	North	West
Agree	68.8	74.7	71.8
Disagree	31.3	25.3	28.2

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	67.9	77.1	72.7
Disagree	32.1	22.9	27.3

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	69.6	69.8	67.5	78.5
Disagree	30.4	30.2	32.5	21.5

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	72.7	78.7	67.7	67.1
Disagree	27.3	21.3	32.3	32.9

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

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	38.3	30.1	34.2
Disagree	61.7	69.9	65.8

	South	North	West
Agree	34.5	33.9	34.2
Disagree	65.5	66.1	65.8

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	30.4	37.0	38.9
Disagree	69.6	63.0	61.1

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	40.1	32.4	24.8	38.6
Disagree	59.9	67.6	75.2	61.4

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	41.3	40.8	27.9	22.6
Disagree	58.7	59.2	72.1	77.4

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

Increase penalties for young offenders by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	77.9	71.5	74.6
Disagree	22.1	28.5	25.4

	South	North	West
Agree	72.3	81.8	70.9
Disagree	27.7	18.2	29.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	74.6	77.8	67.3
Disagree	25.4	22.2	32.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	79.6	72.8	78.3	69.4
Disagree	20.4	27.2	21.7	30.6

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	71.1	79.3	78.3	67.5
Disagree	28.9	20.7	21.7	32.5

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

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (October 2005)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Agree	71.3	64.7	67.9
Disagree	28.7	35.3	32.1

	South	North	West
Agree	69.2	67.5	66.8
Disagree	30.8	32.5	33.2

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Agree	60.2	75.1	73.8
Disagree	39.8	24.9	26.2

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	61.3	67.9	76.4	67.6
Disagree	38.7	32.1	23.6	32.4

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	63.3	75.7	70.6	58.1
Disagree	36.7	24.3	29.4	41.9

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

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.3	South	36.0	Under \$30,000	34.8	H-School/less	23.8	18-29	30.5
Female	51.7	North	29.7	\$30-\$70,000	44.3	Some P-Sec.	29.9	30-44	20.9
		West	34.3	Over \$70,000	21.0	Col-Tech-Grad	20.3	45-64	33.2
						University Grad	26.1	65 or older	15.3

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 between a woman and her doctor.

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

Marijuana should be legal for medical purposes.

Marijuana should be decriminalized for recreational purposes.

Young offenders convicted of serious crimes should receive sentences similar to those given to adult offenders.

People with terminal illnesses should be allowed to legally access doctor assisted suicides.