



Opinion on Six Policy Items

Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2016

February 2016

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Lethbridge Opinion Structure on Six Policy Issues

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Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 94,804 residents (2015 census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (75,840). A total of 46,394 Lethbridge residents are male (49%) while 48,410 are female (51%). South Lethbridge is home to 31,337 residents (33.1%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 36,716 residents (38.7%). There are 26,751 north Lethbridge residents (28.2%).
-  **Sample Data** Collected by Lethbridge College students enrolled in a variety of social science courses in the winter of 2015. Students interviewed 834 randomly selected, adult Lethbridge residents by telephone from February 6–10, 2016 under the supervision of School of Liberal Arts faculty member Faron Ellis. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes for samples from previous Lethbridge and Alberta Public Opinion Studies can be obtained by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/go/csrl.
-  **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 weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 3.37 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.
-  **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre.
-  **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 and faculty interest in the topics.

Policy Issues - Summary



Same-sex Marriage

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (74.2%) continue to 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 (77.2%), the non-religious (87.5%), upper income residents (82.0%), university graduates (81.3%), the youth (83.4%) and Provincial NDP voters (95.1%) are most supportive. Highly religious (51.7%) and lower income (65.9%) residents, seniors (63.7%), and provincial Wildrose (61.4% and PC (62.7%) voters are among the least supportive, although majorities of each of those groups is supportive.



Abortion Choice

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (79.7%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (80.6%) are just as supportive as are women (78.7%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories demonstrate strong support. No significant age differences of opinion are evident. Religion is the most important determinant of opinion on this issue with only a slight majority of the very religious (53.6%) supportive. Support climbs to 90.6% among the somewhat religious, peaking at 94.0% among the non-religious. Some partisan differences are measured with provincial PC (77.3%) and Wildrose (68.2%) partisans somewhat less supportive than are provincial Liberal (85.4%) and NDP (88.0%) voters, although strong majorities of all provincial partisans remain supportive.



Capital Punishment

A majority of Lethbridge residents (59.4%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Religion, education, area of the city, and provincial partisanship are the most important determinants of opinion on this issue. For example, the very religious (44.7%) are much less supportive than are the moderately religious (66.7%) and the non-religious (66.8%). North Lethbridge residents (71.4%) are more supportive than are south (54.8%) and west (54.7%) Lethbridge residents. Majorities of university grads (56.9%) and provincial NDP voters (59.2%) are opposed, while substantial majorities of provincial PC (64.2%) and Wildrose (70.7%) voters support reinstating capital punishment.



Legal Medical Marijuana

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (81.2%) support marijuana remaining legal for medical purposes. Although strong majorities in all demographic categories are supportive, support is tempered somewhat amongst the most religious (68.6%), but a substantial majority of even this groups remain supportive.



Legal Recreational Marijuana

Support for legalizing recreational marijuana dropped slightly to less than a majority (43.9%) after steadily increasing for the past six years. Support is strongest among men (51.3%), the non-religious (58.7%), and the youth (58.5%). Opposition is strongest among seniors (72.5%), provincial PC (65.7%) and Wildrose (69.7%) voters, and the very religious (74.2%).



Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (76.9%) support legal doctor-assisted suicide. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion. A slim majority of the non-religious are opposed (52.1%). Support climbs to more than 9 out of every 10 residents with less religion. Substantial majorities of all other demographic groups are supportive.

Opinion on Six Policy Items 2002–2016 (%)

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

| Abortion Choice | 2003 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 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 |
| 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 |

| Capital Punishment | 2003 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 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 |
| 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 |

| Marijuana-medical | 2003 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 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 |
| 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 |

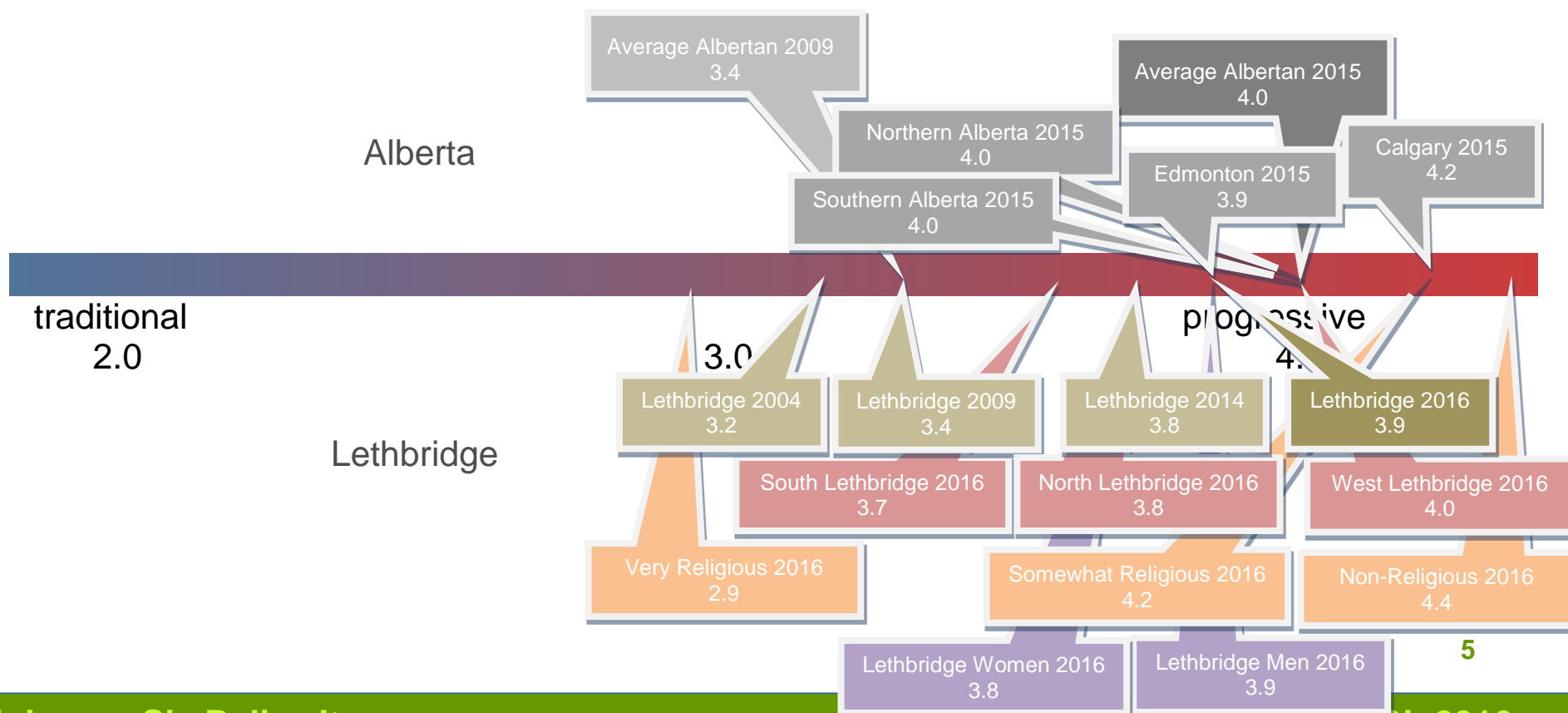
| Marijuana-recreation | 2003 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| Agree | 36.1 | 31.5 | 37.9 | 33.4 | 35.4 | 35.8 | 39.0 | 38.9 | 38.6 | 42.0 | 47.3 | 51.1 | 43.9 |
| 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 |

| Doctor-ass't suicide | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 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 |
| 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 |

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 2015 Alberta-wide data featured above the bar and 2016 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. In fact, from 2009 through 2015, Lethbridge opinion most closely mirrors that of the province as a whole than does any other region. Over the course of a decade, Lethbridge public opinion has moved considerably towards the progressive end of the spectrum (3.2 in 2004, to 3.4 in 2009, to 3.9 in 2016).
- Lethbridge men (3.9) are somewhat more progressive than are Lethbridge women (3.8), while west Lethbridge (4.0) is somewhat more progressive than north (3.8) or south (3.7) Lethbridge.



Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2016) (%)

| Gender* | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 71.0 | 77.2 | 74.2 |
| Disagree | 29.0 | 22.8 | 25.8 |

| Area* | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 67.8 | 74.3 | 79.3 |
| Disagree | 32.2 | 25.7 | 20.7 |

| Household Income* | Under \$40,000 | \$40,001 to \$100,000 | Over \$100,000 |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Agree | 65.9 | 73.9 | 82.0 |
| Disagree | 34.1 | 26.1 | 18.0 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 51.7 | 82.2 | 87.5 |
| Disagree | 48.3 | 17.8 | 12.5 |

| Education* | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 70.6 | 74.8 | 69.3 | 81.3 |
| Disagree | 29.4 | 25.2 | 30.7 | 18.8 |

| Age* | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 83.4 | 74.5 | 78.3 | 63.7 |
| Disagree | 16.6 | 25.5 | 21.7 | 36.3 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 95.1 | 61.4 | 62.7 | 80.9 | 81.1 |
| Disagree | 4.9 | 38.6 | 37.3 | 19.1 | 18.9 |

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2016) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 80.6 | 78.7 | 79.7 |
| Disagree | 19.4 | 21.3 | 20.3 |

| Area* | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 74.0 | 84.1 | 81.4 |
| Disagree | 26.0 | 15.9 | 18.6 |

| Household Income* | Under \$40,000 | \$40,001 to \$100,000 | Over \$100,000 |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Agree | 70.6 | 80.9 | 84.1 |
| Disagree | 29.4 | 19.1 | 15.9 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 53.6 | 90.6 | 94.0 |
| Disagree | 46.4 | 9.4 | 6.0 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 86.5 | 76.8 | 77.5 | 80.4 |
| Disagree | 13.5 | 23.2 | 22.5 | 19.6 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 76.4 | 78.1 | 85.1 | 79.2 |
| Disagree | 23.6 | 21.9 | 14.9 | 20.8 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 88.0 | 68.2 | 77.3 | 85.4 | 78.9 |
| Disagree | 12.0 | 31.8 | 22.7 | 14.6 | 21.1 |

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2016) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 58.4 | 60.3 | 59.4 |
| Disagree | 41.6 | 39.7 | 40.6 |

| Area* | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 54.8 | 71.4 | 54.7 |
| Disagree | 45.2 | 28.6 | 45.3 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 57.8 | 60.9 | 53.9 |
| Disagree | 42.2 | 39.1 | 46.1 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 44.7 | 66.7 | 66.8 |
| Disagree | 55.3 | 33.3 | 33.2 |

| Education* | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 76.6 | 57.2 | 68.4 | 43.1 |
| Disagree | 23.4 | 42.8 | 31.6 | 56.9 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 60.0 | 53.2 | 59.7 | 64.2 |
| Disagree | 40.0 | 46.8 | 40.3 | 35.8 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 40.8 | 70.7 | 64.2 | 59.8 | 65.7 |
| Disagree | 59.2 | 29.3 | 35.8 | 40.2 | 34.3 |

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

Medical marijuana by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 80.8 | 81.8 | 81.2 |
| Disagree | 19.3 | 18.2 | 18.8 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 78.9 | 84.0 | 81.2 |
| Disagree | 21.1 | 16.0 | 18.8 |

| Household Income* | Under \$40,000 | \$40,001 to \$100,000 | Over \$100,000 |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Agree | 75.3 | 81.8 | 87.0 |
| Disagree | 24.7 | 18.2 | 13.0 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 68.6 | 87.7 | 89.4 |
| Disagree | 31.4 | 12.3 | 10.6 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 76.2 | 86.4 | 77.1 | 84.0 |
| Disagree | 23.8 | 13.6 | 22.9 | 16.0 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 79.1 | 82.0 | 85.5 | 77.8 |
| Disagree | 20.9 | 18.0 | 14.5 | 22.2 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 90.9 | 78.2 | 71.3 | 92.2 | 83.8 |
| Disagree | 9.1 | 21.8 | 28.7 | 7.8 | 16.2 |

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

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (February 2016) (%)

| Gender* | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 51.3 | 36.7 | 43.9 |
| Disagree | 48.7 | 63.3 | 56.1 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 45.5 | 42.5 | 43.4 |
| Disagree | 54.5 | 57.5 | 56.6 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,001 to \$100,000 | Over \$100,000 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Agree | 43.4 | 37.3 | 50.7 |
| Disagree | 56.6 | 62.7 | 49.3 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 25.8 | 45.8 | 58.2 |
| Disagree | 74.2 | 54.2 | 41.8 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 39.9 | 55.5 | 33.7 | 45.8 |
| Disagree | 60.1 | 44.5 | 66.3 | 54.2 |

| Age* | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 58.5 | 42.6 | 46.7 | 27.5 |
| Disagree | 41.5 | 57.4 | 53.3 | 72.5 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 58.1 | 30.3 | 34.3 | 61.5 | 40.8 |
| Disagree | 41.9 | 69.7 | 65.7 | 38.5 | 59.2 |

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

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|------------|
| Agree | 77.7 | 76.4 | 76.9 |
| Disagree | 22.3 | 23.6 | 23.1 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 71.5 | 81.3 | 78.3 |
| Disagree | 28.5 | 18.7 | 21.7 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,001 to \$100,000 | Over \$100,000 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Agree | 72.4 | 78.1 | 79.6 |
| Disagree | 27.6 | 21.9 | 20.4 |

| Religious Attendance* | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 47.9 | 89.1 | 93.6 |
| Disagree | 52.1 | 10.9 | 6.4 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 79.7 | 73.8 | 78.2 | 78.0 |
| Disagree | 20.3 | 26.2 | 21.8 | 22.0 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 76.0 | 74.9 | 82.6 | 75.0 |
| Disagree | 24.0 | 25.1 | 17.4 | 25.0 |

| Provincial Vote* | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Agree | 87.6 | 65.1 | 70.9 | 81.8 | 83.8 |
| Disagree | 12.4 | 34.9 | 29.1 | 18.2 | 16.2 |

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

Demographics

| Gender (%) | | Area of City (%) | | Income (%) | | Education (%) | | Age (%) | |
|------------|------|------------------|------|----------------|------|-----------------|------|-------------|------|
| Male | 48.8 | South | 32.8 | Under \$40,000 | 25.5 | H-School/less | 18.4 | 18-29 | 23.7 |
| Female | 51.2 | North | 27.4 | \$40-100,000 | 43.6 | Some P-Sec. | 26.4 | 30-44 | 24.2 |
| | | West | 39.8 | Over \$100,000 | 30.9 | Col-Tech-Grad | 25.3 | 45-64 | 28.9 |
| | | | | | | University Grad | 29.9 | 65 or older | 23.2 |

| Church Attendance (%) | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 2-3/month + | 36.6 |
| Several/year | 17.7 |
| Rarely/never | 45.7 |

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 legal for recreational purposes.

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

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