



Social Issues Report







Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2009

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Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 83,960 residents (2008 municipal census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (67,168). A total of 41,160 Lethbridge residents are male (49.0%) while 42,800 are female (51.0%). South Lethbridge is home to 29,773 residents (35.5%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 29,673 residents (35.3%). There are 24,514 north Lethbridge residents (29.2%).
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods in the winter of 2008. Students interviewed 637 adult city of Lethbridge residents by telephone on February 4, 7 and 8, 2009 under the supervision of School of Liberal Arts faculty members Faron Ellis, PhD and Marda Schindeler, MA. Telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoCanada directories. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time out of their day to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes for samples from previous Lethbridge 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 where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender, age and area of the city of Lethbridge).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 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** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre and applications developed by the Open Source Learning Lab. We thank Dr. James Manis and the OSLL for their efforts in working with us to establish and maintain the 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 question was derived from the research interests of College students and faculty.

Social Issues

Same-sex Marriage

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (58.7%) continue to support same-sex marriages having equal legal status with traditional marriages. Support for same-sex marriages has increased significantly from only 33.5% in 2002 when we first asked Lethbridge residents about this issue. West Lethbridge residents (65.0%), women (61.8%), the least religious (72.4%), the youth (72.3%) and those with a university education (71.0%) are most supportive. Religion, age, education and federal vote intention remain the most important predictors of opinion on this issue.

Abortion Choice

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (76.2%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (78.7%) are just as supportive as are women (73.8%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories also demonstrate strong support. Religion is the most important deterrent of opinion on this issue with (88.4%) support among the least religious, dropping to only (48.3%) among the most religious.

Capital Punishment

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (58.1%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Support is strongest in north Lethbridge (67.6%), among those with the least amount of formal education (78.5%), seniors (69.1%) and Conservative party supporters (68.5%).

Legal Medical Marijuana

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (74.7%) support marijuana being legal for medical purposes. Support is strongest with upper income residents (77.4%), university grads (78.6%), and the youth (81.2%).

Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana

More than one-third of all Lethbridge residents (35.8%) support decriminalizing marijuana for recreational purposes. Support is strongest among men (40.8%), the least religious (45.7%), university grads (41.4%), and the youth (46.2%).

Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide

A majority of Lethbridge residents (61.7%) support making doctor-assisted suicide legal in Canada. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion with fully three-quarters (79.1%) of the least religious respondents supportive. Support drops to less than one-third (29.2%) among the most religious.

Social Issues (%)

| Same-sex Marriage | Feb. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | 33.5 | – | 38.9 | 40.5 | 45.0 | 39.4 | 50.8 | 53.4 | 51.7 | 52.2 | 54.1 | 60.0 | 58.7 |
| Disagree | 66.5 | – | 61.1 | 59.5 | 55.0 | 60.6 | 49.2 | 46.6 | 48.3 | 47.8 | 45.9 | 40.0 | 41.3 |

| Abortion Choice | Oct. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | 75.7 | 69.9 | 71.9 | 75.3 | 73.3 | 70.3 | 75.4 | 74.8 | 73.0 | 77.9 | 75.0 | 78.0 | 76.2 |
| Disagree | 24.3 | 30.1 | 28.1 | 24.7 | 26.7 | 29.7 | 24.6 | 25.2 | 27.0 | 22.1 | 25.0 | 22.0 | 23.8 |

| Capital Punishment | Oct. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | 59.5 | 60.8 | 60.8 | 60.6 | 60.0 | 56.4 | 60.6 | 58.4 | 62.9 | 60.9 | 57.6 | 58.7 | 58.1 |
| Disagree | 40.5 | 39.2 | 39.2 | 39.4 | 40.0 | 43.6 | 39.4 | 41.6 | 37.1 | 39.1 | 42.4 | 41.3 | 41.9 |

| Marijuana-medical | Oct. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | 70.8 | 73.1 | 73.4 | 72.0 | 73.3 | 70.4 | 71.7 | 72.6 | 73.7 | 75.8 | 74.8 | 75.5 | 74.7 |
| Disagree | 29.2 | 26.9 | 26.6 | 28.0 | 26.7 | 29.6 | 28.3 | 27.4 | 26.3 | 24.2 | 25.2 | 24.5 | 25.3 |

| Marijuana-recreation | Oct. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | 28.1 | 36.1 | 34.2 | 35.2 | 37.6 | 31.5 | 34.2 | 36.3 | 37.9 | 33.4 | 35.4 | 38.0 | 35.8 |
| Disagree | 71.9 | 63.9 | 65.8 | 64.8 | 62.4 | 68.5 | 65.8 | 63.7 | 62.1 | 66.6 | 64.6 | 62.0 | 64.2 |

| Doctor-ass't suicide | Oct. '02 | Feb. '03 | Oct. '03 | Feb. '04 | Oct. '04 | Feb. '05 | Oct. '05 | Feb. '06 | Oct. '06 | Oct. '07 | Feb. '08 | Oct. '08 | Feb. '09 |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Agree | – | – | – | – | 60.7 | 59.2 | 67.9 | 62.3 | 63.4 | 63.9 | 61.5 | 61.5 | 61.7 |
| Disagree | – | – | – | – | 39.3 | 40.8 | 32.1 | 37.7 | 36.6 | 36.1 | 38.5 | 38.5 | 38.3 |

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

Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 55.3 | 61.8 | 58.7 |
| Disagree | 44.7 | 38.2 | 41.3 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 57.2 | 52.5 | 65.0 |
| Disagree | 42.8 | 47.5 | 35.0 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 54.9 | 60.1 | 61.4 |
| Disagree | 45.1 | 39.9 | 38.6 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 35.6 | 62.7 | 72.4 |
| Disagree | 64.4 | 37.3 | 27.6 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 50.7 | 59.9 | 49.7 | 71.0 |
| Disagree | 49.3 | 40.1 | 50.3 | 29.0 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 72.3 | 60.4 | 56.2 | 47.8 |
| Disagree | 27.7 | 39.6 | 43.8 | 52.2 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 43.8 | 76.9 | 91.9 | 73.5 | 68.3 |
| Disagree | 56.2 | 23.1 | 8.1 | 26.5 | 31.7 |

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 78.7 | 73.8 | 76.2 |
| Disagree | 21.3 | 26.3 | 23.8 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 76.7 | 70.7 | 79.7 |
| Disagree | 23.3 | 29.3 | 20.3 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 77.3 | 73.2 | 80.0 |
| Disagree | 22.7 | 26.8 | 20.0 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 48.3 | 85.6 | 88.4 |
| Disagree | 51.7 | 14.4 | 11.6 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 74.3 | 75.3 | 76.4 | 78.1 |
| Disagree | 25.7 | 24.7 | 23.6 | 21.9 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 73.1 | 76.4 | 77.2 | 77.4 |
| Disagree | 26.9 | 23.6 | 22.8 | 22.6 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 69.6 | 88.0 | 88.7 | 90.3 | 70.5 |
| Disagree | 30.4 | 12.0 | 11.3 | 9.7 | 29.5 |

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 61.0 | 55.1 | 58.1 |
| Disagree | 39.0 | 44.9 | 41.9 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 57.7 | 67.6 | 50.5 |
| Disagree | 42.3 | 32.4 | 49.5 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 57.7 | 58.1 | 55.8 |
| Disagree | 42.3 | 41.9 | 44.2 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 55.7 | 56.8 | 59.2 |
| Disagree | 44.3 | 43.2 | 40.8 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 78.5 | 49.3 | 65.8 | 42.9 |
| Disagree | 21.5 | 50.7 | 34.2 | 57.1 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 41.8 | 55.8 | 63.5 | 69.1 |
| Disagree | 58.2 | 44.2 | 36.5 | 30.9 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 68.5 | 41.7 | 33.9 | 45.5 | 58.1 |
| Disagree | 31.5 | 58.3 | 66.1 | 54.5 | 41.9 |

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

Medical marijuana by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 76.5 | 73.0 | 74.7 |
| Disagree | 23.5 | 27.0 | 25.3 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 72.1 | 79.0 | 73.8 |
| Disagree | 27.9 | 21.0 | 26.2 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 73.9 | 75.6 | 77.4 |
| Disagree | 26.1 | 24.4 | 22.6 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 55.3 | 78.4 | 85.9 |
| Disagree | 44.7 | 21.6 | 14.1 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 74.1 | 73.8 | 71.8 | 78.6 |
| Disagree | 25.9 | 26.2 | 28.2 | 21.4 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 81.2 | 71.4 | 78.3 | 66.7 |
| Disagree | 18.8 | 28.6 | 21.7 | 33.3 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 67.8 | 83.0 | 93.5 | 76.5 | 75.0 |
| Disagree | 32.2 | 17.0 | 6.5 | 23.5 | 25.0 |

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

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 40.8 | 30.8 | 35.8 |
| Disagree | 59.2 | 69.2 | 64.2 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 32.7 | 38.8 | 36.3 |
| Disagree | 67.3 | 61.2 | 63.7 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 40.4 | 30.5 | 39.1 |
| Disagree | 59.6 | 69.5 | 60.9 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 20.6 | 35.5 | 45.7 |
| Disagree | 79.4 | 64.5 | 54.3 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 33.6 | 39.4 | 28.0 | 41.4 |
| Disagree | 66.4 | 60.6 | 72.0 | 58.6 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 46.2 | 34.2 | 34.1 | 29.9 |
| Disagree | 53.8 | 65.8 | 65.9 | 70.1 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 46.2 | 34.2 | 34.1 | 29.9 | 46.2 |
| Disagree | 53.8 | 65.8 | 65.9 | 70.1 | 53.8 |

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

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (February 2009) (%)

| Gender | Male | Female | All Lethbridge |
|----------|------|--------|----------------|
| Agree | 63.9 | 59.4 | 61.7 |
| Disagree | 36.1 | 40.6 | 38.3 |

| Area | South Lethbridge | North Lethbridge | West Lethbridge |
|----------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 70.2 | 61.7 | 53.5 |
| Disagree | 29.8 | 38.3 | 46.5 |

| Household Income | Under \$40,000 | \$40,000 to \$80,000 | Over \$80,000 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Agree | 56.1 | 56.9 | 72.4 |
| Disagree | 43.9 | 43.1 | 27.6 |

| Religious Attendance | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Agree | 29.2 | 62.4 | 79.1 |
| Disagree | 70.8 | 37.6 | 20.9 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post Secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Agree | 63.0 | 55.1 | 61.5 | 66.3 |
| Disagree | 37.0 | 44.9 | 38.5 | 33.7 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Agree | 49.2 | 62.4 | 69.2 | 62.3 |
| Disagree | 50.8 | 37.6 | 30.8 | 37.7 |

| Federal Vote Intention | Conservative | Liberal | NDP | Green | Undecided |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Agree | 49.2 | 62.4 | 69.2 | 62.3 | 49.2 |
| Disagree | 50.8 | 37.6 | 30.8 | 37.7 | 50.8 |

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

Demographics

| Gender (%) | | Area of City (%) | | Income (%) | | Education (%) | | Age (%) | |
|------------|------|------------------|------|----------------|------|-----------------|------|-------------|------|
| Male | 48.6 | South | 35.0 | Under \$40,000 | 32.4 | H-School/less | 21.8 | 18-29 | 21.0 |
| Female | 51.4 | North | 29.2 | \$40-\$80,000 | 39.5 | Some P-Sec. | 23.2 | 30-44 | 24.1 |
| | | West | 35.8 | Over \$80,000 | 28.1 | Col-Tech-Grad | 25.1 | 45-64 | 32.5 |
| | | | | | | University Grad | 29.8 | 65 or older | 22.4 |

| Federal Vote Intention (%) | | Religious Participation (%) | |
|----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| Conservative | 57.5 | 2-3/month-more | 29.6 |
| Liberal | 18.6 | Several/year | 20.4 |
| NDP | 10.6 | Rarely-never | 49.9 |
| Green | 5.7 | | |
| Undecided | 7.7 | | |

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.

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