



## Social Issues Report

### Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2010







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# Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 85,492 residents (2009 municipal census) approximately 80.1% of which are 18 years of age or older (68,988). A total of 41,967 Lethbridge residents are male (49.1%) while 43,525 are female (50.9%). South Lethbridge is home to 30,168 residents (35.3%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 30,489 residents (35.7%). There are 24,835 north Lethbridge residents (29.0%). Coaldale has a total population of 6,943 residents (2009 Census).
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods in the winter of 2010. Students interviewed 888 adult Lethbridge and Coaldale residents by telephone on February 6 – 8, 2010 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 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](http://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  $\pm 3.27$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data. For example, the margin of error is  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20 for the Lethbridge subsample and  $\pm 8.8$  percentage points for the Coaldale subsample.
-  **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 OSL 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 (62.3%) 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. Women (68.5%), the least religious (77.3%), the youth (68.6%) and those with a university education (76.8%) are most supportive. Religion, age and education remain the most important predictors of opinion on this issue. Coaldale residents are more evenly split on this issue with 49.7% supporting equal same-sex marriage and 50.3% opposed. Opinion is also divided along partisan lines with slight majorities of PC (52.8%) and Wildrose Alliance supporters (51.3%) are opposed, while substantial majorities of Liberal (78.5%) and NDP supporters (80.0%) are supportive.

### **Abortion Choice**

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (79.2%) and Coaldale residents (74.7%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (81.5%) are just as supportive as are women (77.2%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories also demonstrate strong support. Religion is the most important determinant of opinion on this issue with 58.6% support among the least religious, but climbing to 90.0% support among the most religious. Few partisan differences are measured on this issue.

### **Capital Punishment**

Clear majorities of Lethbridge (62.1%) and Coaldale residents (65.4%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Support is strongest in north Lethbridge (73.3%), among those with the least amount of formal education (78.3%), seniors (70.2%) and PC (71.4%) and Wildrose Alliance supporters (74.5%).

### **Legal Medical Marijuana**

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (80.1%) and Coaldale residents (81.0%) support marijuana being legal for medical purposes. Support is strongest with upper income residents (87.2%), university grads (86.3%), and boomers (84.4%).

### **Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana**

Approximately two in every five Lethbridge (39.0%) and Coaldale residents (42.3%) support decriminalizing marijuana for recreational purposes. Support is strongest among men (45.6%), the least religious (54.7%), university grads (42.0%), those with the least amount of education (46.9%), and Liberal (45.8%) and NDP (59.4%) supporters.

### **Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide**

Majorities of Lethbridge (67.0%) and Coaldale residents (60.1%) support making doctor-assisted suicide legal in Canada. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion with 84.2% of the least religious respondents supportive. Support drops to just over one-third (39.4%) among the most religious.

# Social Issues (%)

Same-sex Marriage	Feb. '02	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
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	<b>62.3</b>
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	<b>37.7</b>

Abortion Choice	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
Agree	69.9	71.9	75.3	73.3	70.3	75.4	74.8	73.0	77.9	75.0	78.0	76.2	<b>79.2</b>
Disagree	30.1	28.1	24.7	26.7	29.7	24.6	25.2	27.0	22.1	25.0	22.0	23.8	<b>20.8</b>

Capital Punishment	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
Agree	60.8	60.8	60.6	60.0	56.4	60.6	58.4	62.9	60.9	57.6	58.7	58.1	<b>62.1</b>
Disagree	39.2	39.2	39.4	40.0	43.6	39.4	41.6	37.1	39.1	42.4	41.3	41.9	<b>37.9</b>

Marijuana-medical	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
Agree	73.1	73.4	72.0	73.3	70.4	71.7	72.6	73.7	75.8	74.8	75.5	74.7	<b>80.1</b>
Disagree	26.9	26.6	28.0	26.7	29.6	28.3	27.4	26.3	24.2	25.2	24.5	25.3	<b>19.9</b>

Marijuana-recreation	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
Agree	36.1	34.2	35.2	37.6	31.5	34.2	36.3	37.9	33.4	35.4	38.0	35.8	<b>39.0</b>
Disagree	63.9	65.8	64.8	62.4	68.5	65.8	63.7	62.1	66.6	64.6	62.0	64.2	<b>61.0</b>

Doctor-ass't suicide	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10
Agree	—	—	—	60.7	59.2	67.9	62.3	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.5	61.7	<b>67.0</b>
Disagree	—	—	—	39.3	40.8	32.1	37.7	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.5	38.3	<b>33.0</b>

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

## Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	55.8	68.5	62.3	49.7
Disagree	44.2	31.5	37.7	50.3

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	64.9	58.9	62.8
Disagree	35.1	41.1	37.2

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	49.1	65.0	68.8
Disagree	50.9	35.0	31.2

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	36.4	65.1	77.3
Disagree	63.6	34.9	22.7

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	61.0	57.4	48.8	76.8
Disagree	39.0	42.6	51.2	23.2

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	68.6	64.3	66.0	47.7
Disagree	31.4	35.7	34.0	52.3

Provincial Vote*	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	47.2	78.5	80.0	48.7	72.3
Disagree	52.8	21.5	20.0	51.3	27.7

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

## Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	81.5	77.2	79.2	74.7
Disagree	18.5	22.8	20.8	25.3

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	80.8	77.4	78.9
Disagree	19.2	22.6	21.1

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	75.0	77.9	83.8
Disagree	25.0	22.1	16.2

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	58.6	83.4	90.0
Disagree	41.4	16.6	10.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	70.4	80.9	78.4	84.0
Disagree	29.6	19.1	21.6	16.0

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	80.6	78.2	79.6	78.3
Disagree	19.4	21.8	20.4	21.7

Provincial Vote	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	75.1	84.6	83.5	77.3	74.6
Disagree	24.9	15.4	16.5	22.7	25.4

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

## Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	64.9	59.2	62.1	65.4
Disagree	35.1	40.8	37.9	34.6

Area*	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	55.6	73.3	59.2
Disagree	44.4	26.7	40.8

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	70.5	64.8	50.9
Disagree	29.5	35.2	49.1

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	61.1	62.6	63.3
Disagree	38.9	37.4	36.7

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	78.3	62.1	68.6	47.0
Disagree	21.7	37.9	31.4	53.0

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	51.5	65.3	62.5	70.2
Disagree	48.5	34.7	37.5	29.8

Provincial Vote*	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	71.4	49.4	35.0	74.5	70.7
Disagree	28.6	50.6	65.0	25.5	29.3

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

## Medical marijuana by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	82.9	77.6	80.1	81.0
Disagree	17.1	22.4	19.9	19.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	81.6	77.4	81.1
Disagree	18.4	22.6	18.9

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	71.9	82.8	87.2
Disagree	28.1	17.2	12.8

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	65.5	82.0	88.0
Disagree	34.5	18.0	12.0

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	79.5	79.3	74.0	86.3
Disagree	20.5	20.7	26.0	13.7

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	77.4	81.6	84.4	74.9
Disagree	22.6	18.4	15.6	25.1

Provincial Vote*	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	74.1	90.5	87.9	78.0	76.9
Disagree	25.9	9.5	12.1	22.0	23.1

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



## Recreational marijuana by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	45.6	32.9	39.0	42.3
Disagree	54.4	67.1	61.0	57.7

Area*	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	45.3	36.1	35.4
Disagree	54.7	63.9	64.6

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	32.9	40.7	41.5
Disagree	67.1	59.3	58.5

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	20.0	35.0	54.7
Disagree	80.0	65.0	45.3

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	46.9	29.9	37.2	42.0
Disagree	53.1	70.1	62.8	58.0

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	40.2	41.8	43.3	28.0
Disagree	59.8	58.2	56.7	72.0

Provincial Vote*	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	27.6	45.8	59.4	33.5	35.7
Disagree	72.4	54.2	40.6	66.5	64.3

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

## Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (February 2010) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	69.6	64.6	67.0	60.1
Disagree	30.4	35.4	33.0	39.9

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	66.4	64.9	69.3
Disagree	33.6	35.1	30.7

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	59.2	63.6	77.2
Disagree	40.8	36.4	22.8

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	39.4	67.2	84.2
Disagree	60.6	32.8	15.8

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	60.6	60.8	70.6	72.2
Disagree	39.4	39.2	29.4	27.8

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	57.7	74.7	72.1	62.4
Disagree	42.3	25.3	27.9	37.6

Provincial Vote*	PC	Liberal	NDP	Wildrose Alliance	Undecided
Agree	61.5	69.3	76.1	69.4	67.0
Disagree	38.5	30.7	23.9	30.6	33.0

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

# Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.9	South	35.6	Under \$40,000	23.6	H-School/less	21.3	18-29	23.5
Female	51.1	North	29.1	\$40-\$80,000	44.2	Some P-Sec.	21.4	30-44	21.9
		West	35.3	Over \$80,000	32.2	Col-Tech-Grad	26.0	45-64	33.6
						University Grad	31.3	65 or older	21.1

Religious Participation (%)		Federal Vote Intention (%)		Provincial Vote Intention (%)	
2-3/month or more	30.8	Conservative	47.8	PC	29.0
Several/year	22.8	Liberal	19.8	Liberal	22.3
Rarely-never	46.4	NDP	10.2	NDP	12.4
		Green	9.3	Wildrose Alliance	20.9
		Undecided	13.0	Undecided	15.4

## 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.