



Social Issues Report







Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2011

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Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 86,659 residents (2010 municipal census) approximately 80% of which are 18 years of age or older (69,327). A total of 42,373 Lethbridge residents are male (48.9%) while 44,286 are female (51.1%). South Lethbridge is home to 30,144 residents (34.8%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 31,399 residents (36.2%). There are 25,116 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 2011. Students interviewed 771 randomly selected, adult Lethbridge and Coaldale residents by telephone on February 12–13, 2011 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
-  **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 ± 3.51 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data. For example, the Lethbridge subsample margin of error is ± 3.77 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, while the Coaldale subsample has a margin of error of ± 9.52 percentage points 19 times out of 20.
-  **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 Lethbridge College students and faculty.

Social Issues



Same-sex Marriage

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (64.2%) 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 (69.2%), the least religious (79.4%), the youth (69.6%) and those with a university education (75.5%) 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 50.9% supporting equal same-sex marriage and 49.1% opposed. Opinion is also divided along partisan lines with a majority of Wildrose Alliance supporters opposed (58.8%) and only a slim majority of PC (50.8%) supportive. However, substantial majorities of Liberal (79.1%) and NDP supporters (93.2%) are supportive.



Abortion Choice

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (74.6%) and Coaldale residents (69.3%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (72.3%) are almost as supportive as are women (75.7%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories demonstrate strong support. Religion is the most important determinant of opinion on this issue with a majority of the most religious opposed (53.4%). Support climbs to 89.9% among the most religious. Significant partisan differences are measured on this issue with PC (68.2%) and Wildrose Alliance (67.4%) partisans are less supportive than Liberal (78.4%) and NDP (90.4%) partisans.



Capital Punishment

Majorities of both Lethbridge (53.7%) and Coaldale residents (65.2%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Support is strongest in north Lethbridge (58.0%), among those with the least amount of formal education (72.2%), seniors (62.8%) and PC (65.1%) and Wildrose Alliance (75.9%) supporters.



Legal Medical Marijuana

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (73.5%) and Coaldale residents (68.0%) support marijuana being legal for medical purposes. Support is strongest with upper income residents (82.5%), university grads (76.3%), and boomers (77.1%).



Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana

Approximately two in every five Lethbridge (39.5%) and Coaldale residents (32.0%) support decriminalizing marijuana for recreational purposes. Support is strongest among men (41.6%), the least religious (51.5%), College, Technical and Trade School grads (45.3%), and Liberal (40.4%) and NDP (70.0%) supporters.



Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide

Majorities of Lethbridge (63.1%) and Coaldale residents (50.3%) support making doctor-assisted suicide legal in Canada. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion with 79.4% of the least religious respondents supportive. Support drops to just over one-third (37.3%) 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	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	33.5	38.9	40.5	45.0	39.4	50.8	53.4	51.7	52.2	54.1	58.7	62.3	64.2
Disagree	66.5	61.1	59.5	55.0	60.6	49.2	46.6	48.3	47.8	45.9	41.3	37.7	35.8

Abortion Choice	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	69.9	71.9	75.3	73.3	70.3	75.4	74.8	73.0	77.9	75.0	76.2	79.2	74.1
Disagree	30.1	28.1	24.7	26.7	29.7	24.6	25.2	27.0	22.1	25.0	23.8	20.8	25.9

Capital Punishment	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	60.8	60.8	60.6	60.0	56.4	60.6	58.4	62.9	60.9	57.6	58.1	62.1	54.8
Disagree	39.2	39.2	39.4	40.0	43.6	39.4	41.6	37.1	39.1	42.4	41.9	37.9	45.2

Marijuana-medical	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	73.1	73.4	72.0	73.3	70.4	71.7	72.6	73.7	75.8	74.8	74.7	80.1	73.0
Disagree	26.9	26.6	28.0	26.7	29.6	28.3	27.4	26.3	24.2	25.2	25.3	19.9	27.0

Marijuana-recreation	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	36.1	34.2	35.2	37.6	31.5	34.2	36.3	37.9	33.4	35.4	35.8	39.0	38.9
Disagree	63.9	65.8	64.8	62.4	68.5	65.8	63.7	62.1	66.6	64.6	64.2	61.0	61.1

Doctor-ass't suicide	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11
Agree	—	—	—	60.7	59.2	67.9	62.3	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.7	67.0	61.9
Disagree	—	—	—	39.3	40.8	32.1	37.7	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.3	33.0	38.1

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

Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	58.9	69.2	65.5	50.9
Disagree	41.1	30.8	34.5	49.1

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	61.8	66.3	68.2
Disagree	38.2	33.7	31.8

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	57.5	70.0	70.9
Disagree	42.5	30.0	29.1

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	38.7	75.3	79.4
Disagree	61.3	24.7	20.6

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	53.0	63.7	61.7	75.5
Disagree	47.0	36.3	38.3	24.5

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	69.6	71.9	67.0	50.0
Disagree	30.4	28.1	33.0	50.0

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	50.8	41.2	79.1	93.2	73.7
Disagree	49.2	58.8	20.9	6.8	26.3

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	72.5	75.7	74.6	69.3
Disagree	27.5	24.3	25.4	30.7

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	78.1	75.4	70.7
Disagree	21.9	24.6	29.3

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	67.1	76.2	79.1
Disagree	32.9	23.8	20.9

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	46.6	86.3	89.9
Disagree	53.4	13.7	10.1

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	75.7	73.0	74.1	73.8
Disagree	24.3	27.0	25.9	26.2

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	64.0	73.0	80.4	75.9
Disagree	36.0	27.0	19.6	24.1

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	68.2	67.4	78.4	90.4	72.9
Disagree	31.8	32.6	21.6	9.6	27.1

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	56.5	53.2	53.7	65.2
Disagree	43.5	46.8	46.3	34.8

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	55.7	58.0	48.5
Disagree	44.3	42.0	51.5

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	58.2	52.2	49.7
Disagree	41.8	47.8	50.3

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	51.0	59.8	54.7
Disagree	49.0	40.2	45.3

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	72.2	53.5	64.4	34.3
Disagree	27.8	46.5	35.6	65.7

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	40.7	52.2	58.3	62.8
Disagree	59.3	47.8	41.7	37.2

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	65.1	75.9	31.8	20.6	58.3
Disagree	34.9	24.1	68.2	79.4	41.7

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

Medical marijuana by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	70.4	75.5	73.5	68.0
Disagree	29.6	24.5	26.5	32.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	75.4	72.0	72.8
Disagree	24.6	28.0	27.2

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	68.0	79.2	73.7
Disagree	32.0	20.8	26.3

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	55.7	81.0	82.5
Disagree	44.3	19.0	17.5

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	67.1	72.8	75.3	76.3
Disagree	32.9	27.2	24.7	23.7

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	69.5	81.0	77.1	64.8
Disagree	30.5	19.0	22.9	35.2

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	59.9	70.6	73.2	94.5	74.8
Disagree	40.1	29.4	26.8	5.5	25.2

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

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	42.9	34.9	39.5	32.0
Disagree	57.1	65.1	60.5	68.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	41.6	38.5	38.3
Disagree	58.4	61.5	61.7

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	41.7	41.8	37.5
Disagree	58.3	58.2	62.5

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	25.2	31.1	51.5
Disagree	74.8	68.9	48.5

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	34.9	36.0	45.3	39.1
Disagree	65.1	64.0	54.7	60.9

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	43.9	48.0	39.5	27.3
Disagree	56.1	52.0	60.5	72.7

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	28.4	33.1	40.4	70.0	28.4
Disagree	71.6	66.9	59.6	30.0	71.6

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

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (February 2011) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	64.2	59.9	63.1	50.3
Disagree	35.8	40.1	36.9	49.7

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	63.6	57.9	67.0
Disagree	36.4	42.1	33.0

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	52.9	62.3	73.7
Disagree	47.1	37.7	26.3

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	37.3	63.3	79.4
Disagree	62.7	36.7	20.6

Education*	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	59.1	54.4	60.2	70.6
Disagree	40.9	45.6	39.8	29.4

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	47.3	68.5	69.9	58.8
Disagree	52.7	31.5	30.1	41.2

Provincial Vote	PC	Wildrose Alliance	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	55.1	56.3	63.9	77.8	64.8
Disagree	44.9	43.7	36.1	22.2	35.2

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

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	49.1	South	33.3	Under \$40,000	35.7	H-School/less	22.9	18-29	21.6
Female	50.9	North	30.1	\$40-\$80,000	34.6	Some P-Sec.	21.3	30-44	20.6
		West	36.6	Over \$80,000	29.6	Col-Tech-Grad	25.7	45-64	30.8
						University Grad	30.1	65 or older	27.0

Religious Participation (%)	
2-3/month or more	37.2
Several/year	15.0
Rarely-never	47.9

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.