



Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Fall 2008







Social Issues Report

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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 and PSC150 – Local Government in the fall of 2008. Students interviewed 955 adult city of Lethbridge residents by telephone on October 4 and 5, 2008 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 ± 3.15 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 (60.0%) now support same-sex marriages having equal legal status to traditional marriages. Support for same-sex marriages had almost doubled from only 33.5% in 2002 when we first asked Lethbridge residents about this issue. Women (63.5%), the least religious (73.9%), the youth (72.5%) and those with a university education (67.8%) are most supportive. Religion, age and education remain the most important predictors of opinion on this issue.



Abortion Choice

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (78.0%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (79.6%) are just as supportive as are women (76.5%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories also demonstrate strong support. Religion is the most important determinant of opinion on this issue with (91.0%) support among the least religious, dropping to only (53.5%) among the most religious.



Capital Punishment

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (58.7%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Support is strongest in north Lethbridge (72.4%), among those with the least amount of formal education (77.0%), older Lethbridge residents and Conservative party supporters (68.8%).



Legal Medical Marijuana

A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (75.5%) support marijuana being legal for medical purposes. Support is strongest with upper income residents (84.9%), university grads (79.2%), and the youth (83.2%).



Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana

More than one-third of all Lethbridge residents (38.0%) support decriminalizing marijuana for recreational purposes. Support is strongest among men (44.3%), the least religious (46.4%), university grads (43.5%), the youth (47.6%), and among Green (61.6%) and Liberal (57.1%) party supporters.



Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide

A majority of Lethbridge residents (61.5%) support making doctor-assisted suicide legal in Canada. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion on this issue with fully three-quarters (75.8%) of those with the least amount of religious participation supportive, dropping to only one-third (33.6%) support among the most religious.

Social Issues (%)

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

Abortion Choice	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08
Agree	73.5	75.7	69.9	71.9	75.3	73.3	70.3	75.4	74.8	73.0	77.9	75.0	78.0
Disagree	26.5	24.3	30.1	28.1	24.7	26.7	29.7	24.6	25.2	27.0	22.1	25.0	22.0

Capital Punishment	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08
Agree	68.1	59.5	60.8	60.8	60.6	60.0	56.4	60.6	58.4	62.9	60.9	57.6	58.7
Disagree	31.9	40.5	39.2	39.2	39.4	40.0	43.6	39.4	41.6	37.1	39.1	42.4	41.3

Marijuana-medical	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08
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
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

Marijuana-recreation	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08
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
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

Doctor-ass't suicide	Feb. '02	Oct. '02	Feb. '03	Oct. '03	Feb. '04	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '05	Feb. '06	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Oct. '08
Agree	55.4	—	—	—	—	60.7	59.2	67.9	62.3	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.5
Disagree	44.6	—	—	—	—	39.3	40.8	32.1	37.7	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.5

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

Same-sex marriage by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	56.4	63.5	60.0
Disagree	43.6	36.5	40.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	60.1	56.8	62.6
Disagree	39.9	43.2	37.4

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	55.6	63.1	65.8
Disagree	44.4	36.9	34.2

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	32.6	69.3	73.9
Disagree	67.4	30.7	26.1

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	58.3	60.2	52.7	67.8
Disagree	41.7	39.8	47.3	32.2

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	72.5	62.6	59.4	46.2
Disagree	27.5	37.4	40.6	53.8

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	49.0	77.1	72.3	81.5	54.1
Disagree	51.0	22.9	27.7	18.5	45.9

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

Abortion choice by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	79.6	76.5	78.0
Disagree	20.4	23.5	22.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	80.4	74.3	78.5
Disagree	19.6	25.7	21.5

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	80.6	70.5	87.3
Disagree	19.4	29.5	12.7

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	53.5	82.9	91.0
Disagree	46.5	17.1	9.0

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	75.5	79.9	77.2	79.0
Disagree	24.5	20.1	22.8	21.0

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	79.9	74.2	78.7	78.8
Disagree	20.1	25.8	21.3	21.2

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	75.5	80.9	79.7	85.1	78.8
Disagree	24.5	19.1	20.3	14.9	21.2

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

Capital punishment by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	62.3	55.0	58.7
Disagree	37.7	45.0	41.3

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	55.0	72.4	51.1
Disagree	45.0	27.6	48.9

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	58.3	60.0	57.3
Disagree	41.7	40.0	42.7

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	58.3	55.3	60.3
Disagree	41.7	44.7	39.7

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	77.0	53.6	64.4	41.9
Disagree	23.0	46.4	35.6	58.1

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	51.9	53.0	64.6	64.4
Disagree	48.1	47.0	35.4	35.6

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	68.8	43.6	48.0	50.0	55.0
Disagree	31.2	56.4	52.0	50.0	45.0

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

Medical marijuana by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	77.0	74.2	75.5
Disagree	23.0	25.8	24.5

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	75.8	73.1	77.5
Disagree	24.2	26.9	22.5

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	73.4	71.8	84.9
Disagree	26.6	28.2	15.1

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	57.9	80.9	84.6
Disagree	42.1	19.1	15.4

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	71.2	78.9	72.8	79.2
Disagree	28.8	21.1	27.2	20.8

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	83.2	72.1	79.5	65.0
Disagree	16.8	27.9	20.5	35.0

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	68.8	81.4	86.3	84.9	75.7
Disagree	31.2	18.6	13.7	15.1	24.3

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

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	44.3	32.0	38.0
Disagree	55.7	68.0	62.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	43.6	30.8	38.2
Disagree	56.4	69.2	61.8

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	39.4	41.0	36.9
Disagree	60.6	59.0	63.1

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	23.5	40.3	46.4
Disagree	76.5	59.7	53.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	40.6	37.9	30.0	43.5
Disagree	59.4	62.1	70.0	56.5

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	47.6	36.1	39.5	26.9
Disagree	52.4	63.9	60.5	73.1

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	28.6	57.1	47.2	61.6	28.6
Disagree	71.4	42.9	52.8	38.4	71.4

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

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (October 2008) (%)

Gender	Male	Female	All Lethbridge
Agree	62.0	61.2	61.5
Disagree	38.0	38.8	38.5

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	60.6	62.7	61.2
Disagree	39.4	37.3	38.8

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	60.1	61.6	67.1
Disagree	39.9	38.4	32.9

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	33.6	69.7	75.8
Disagree	66.4	30.3	24.2

Education	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	63.1	58.7	61.4	64.0
Disagree	36.9	41.3	38.6	36.0

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	56.6	60.7	67.8	59.4
Disagree	43.4	39.3	32.2	40.6

Federal Vote Intention	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Agree	56.9	64.8	76.2	67.5	54.1
Disagree	43.1	35.2	23.8	32.5	45.9

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

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.9	South	35.3	Under \$40,000	33.6	H-School/less	24.9	18-29	23.9
Female	51.1	North	29.4	\$40-\$80,000	36.8	Some P-Sec.	22.0	30-44	21.8
		West	35.3	Over \$80,000	29.6	Col-Tech-Grad	25.1	45-64	31.5
						University Grad	28.0	65 or older	22.9

Federal Vote Intention (%)		Religious Participation (%)	
Conservative	56.3	2-3/month-more	30.0
Liberal	16.5	Several/year	24.0
NDP	14.0	Rarely-never	46.0
Green	10.9		
Undecided	2.3		

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.