

KATE BROWN

b. June 21, 1960

GOVERNOR OF OREGON

“There’s no better place to fight for working families than the governor’s chair.”

She is the first openly bisexual governor in the United States.

Kate Brown is a Democrat and the first openly bisexual governor in the United States. Among other priorities, she fights for children and working families, environmental protections and LGBTQ+ rights.

Brown was born in Torrejón de Ardoz, Spain, where her father was serving in the U.S. Air Force. She grew up in Minnesota. Brown attended the University of Colorado Boulder and graduated in 1981 with a bachelor’s degree in environmental conservation and a certificate in women’s studies. Brown earned her J.D. with a certificate in environmental law in 1985 from Lewis & Clark’s Northwestern School of Law in Portland, Oregon.

After working as an attorney, Brown was elected in 1991 to the Oregon House of Representatives. She served two terms. In 1996 she ran for the state Senate and won. Her colleagues voted her Senate Democratic Leader in 1998.

Brown held her Senate seat for 12 years and, in 2004, became the first woman to serve as Senate majority leader. She relinquished her post to run for Oregon Secretary of State, winning in 2008.

As Secretary of State, Brown passed bills to reduce fraud, initiated online voter registration and provided disabled citizens with increased voting accessibility options, including iPads and tablets. In 2009 the Aspen Institute awarded her a Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership.

In 2015 Brown assumed the governorship of Oregon after her predecessor, Governor John Kitzhaber, resigned over an ethics investigation. She won a special election in 2016 to serve out the remainder of his term. Oregonians re-elected Governor Brown for a second term in 2018.

As the state’s leader, Governor Brown enhanced discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people; established the state’s Racial Justice Council; passed the Reproductive Health Equity Act to preserve and expand access to abortion and women’s health services; set some of the nation’s most aggressive goals to address climate change; established the Child Welfare Oversight Board; expanded health care to cover all children; and more.

In July 2021 President Joe Biden appointed her chair of the Disaster Response and Emergency Management Group of the President’s Council of Governors.

Brown and her husband, Dan Little, married in 1997. She helped raise his two children.

