

CHASTEN BUTTIGIEG

LGBT ACTIVIST

b. June 23, 1989

“Your time in the closet and your journey to coming out belong to you.”

He is an openly gay teacher, author, and activist, and the spouse of Pete Buttigieg.

Chasten Glezman Buttigieg is an educator, an author, and an LGBTQ rights advocate. He is the spouse of Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who became the U.S. Secretary of Transportation in February 2021.

Chasten was born in Traverse City, Michigan. His parents owned a landscaping business. As a teenager, he attended public high school and worked on his grandfather's cherry farm. “Growing up in conservative rural Michigan, I thought I was the only gay person in the world,” he says. He thought there was something “twisted and wrong” with him. Although he kept his sexual orientation secret, he was bullied and taunted with homophobic epithets.

Buttigieg escaped to Germany on an exchange program for his senior year in high school. When he returned, he came out to his family. Their rejection compelled him to leave home, and he spent a difficult period in which he was technically homeless. Around this same time, he was sexually assaulted by the friend of a friend.

Buttigieg and his family eventually reconciled. He went on to attend the University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in theater and global studies. He received his Master of Education from DePaul University.

Buttigieg worked as a teaching artist at First Stage Children's Theater in Milwaukee. During the 2010s, he taught in public schools in Chicago and Indiana. He met his husband on a dating app in 2015. The couple married in 2018, during Pete's tenure as South Bend's mayor, making Chasten the first gay “first gentleman” of a city mayor in America. The following year, Chasten joined the South Bend Civic Theater as director of curriculum for civic education.

Chasten took a leave of absence from his teaching job to support Pete's 2020 presidential bid. The couple made history again, as Pete was the first openly gay married presidential candidate in U.S. history. Chasten served as his husband's campaign spokesperson, advisor, and social media manager. In the fall of 2020, Chasten became a Harvard Institute of Politics fellow for a semester and released his first book, a memoir titled “I Have Something to Tell You.”

In 2021 the Buttigieges received the International Role Model Award from Equality Forum. Around the same time, they became the parents of twins, Joseph and Penelope. The family lives in Washington, D.C. Chasten appears on television and holds public speaking engagements to discuss his life experiences and advocate for LGBTQ equality.



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