



## Life in Brief

**Born:** June 21, 1960

**Hometown:** Arden Hills, MN

**Current Residence:** Salem, OR

### Education:

- JD, Lewis & Clark College, 1985
- BA, Environmental Conservation, University of Colorado Boulder, 1981

### Family:

- Husband, Dan Little, former U.S. Forest Service employee
- Two stepchildren

### Work History:

- Governor of Oregon, 2015-present
- Oregon Secretary of State, 2009-2015
- Member of the Oregon Senate from the 21<sup>st</sup> District, 1997-2009
- Member of the Oregon House of Representatives from the 13<sup>th</sup> District, 1991-1997

### Electoral Overview

- Won 50.6% of the vote during the 2016 special gubernatorial election, and was reelected in 2018 with 50% of the vote
- Received 51% and 51.3% of the vote during the 2008 and 2012 Secretary of State races, respectively

## Quick Summary

**Passionate feminist who has spent her career advocating for marginalized groups. Civil and women's rights advocate who has adopted a collaborative approach, while occasionally clashing with the Trump Administration**

- Became Governor after her predecessor resigned following a corruption scandal; Brown was next in line as Secretary of State
- First openly bisexual governor
- Had demonstrated interest in feminism and reproductive rights since she was a teenager
- Initially wanted to practice environmental law, but her existing passion for women's reproductive choice had intensified, leading her to shift to women's rights and family law
- In the Oregon Senate, shifted from a radical feminist to a moderate Democrat focused on bipartisanship, as her previous style garnered little support
- Eventually garnered enough support among her peers to become Majority Leader
- Aim to achieve policy goals through state investment in resources to aid residents

## Approach and Motivations

**Entered public service to "be a voice for the voiceless," and advocate for those who are unable to do so. Her experience as a member of a minority group fuels her desire for equality**

- Became interested in advocacy after exposure to anti-abortion rhetoric during *Roe v. Wade*
- Went to law school because she believed it would help her work for justice and equality
- Claims to have made less than her male counterpart due to her gender while practicing law; inspired her to fight for pay equality
- Experienced the fear of possibly losing her job solely due to her sexual orientation; has pledged to protect others from that same fear

**Policy Positions and Areas of Focus**

**Brown focuses on accessible civic participation, employment opportunity, and education policy**

**Voting Reform: *Supports measures that expand voting access, as well as election transparency***

- Increased voter registration through online voter registration and a motor voter bill
- Increased the availability of iPads and tablets to provide accessibility to voters with disabilities
- Pushed for the ORESTAR campaign finance reporting system to increase transparency

**Gender Parity: *Champions policies that focus on women's needs to address gender imbalances***

- Signed the Oregon Equal Pay Act into law, which addresses pay discrepancies through measures such as prohibiting employers from asking applicants their current pay
- Signed legislation establishing paid family leave; this also required insurance companies to cover annual women's health exams
- Signed legislation preventing domestic violence offenders from purchasing and owning guns

**Education: *Aims to invest in Oregon's education system to ensure widespread education access***

- Secured \$100 million in early childhood education investments since taking office and aims to expand quality preschool access
- Secured \$1 million to pilot trauma-informed practices to aid teachers in addressing students who have experienced trauma
- Implemented the Oregon Promise, which will cover community college costs for need-based high school graduates and GED recipients

**Environment: *Strong supporter of clean energy***

- Signed the nation's first "coal-to-clean" law to phase out coal power by 2030
- Implemented the Cleaner Air Oregon program to regulate commercial facilities' toxic air contaminants

**Core Communities**

**Brown's core communities include women's interest groups, a staff of seasoned private sector experts, and labor unions**

**Women's Interest Groups: *Began her career as a women's rights advocate and continues to garner support from women's interest groups***

- Volunteered at the Portland Feminist Women's Health Center during law school
- Lobbied the state legislature on behalf of the Oregon Women's Rights Coalition
- Co-founded the Oregon Women's Health & Wellness Alliance
- Has been endorsed by numerous women's advocacy groups such as the Mother PAC, NARAL, NOW, and Planned Parenthood

**Staff: *Diverse staff includes experience in business and nonprofits***

- Chief of Staff Nik Blosser bridges policy and business interests, as he co-founded the Oregon Business Administration
- Former Chief of Staff Kristen Leonard was the owner of financial services and government relations company C&E Systems
- Former legal counsel Misha Isaak now works at prestigious law firm Perkins Coie, where he practiced before joining Brown's team
- Deputy Director of Health Care Policy Linda Roman has experience with health care-focused interest groups

**Labor Unions: *Strong ties to Oregon unions***

- Authored a joint statement with leaders of Oregon AFL-CIO, the Oregon Education Association, SEIU Local 503, and Oregon AFSCME to denounce the *Janus* decision
- American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten campaigned for Brown and phone banked with Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain to garner union votes
- Receives significant funding from unions

**Relevant Financial Information**

**Brown receives the majority of campaign contributions from interest groups and politically active organizations**

**Biggest Industry Donors (1991-2020)**

- Public Sector Unions: \$3.6 million
- Liberal Policy Organizations: \$2.8 million
- General Trade Unions: \$1.6 million
- Lawyers & Lobbyists: \$1.6 million
- Abortion Policy Organizations: \$930,000

**Biggest Interest Group Donors (1991-2020)**

- Democratic Governors Association (Washington, DC): \$2.2 million
- Team Oregon (Corvallis, OR): \$1.4 million
- Oregon Democratic Party (Portland, OR): \$1.2 million
- Oregon Public Employees Local 503 (Salem, OR): \$910,000
- Defend Oregon's Values (Portland, OR): \$890,000

**Biggest Individual Donors (1991-2020)**

- Michael Bloomberg, Founder of Bloomberg Inc. and former Mayor of New York City: \$250,000
- Barbara Lee, Founder of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation: \$192,222
- Eric D. Lemelson, Owner of Lemelson Vineyards: \$170,000
- Stephen Michael Silberstein, Founder of Innovator Enterprises: \$115,000
- George Kenneth Austin Jr., deceased, Founder of A-dec Inc.: \$107,500

**Political Donations**

- Contributed \$4,365 to various candidates over eleven years; most of the races were Oregon-based

**Publications, Media, and Speaking**

**Uses media to engage with Oregonians on issues that include civic participation, diversity, and health policy**

**Publications: *Writes op-eds on topics such as voting accessibility and criticism of the Trump administration***

- [“We’ve had Vote-by-Mail in Oregon for Decades. It’s Obviously the Best Way to Hold Elections Now,”](#) *Newsweek*, April 17, 2020
- [“The Importance of National Voter Registration Day,”](#) *Teen Vogue*, September 24, 2019
- [“Federal Leadership Vacuum means Governors Must Step Up,”](#) *Oregon Live*, July 4, 2017
- [“Do What’s Right: Disavow Donald Trump,”](#) *The Huffington Post*, August 18, 2016

**Media: *Utilizes Oregon-specific media platforms to engage with constituents***

- Preferred Outlets: Local news outlets such as KGW and KATU
- Favorite Subjects: Environmental policy, disaster prevention, housing, education policy
- Social Media Habits: Very active on Twitter and Facebook

**Speaking: *Speaks mainly about diversity and inclusion to politically-oriented groups***

- Favorite Subjects: Gender and racial issues, voting accessibility, health care policy
- Preferred Audience: Political audiences and social-justice oriented groups; examples include the Oregon Diversity Conference, the Democratic Party of Oregon, and the National Governors’ Association

**Congressional Testimony: *Testified before Congress to discuss the opioid epidemic***

- Testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions about addressing the opioid crisis, March 8, 2018
- Brown outlined the measures she has already taken to address the state’s crisis, and called on Congress to focus on substance abuse treatment rather than punishment for users

## Family and Personal Background

**Despite not being an Oregon native, Brown moved to the state for law school and has since established a place for herself**

- Born in Spain, where her father was stationed while serving in the U.S. Air Force
- Grew up in Minnesota
- Her parents were Republicans and often discussed politics with Brown and her siblings
- Became passionate about women's rights and reproductive rights at age 13, when *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion
- Moved to Oregon for law school
- Specialized in family law and juvenile rights
- Lobbied the Oregon legislature for the Oregon Women's Rights Coalition prior to running for office
- Has received several awards throughout her career, such as the Oregon Commission for Women's Woman of Achievement Award and the Oregon State Bar's President's Award of Merit
- Describes herself as a "fierce feminist"
- Enjoys horseback riding, hiking, yoga, and meditation

## Criticisms and Controversies

**Brown's notable controversies include allegations of an illegal agreement, as well as a controversial Court appointment**

### Ballot initiative agreement accusation

- In 2018, a complaint to the Oregon Department of Justice alleged that Brown negotiated an illegal ballot initiative agreement with Nike and public employee unions
- Brown had been meeting with corporate leaders and public employee unions to attempt to keep a corporate tax disclosure requirement off the ballot
- The Department of Justice reviewed the complaint and determined that an investigation was not warranted

### Criticism of Court of Appeals appointee

- Brown faced criticism from the state's legal community in 2019 after appointing her general counsel, Misha Isaak, to the Oregon Court of Appeals
- The judicial vacancy had not been advertised through state and local bar associations, resulting in Isaak as the sole candidate
- Isaak's relative youth and lack of trial experience, combined with the lack of other candidates, led to accusations of cronyism
- Isaak declined the nomination following the criticism, staying with Brown's office for six months until leaving for a private firm

## **COVID-19 Response**

**As the Governor of Oregon, a state with a modest amount of cases, Brown has nonetheless taken measures to slow the spread of the virus, ensure Oregonians' needs are met**

**Actions: *Implemented a stay-at-home order, has utilized the state's PPE, and is cautiously looking into reopening Oregon***

- Reached an agreement with health insurance companies in early March to waive cost-sharing for individuals tested for COVID-19
- Closed Oregon schools on March 12
- Enacted a stay-at-home order across Oregon on March 23, the same day as Washington and four days after California
- Convened a Medical Advisory Panel of medical experts to make recommendations
- Issued an executive order preventing creditors from garnishing CARES Act rebates
- Utilized the state's stockpile of PPE to distribute to long-term care homes
- Contributed 140 ventilators to New York, where they are in higher demand
- Set a three-phase plan to reopen the state based on a downward trajectory of reported flu-like symptoms as well as confirmed cases within 14 days, and hospitals' ability to treat all patients without crisis care

**Messaging: *Regularly updates the public; has called upon Congress for more funding***

- Holds daily press briefings and uses social media to update the public
- Wrote to Congress to call for more financial assistance for small businesses, unemployed individuals, and state stabilization
- Pledged to lift restrictions on non-urgent medical procedures in May, provided enough beds and PPE remains for COVID patients
- Affirms that her Medical Advisory Panel will continuously monitor data to determine next steps

## **COVID-19 Response (Cont.)**

**Public Reception: *Prisoners and mental health advocates have criticized Brown for failing to address their needs***

- A group of prison inmates filed a lawsuit against Brown and the Department of Corrections for failing to take steps to slow the spread of the virus within Oregon prisons
- Proponents have urged Brown to approve construction of a long-proposed psychiatric hospital to address the mental health services shortage that has resulted from the pandemic; Brown has responded that the state needs further information from the company behind the proposed hospital