



## Life In Brief

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**Current Title:** Governor

**Political Party:** Republican Party

**Born:** November 2, 1963

**Birthplace:** Athens, GA

**Religion:** Episcopalian

**Ethnicity:** White/Caucasian

**Marital Status:** Married

**Education:**

- BS, Agriculture, University of Georgia

**Family:**

3 children

**Work History:**

- Owner, Kemp Properties, Residential and Commercial Construction
- Co-Owner, Specialty Stone Supply

## Quick Summary

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**Entrepreneur and native Georgian who has led state efforts to cut government spending and support small business; combines two decades of experience in state politics with anti-establishment message**

- Lifelong resident of Athens, Georgia and fourth-generation University of Georgia graduate
- Over his career, has launched a number of small businesses, including in banking, farming, timber, manufacturing, and real estate;

experience as a businessowner inspired him to enter politics

- As Georgia’s secretary of state, introduced controversial voter ID law, which has been labeled as voter suppression by critics
- Narrowly defeated Democrat Stacey Abrams in a tight gubernatorial race; secured key votes from rural and business communities
- Pushes to make Georgia number one for small business through regulatory reform
- Advocates for limiting government spending, including through spending caps
- Vocal opponent of the Affordable Care Act; proposed state’s limited Medicaid expansion

## Approach and Motivations

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**Driven to public service by experience as a small business owner**

- Started Kemp Development and Construction with only a pickup truck and a shovel; says he understands the hardships of making payroll and paying bills
- Frustration with state zoning rules drove him to run for state Senate
- Promises to eliminate regulations that frustrate job creators and cripple economic development

**Has called himself a “politically incorrect conservative”**

- Distances himself from the Republican establishment, claiming he fights for the common man rather than deep-pocketed interests
- Emphasizes use of humor and unconventional terms to convey his policy messages



## Policy Position and Areas of Focus

**Prioritizes cutting state spending, spurring rural and small business growth, and rolling back the Affordable Care Act**

**Business Growth: *Supports small business by removing regulation; promotes investment in rural job creation***

- As secretary of state, worked with state Republicans on legislation to streamline procedure and reduce processing time for professional licenses
- Upon becoming governor, established the Georgians First Commission to review state regulations that impact small business
- Created rural strike team to bring businesses and jobs to rural Georgia, including through marketing and job training

**Government Spending: *Pushes to reduce and cap state spending***

- In the secretary of state's office, implemented zero-based budgeting, where all expenses must be justified for each new period, to cut wasteful spending
- As governor, instructed state government offices to develop proposals to reduce spending by 4% in the amended fiscal year 2020 budget and 6% in the fiscal year 2021 budget
- Argues that the state needs a spending cap before comprehensive tax reform can take place

**Health Care: *Advocates conservative reform to government-run health care***

- Favors repealing the Affordable Care Act and supports legislation to eliminate the law's protections for pre-existing conditions
- Ran gubernatorial campaign on opposition to full-scale Medicaid expansion; proposed limited expansion to extend coverage to adults living at the federal poverty level in exchange for 80 hours/month of work, volunteering, or studying
- Signed into law a bill that would prohibit abortions after a heartbeat can be detected

## Core Communities

**Wide network of state politicians and business owners**

**Secretaries of State: *Connections with fellow state executives; has carried over staff from secretary of state's office***

- Variety of leadership positions in National Association of Secretaries of State, including on the executive and elections committees
- Former Secretary of State Lewis Massey was Kemp's fraternity initiation advisor in college
- Friendship with Tre Hargett (TN), who used his platform to promote Kemp's run for governor
- Brought staff from the Office of the Secretary of State to the Governor's Office, including former Deputy Secretary of State Tim Fleming, who is now his Chief of Staff

**Former Governors: *Support from former state leaders crucial to political rise***

- Originally appointed to secretary of state of Georgia by former-Governor Sonny Perdue, who is now Agriculture Secretary; received key endorsement from Trump late in gubernatorial campaign at the request of Purdue
- Friendly relationship with former Governor Nathan Deal; the two worked closely together



during the transition and Kemp has said he hopes to build off of Deal's accomplishments

- Former Governor Mike Pence campaigned heavily for Kemp during gubernatorial run and has championed Kemp for his pro-life stance

**Georgia Business Community: Collaborates with business groups and elevates business executives to political positions**

- Named small business owner Cade Joiner and Landmark Properties Founder James Whitley to the Georgians First Commission
- After Sen. Johnny Isakson resigned, chose businesswoman Kelly Loeffler to fill the vacancy, despite Trump's preference for someone else
- Strong campaign support from NFIB Small Business Association; upon gaining office, launched tour of local chambers of commerce, including Albany and Savannah Area Chambers

**Political History**

- Member, Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Committee
- Member, Waste Water Treatment Advisory Committee
- Member, GA State Senate, 2002-2006
- Former Chair, Sexual Assault Center Committee
- Secretary of State, GA Office of the Secretary of State, 2010-2018

**Relevant Financial Information**

**Attracted high-dollar donations during gubernatorial run from Georgia-based businesses and business owners; has contributed to congressional campaigns of Georgia Republicans**

**Biggest Industry Donors (Governor)**

- Lawyers & Lobbyists: \$950,000
- Candidate Committees: \$700,000
- Real Estate: \$600,000
- Hospitals & Nursing Homes: \$300,000
- Health Professionals: \$300,000

**Biggest Corporate Donors (Governor)**

- Cooper, Barnette & Page (Statham, GA), \$40,000
- Double Bay Arcade (Norcross, GA), \$27,000
- Atlanta Game World (Norcross, GA), \$22,000
- ESE Holdings (Ray City, GA), \$17,000
- PNP Amusement Games (Rincon, GA), \$17,000

**Biggest Individual Donors (Governor)**

- Larry Benson, CEO of Benson's Inc. (Bogart, GA), \$20,000
- James Brady III, Faculty at East Georgia State College (Augusta, GA), \$20,000
- William Edward Russell, Contractor at Russell Landscape (Duluth, GA), \$20,000
- Troy Welker, CEO of IPT Sink (Marietta, GA), \$19,000
- Danny Bryant, Retired (Richmond Hills, GA), \$18,000

**Political**

**Donations**

- Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), \$2,000, 2007-2008
- Jim Whitehead (R-GA), \$1,050, 2007
- Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA), \$375, 2004
- Barbara Dooley (R-GA), \$500, 2002



- Calder Clay (R-GA), \$2,000, 2001

## **Publications, Media and Speaking**

Appears in local and national media to discuss policy priorities, electronic voting, and political ideology; frequents business groups and Georgia colleges

**Publications:** *Has authored op-eds in local and national newspapers on education, health, and election security policies*

- Favorite Subjects: Electronic voting, ACA repeal, education reform
- Preferred Outlets: National newspapers including USA Today and local outlets including AJC

**Media:** *Speaks on political ideology and policy positions in cable news outlets*

- Favorite Subjects: Divisive politics, voting issues, Medicaid expansion
- Preferred Outlets: National cable news channels including FOX and local news stations including Atlantic Journal-Constitution and 11 Alive
- Social Media Habits: Active on Twitter and Facebook

**Speaking:** *Discusses economic development and employment before business groups and state universities*

- Favorite Subjects: Business interests, workforce development
- Preferred Audience: Chambers of commerce including Augusta Metro, Burke County, and Columbia County; state colleges including Georgia Northwestern Technical College and Georgia Gwinnett College

## **Professional Affiliations**

- Member, Habitat for Humanity

## **Family and Personal Background**

**Born and raised in Athens, GA; family ties to state politics and university**

- Grew up on a farm outside of Athens
- Grandfather Julian H. Cox Sr. was a member of the Georgia Legislature
- Attended Athens Academy until the ninth grade and then transferred to Clarke Central High School to play football for accomplished player and coach Billy Henderson
- Fourth-generation University of Georgia graduate

## **Criticisms and Controversies**

**As Secretary of State, received backlash for controversial election security policies and refusal to resign from post during gubernatorial run**

**Criticized for voter registration policies and data breaches**

- Implemented Georgia's controversial "exact match" system for voter registration in 2010, which Democratic critics have called voter suppression designed to disproportionately target minorities; Kemp and his successor as Secretary of State, Brad Raffensperger, were under investigation by the House Oversight and Reform Committee for alleged voter suppression in the 2018 elections
- In 2015, a data breach within Kemp's office distributed the Social Security numbers and



## Brian Kemp

Governor of GA

birthdates of over 6.2 million Georgia voters; drew criticism again in 2017 when it was revealed that a flaw in the state voting system exposed the personal information of all of Georgia's 6.7 million voters

- Kemp was the only secretary of state to reject help from the Department of Homeland Security to guard against Russian interference in the 2016 election

### **Declined to resign from Secretary of State position during gubernatorial election**

- Called upon by former President Jimmy Carter, the Georgia NAACP, and Georgia Common to step down while running for governor, citing ethics concerns relating to Kemp overseeing his own election