



Life In Brief

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

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

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



Brian Kemp

Governor of GA

Vignette
by National Journal

- 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 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



Brian Kemp
Governor of GA

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