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Governor of Oregon

The **Governor of Oregon** is the head of the executive branch of Oregon's state government and serves as the commander-in-chief of the state's military forces. The title of governor was also applied to the office of Oregon's chief executive during the provisional and U.S. territorial governments.

The current governor of Oregon is Kate Brown, a Democrat who took office following the resignation of Governor John Kitzhaber amid an ethics scandal. The Governor's current salary was set by the 2001 Oregon Legislature at \$93,600 annually.^[1]

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Constitutional descriptions

Article V of the Oregon State Constitution sets up the legal framework of the Oregon Executive Branch.^[2]

[3]

Eligibility

Governor of the State of Oregon



Seal of Oregon



Incumbent
Kate Brown
since February 18, 2015

Style	The Honorable
Residence	Mahonia Hall
Term length	Four years, limited to 2 consecutive terms with no limit on total number of terms
Inaugural holder	John Whiteaker

Article V, Section 1 states that the governor must be a natural born U.S. citizen, at least 30 years of age, and a resident of Oregon for at least three years before the candidate's election. Section 2 extends ineligibility as follows:

No member of Congress, or person holding any office under the United States, or under this State, or under any other power, shall fill the Office of Governor, except as may be otherwise provided in this Constitution.^[2]

Formation	February 14, 1859 (Constitution of Oregon)
Salary	\$93,600 (2013) ^[1]
Website	Official website (http://www.governor.oregon.gov/)

Elections and terms of office

Sections 4-7 of Article V outline the formal gubernatorial election procedures such as publishing the winner, ties, disputed elections, and terms of office.

Governors are elected by popular ballot and serve terms of four years, limited to two consecutive terms in office, with no limit on the number of total terms.^[2]

The formal process of certification of results of a gubernatorial election ends when the Secretary of State delivers the results to the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives. The Speaker then will publish the results to a joint session of the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

Where an election results in a tie, a joint session of the next legislative session will vote on the two candidates, and declare the winner governor. Legally contested elections are also decided by the full legislature in whichever manner other laws may prescribe.

Line of succession

The gubernatorial line of succession was modified in 1920, 1946, and 1972.^{[2][4]} The current list is designated as Article V, Section 8a. It defines who may become or act as the Governor of Oregon upon the incapacity, death, resignation, or removal from office of a sitting governor. The new governor (or acting governor) will serve out the remainder of the previous governor's or incapacitated governor's term. A special gubernatorial election is required, if there's more than two years remaining in the previous governor's or incapacitated governor's term. Unlike many states, Oregon does not have a Lieutenant Governor (though in 2007, legislation was proposed to establish such an office.)^[5] The current order is:



The ceremonial Governor's Office in the Oregon State Capitol

	Position	Current office holder	Political party
1	<u>Secretary of State</u>	<u>Bev Clarno</u>	<u>Republican</u>
2	<u>State Treasurer</u>	<u>Tobias Read</u>	<u>Democratic</u>
3	President of the <u>Senate</u>	<u>Peter Courtney</u>	<u>Democratic</u>
4	Speaker of the <u>House</u>	<u>Tina Kotek</u>	<u>Democratic</u>

As an appointee, Clarno is not eligible to become Governor, so until a new Secretary of State takes office Read is next in line.^[6]

Transition events

Four governors have died in office, and five governors have resigned.

- After La Fayette Grover resigned in 1877 to become a United States Senator, Secretary of State Stephen F. Chadwick took office; he completed Grover's term and did not seek re-election.
- After George Chamberlain resigned in 1909 to become a United States Senator, Secretary of State Frank W. Benson took office.
- After Benson fell ill in 1910, he transferred his powers to President of the Senate Jay Bowerman, who was sworn in as Acting Governor.^[7] Bowerman then became governor upon Benson's resignation, and was defeated in the 1910 gubernatorial election.
- After the death of James Withycombe in 1919,^[8] Secretary of State Ben W. Olcott took office; he completed Withycombe's term and was defeated in the 1922 general election.
- After the death of Isaac L. Patterson in 1929, President of the Senate A. W. Norblad took office; he completed Patterson's term and was defeated in the 1930 Republican primary.
- After the death of Earl Snell in 1947, Speaker of the House John H. Hall took office; he lost a special election in 1948 and did not complete the term.
- After Douglas McKay resigned in 1952 to become United States Secretary of the Interior, President of the Senate Paul L. Patterson took office; he completed McKay's term and was elected in his own right in 1954.
- After Patterson's death in 1956, President of the Senate Elmo Smith took office; he lost a special election later that year and did not complete the term.
- After John Kitzhaber resigned in 2015 amid a growing ethics scandal, Secretary of State Kate Brown took office; she won a special election in 2016 and was re-elected in 2018.

State military forces

The governor is the commander-in-chief of the Oregon Military Department. Power is granted to the governor to mobilize and deploy state military forces.

Pardons

The power to grant pardons and reprieves and to commute sentences is granted to the governor, with limitations placed upon cases of treason. Additionally, the governor can remit fines and forfeitures. Any use of these powers, however, must be reported to the legislature.

In treason cases, the governor may only grant reprieves. The final matter of pardons, commuting of sentencing, or further reprieves is referred to the legislature in these cases.

Legislative

The governor has the power to veto legislation, which can be overridden by a two-thirds majority in both houses of the legislature, and can veto particular items from an appropriations or emergency bill while leaving others intact (see line item veto).

If needed, the governor may convene a special session of the legislature by proclamation and is empowered to call for special elections to fill vacant seats. Between the vacancy and special election, the governor is able to appoint a replacement.

Annually, the governor addresses the legislature in his or her State of the State address. In this speech the governor outlines the current conditions of the state, and makes recommendations to the assembly as to what the government's priorities ought to be.

Appointments

If the legislature is out of session, the governor may appoint replacements to fill state offices until elections are held or the legislature reconvenes (see recess appointment).

Official residence

Mahonia Hall in Salem is the official governor's mansion.^[9] The house was built in 1924 for hops grower Thomas A. Livesley. It was named Mahonia Hall after citizens raised funds in 1988 to purchase it as Oregon's first official governors' mansion.^[10]

Before the purchase of Mahonia Hall, whatever house the governor rented became the "Governor's mansion".^[11] Governors Atiyeh and McCall lived in the 1929 Stiff-Jarman House, an English cottage-style (also characterized as Arts and Crafts style)^[12] residence currently located in the North Capitol Mall Historic Redevelopment area.^{[13][14]} After the end of Atiyeh's term, the Stiff-Jarman House became the headquarters of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.^[12] Today the building houses rented offices.^[13]

Provisional government (1843–1849)

Meetings at Champoeg led up to the first constitution of the Oregon Country, and a petition for U.S. territorial status. The resulting acts also created this body as a provisional government for the region. The first executives of this government were a three-person, elected committee known as the Executive Committee. In 1845, elections for a chief executive were held. The first person in Oregon to hold the title of governor was George Abernethy, a prominent businessman.^[15]

Gubernatorial data

Note: These facts apply only to persons who have held the governorship under Oregon statehood.

Birthplace

- Four governors were born outside the United States:
 - Oswald West in Canada^[16]
 - James Withycombe in the United Kingdom^[8]
 - Albin W. Norblad in Sweden^[17]
 - Kate Brown in Spain^[18]

See also

- List of Governors of Oregon

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