

GOV. KATE BROWN VISITS STUDENTS IN AN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY CLASS AT CHURCHILL HIGH SCHOOL



The most important bill that she has signed into law, she said, is the automatic voter registration, known as the Oregon Motor Voter law, which uses rosters from the Department of Motor Vehicles when Oregon residents renew or apply for a driver's license.

Brown told the class that she's working to rebuild public trust and continues to work on public records and transparency.

In January 2017, Brown appointed Ginger McCall as Oregon's first public records advocate. The position will provide dispute resolution for public records requestors and state agencies and evaluate practices, procedures, exemptions and fees related to public records.

Brown took multiple questions about public records from the journalism students. One expressed concern over adding another layer to the public records process, noting that the state already struggles with the current process.

"I have to disagree respectfully," the governor replied. "My goal was to approve efficiency speed. I know it feels like it adds a layer, but it ensures public records get out."

For Brown's final meeting of the day, she sat down with a Springfield High School senior Emilee Daley and me in a small conference room in the UO journalism school. We were each given 15 minutes for questions.

Daley asked Brown about her most difficult experience as governor. Brown said it was "painful to meet with families post UCC and offer them comfort. It was really hard."

Brown said the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College affected the Oregon community as a whole.

"What would you say to people turned off by politics?" Daley asked.

"I love visiting businesses large and small and not talking directly politics," Brown said, adding that she enjoys talking to people about their kids and families.

I asked Brown if it was OK to record our conversation and she joked, "Yes, it's OK if we're recording too?"

SINCE ANNOUNCING SHE WILL SEEK REELECTION, Brown said, she's heard three big issues concerning Oregon voters. The number one issue, she said, is "health care and access to health care. What is different now in the last couple of years is that, at least in Oregon, people expect that our vulnerable and that our struggling families have access to health care."

Another major issue concerning Oregonians is education. "There's folks who want to make sure our high school graduation rate improves," Brown said. "I didn't ever get to the two other pieces, creating what I call a seamless system of education from cradle to career. We need comprehensive early childhood education; we need a system of quality day care in this state. We need access to early childhood services, home visitation."

Brown continued: "The third piece in education is edu-

cator advancement — making sure that educators have the professional development and the coaching and the mentoring they need to be successful in the classroom. The world of education has changed, and we want to make sure our educators reflect the diversity of our communities around the state."

I asked Brown whether she supports a universal health care or a single-payer system of health care.

"I certainly support everyone having access to health care, so I would say 'yes' to universal. What I would say is this: In Oregon we have now achieved 95 percent coverage of adults, and moving onto 100 percent coverage of children," Brown said. "It's been a very good system. It's cost effective, and I'd like to continue to sustain this program until I see something better."

I asked Brown to provide specifics about the student who had once been homeless and asked what she was doing for homeless families.

"Look, I don't know what it would be like to try and study and read and do your homework at night if you didn't have a warm dry place," she said. "I don't know how you get dinner, how you figure out where you're going to get a bag lunch to take to school or the funding to, you know, I assume a lot of schools have free lunch."

She continued: "But it's a huge challenge for these students just to survive. I think for us we're focused on how do we work on building more affordable housing, investing, partnering with the private sector, giving local



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