

June 7, 2012| by USCIRF

WASHINGTON, D.C. – [Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett](#), President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, was elected on Wednesday June 6 as Chair of the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). Dr. Swett was appointed to the Commission in March 2012 by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and is serving her first term.

“I’m honored to serve as chair of USCIRF and to work alongside my fellow commissioners in the struggle to guarantee religious freedom for all,” said Dr. Swett. “This Commission has accomplished much, but much is left to be done. We will continue to work with Congress and the Executive Branch, to ensure that this basic human right is a fully integrated component of U.S. foreign, economic and national security policies.”

As the President of the Lantos Foundation, which was founded in 2008, Dr. Swett works to carry on the human rights legacy of her father, the late Representative Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to Congress. Dr. Lantos Swett teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University. She also served as Deputy Counsel to the Criminal

Justice Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee for then-Senator Joe Biden.

Also on June 6, two USCIRF Commissioners were elected Vice-Chairs: The [Reverend William J. Shaw](#), Pastor of the White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia, and [Mary Ann Glendon](#), the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University and President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

Rev. Shaw was appointed to the Commission in May 2012 by President Obama and is serving his second term. He is past President of the National Baptist Convention, the largest African American religious organization in the United States. He currently chairs the Board of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and has served as President of The Baptist Ministers' Conference of Philadelphia and Vicinity, The Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, and the Union Theological Seminary National Alumni Association. From 1981 through 1994, he served as Director of the Ministers' Division of the National Congress of Christian Education.

Professor Glendon, appointed to USCIRF by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in May 2012, is serving her first term on the Commission. She is the former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. Professor Glendon writes and teaches in the fields of human rights, comparative law, constitutional law, and political theory, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 1991, the International Academy of Comparative Law, and a past president of the UNESCO-sponsored International Association of Legal Science. She served two terms as a member of the U.S. President's Council on Bioethics (2001-2004), and has represented the Holy See at various conferences including the 1995 U.N. Women's conference in Beijing where she headed the Vatican delegation.

Also serving on the Commission are [Elliott Abrams](#) , [Dr. Azizah al-Hibri](#) , [Sam Gejdenson](#) ,
[Dr. Robert P. George](#)
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[Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser](#)
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USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

To interview a USCIRF Commissioner, contact Samantha Schnitzer at SSchnitzer@uscirf.gov
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