

Caroline Krass

General Counsel, Department of Defense



Caroline Krass is the General Counsel of the Department of Defense. Appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, she was sworn in on August 2, 2021. As General Counsel, Ms. Krass serves as the chief legal officer of the Department and the principal legal advisor to the Secretary of Defense. Ms. Krass has authority and responsibility for legal policy and determinations across the Department of Defense and its components. She also serves as the Director of the Defense Legal Services Agency, which is comprised of the legal staffs assigned to the Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities.

Ms. Krass was previously the Senior Vice President & General Counsel, General Insurance and Deputy General Counsel of American International Group (AIG), where she led a global legal team supporting the primary business unit, as well as the cybersecurity and privacy, technology and innovation teams across AIG. Before that, she was a partner and Chair of the National Security Practice Group at Gibson Dunn.

Ms. Krass served for more than two decades in the federal government, including thirteen years in the Department of Justice, primarily as a career lawyer in the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) and as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney within the National Security Section at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. In 2009, Ms. Krass was appointed Special Assistant and Special Counsel for National Security Affairs to President Obama and Deputy Legal Adviser to the National Security Council (NSC), where she advised officials on a range of legal issues related to national security and foreign policy. In 2011, Ms. Krass returned to OLC and served as Acting Assistant Attorney General, advising the President, Attorney General and other Executive Branch leaders on complex questions of constitutional and statutory law. In 2014, Ms. Krass was the first woman to be confirmed by the United States Senate as General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, where she served as the chief legal officer and primary legal advisor to the Director until 2017.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Krass served as Deputy Legal Adviser to the NSC, as Special Assistant to the General Counsel of the Department of the Treasury, and as a lawyer at the Department of State. Ms. Krass clerked for the Honorable Patricia M. Wald on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University and received her J.D. from Yale Law School.

Ms. Krass currently serves on ABA Standing Committee on Law and National Security. She has received multiple awards and honors, including the CIA Distinguished Intelligence Medal and CIA Director's Award, the John Marshall Award -- the highest Department of Justice Award for an attorney, and the Department of Defense Medal for Outstanding Service, as well as the Department of State Superior Honor Award.