

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett is Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). She was appointed to USCIRF by Senator Harry Reid in April 2012 and was elected to serve as Chair in June 2012 and again in July 2014.

Dr. Lantos Swett established the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice in 2008 and serves as its President and Chief Executive Officer. This human rights organization is proudly carrying on the unique legacy of the late Congressman Tom Lantos who, as the only survivor of the Holocaust ever elected to Congress, was one of our nation's most eloquent and forceful leaders on behalf of human rights and justice. In addition to managing the Lantos Foundation, Dr. Lantos Swett teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University. She also taught at the University of Southern Denmark while her husband, former Congressman Richard Swett, was serving as the U.S. Ambassador in Copenhagen.

Her varied professional experiences include working on Capitol Hill as Deputy Counsel to the Criminal Justice Sub-Committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee for then Senator Joe Biden and as a consultant to businesses, charitable foundations, and political campaigns.

Dr. Lantos Swett also has experience in broadcasting, having co-hosted the highly regarded political talk show "Beyond Politics" for many years on WMUR TV, New Hampshire's only network affiliated television station. As co-host, she interviewed state, national, and international figures, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Vice President Al Gore, First Lady Hillary Clinton, Members of the United States Congress, and George Stephanopoulos on the issues of the day.

From 2003-2006 Dr. Lantos Swett served as the Director of the Graduate program in Public Policy at New England College, where she now serves on the college's Board of Trustees. She is also a member of the Board of HRNK Human Rights in North Korea and the Tom Lantos Institute in Budapest. She has served on numerous Boards in the past, including the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium Foundation, the Institute for Justice Sector Development, the Granite State Coalition Against Expanded Gambling (co-Chair), and the NH Citizen's Commission on the State Courts. She has also been active in Democratic politics for over three decades. In 2002, she was the Democratic nominee for Congress in New Hampshire's 2nd District, and she was chosen as a Presidential elector in 1992. She has been a member of the New Hampshire Democratic Party (NHDP) Executive Committee and served as Vice-Chair of the NHDP Finance Committee.

Under Dr. Lantos Swett's leadership as President and CEO, the Lantos Foundation has quickly become a distinguished and respected voice on many key human rights concerns ranging from rule of law in Russia and Internet freedom in closed societies to the on-going threat of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. The Foundation also supports human rights defenders around the globe through its Front Line Fund and runs the Lantos Congressional Fellows program in conjunction with Humanity in Action. Each year the Lantos Foundation awards the Lantos Human Rights Prize to an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to standing up for decency, dignity, freedom, and justice. Past recipients have included His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Professor Elie Wiesel, and Paul Rusesabagina.

Dr. Lantos Swett graduated from Yale University in 1974 at the age of 18 and earned her Juris Doctor at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1976. She received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Southern Denmark in 2001. Dr. Lantos Swett has been married for 31 years to former Congressman and Ambassador Richard Swett and they are parents of 7 children and 2 grandchildren. She resides in Bow, New Hampshire.