
Kristina Arriaga
Vice Chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

Kristina Arriaga was appointed to the Commission on May 13, 2016 by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) for a two-year term expiring in May 2018.

Prior to joining USCIRF, Kristina Arriaga de Bucholz was the Executive Director of Becket Law, a firm that defends the free expression of all religious traditions in the United States and abroad. During her tenure, Associated Press called Becket a “powerhouse law firm” after it won several landmark Supreme Court religious freedom cases including *Hosanna Tabor*, *Holt*, and *Hobby Lobby*. Becket also secured the rights of Native Americans to use eagle feathers in their powwows, persuaded the U.S. Army to let a Sikh Bronze Star Medalist serve with his articles of faith, as well as protected the rights of a small order of Catholic nuns who take care of the dying elderly poor. Becket also took on cases in Azerbaijan, Romania, and Spain and filed briefs before the European Court of Human Rights among many others.

After starting her career in DC working for U.S. Ambassador José Sorzano at the Cuban American National Foundation, she became Advisor to the U.S. delegation to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). Splitting her time between the seat of the UNCHR in Geneva and Washington, DC, Kristina worked on raising awareness of the plight of political prisoners with *New York Times* bestselling author, former political prisoner, Armando Valladares who was named Ambassador to the UN Human Rights Commission. After returning permanently to the United States, Kristina continued to work on behalf of defectors and refugees. No less adventurous was her time working on domestic affairs as an Intergovernmental Relations Officer at the Department of Housing and Urban Development and then later as a four-year appointee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Kristina is the recipient of the Newseum Institute’s 2017 Free Expression Award. She was featured by *The Federalist* as one of the 7 “Most Amazing Women of 2016.” She is sought out as an expert on religious liberty issues. She has written numerous articles on the topic, spoken at several conferences and has appeared on multiple television and radio programs including MSNBC, CNN en español, C-Span, Fox and NPR.

In between swapping hats at Becket, she has had the greatest adventure of all: she is happily married to LtCol Matthew Bucholz, USMC (Retired) and has three kids. Kristina has a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Georgetown University where she graduated *summa cum laude* and an undergraduate degree from Marquette University.