

Richard (Rick) Spees

Executive Director, Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC)

Rick was appointed to serve as the Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) in 2017. CAORC is a private not-for-profit federation of 24 independent American Overseas Research Centers operating in 28 countries. Each Center provides support for American and host country scholars, including fellowships, libraries, collaboration with host country institutions, hostel services and visas.

Rick spent eleven years in various positions on staff of the United States Senate. His final position was as the Staff Director of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State and Related Agencies. He left government service in 1986 and spent over 30 years in private practice as an attorney. He specialized in representing public entities such as cities, counties, transit districts, and educational institutions before the federal government. He remains a partner in the law firm of Akerman LLP.

As an attorney, Rick served as General Counsel of CAORC for over 30 years before becoming the Executive Director. In 2004, he served on the steering committee created by Congress to establish the International Center for Middle Eastern-Western Dialogue, also known as the Hollings Center. The Hollings Center is a non-profit organization dedicated fostering dialogue between the United States and countries with predominately Muslim populations. He continues to serve as the General Counsel of that organization.

Rick currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Brighter Tomorrow for Africa Foundation, which supports feeding programs in Sierra Leone. He also serves on the board of the Alliance for International Exchange, an association that promotes U.S. educational and cultural exchanges. He previously served on the board of Reading Partners, a literacy program that provides reading mentorships for students in grades 3-6.

Rick received his B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.