

People

Matthew D. Aho

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Matthew Aho has crafted history-making market-entry strategies for Akerman clients across wide-ranging industry sectors including: short-term vacation rentals, airlines, cruise lines, online travel agencies, telecom providers, live music concerts and venues; film, sports leagues, information technology, and banking and financial services. A recognized authority on U.S. sanctions policy, Matthew provides real-time federal policy intelligence to clients and their allies, and actively solicits and dispenses feedback from relevant agencies to fully inform his clients' planning.

Companies need surefire compliance strategies as they deal with complex sanctioned jurisdictions, and to maximize the likelihood of success, they must often adapt or modify operations to satisfy local legal and market conditions. Matthew helps clients tailor plans to reflect local needs and leads frontline negotiations with his foreign counterparts, when necessary, to achieve his clients' goals.

To support his work, Matthew maintains extensive relationships within the U.S. Executive Branch and on The Hill; at the relevant U.S. federal enforcement agencies; and with government officials and other leaders from foreign jurisdictions. While Matthew's pioneering work is rarely covered in the media, his guidance behind the scenes has contributed to many commercial successes in his target markets.

Before joining Akerman, Matthew worked on policy issues at the New York-based Council of the Americas, the Western Hemisphere's premiere business membership organization, where he spearheaded efforts to unite executives of select Fortune 500 companies with officials from the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, and the National Security Council for discussions on Cuba policy in the context of financial services, telecommunications, energy, pharmaceuticals, hospitality, and agriculture.

Areas of Experience

Cuba
Corporate
International
Latin America and the Caribbean
Economic Sanctions and Export Controls

Education

M.A., Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs, International Affairs, International Economic Policy, 2009
B.A., Bard College, Political Studies, 2002

Admissions*

Bars

* Not admitted to the practice of law

Languages

Spanish
Portuguese
Russian

Related Content

Chambers Names Akerman "Law Firm of the Year" for Work in Cuban Market
December 02, 2024

Legal 500 Ranks Akerman as a Top Tier Firm in Latin America 2025 Guide
October 30, 2024

Pedro Freyre and Matthew Aho Share Insights on New US/Cuban Banking Regs
May 31, 2024

Related Professional Experience

- Cuba Study Group, Member, 2012–Present
- Americas Society and Council of the Americas (AS/COA), 2009-2012
- Central & Eastern European Fair Trade Association, 2006-2007

Published Work and Lectures

- *Miami Herald*, Quoted, “Western Union Expands Remittances to Cuba in Thousands of Locations, Digital Platforms,” March 3, 2023
- *Cuba Standard*, Author, “Remittances to Cuba: A U.S. Policy Explainer,” August 25, 2021
- *Americas Quarterly*, Author, “US-Cuba Policy Whiplash: LatAm’s Biggest Stories of the 2010s,” December 9, 2019
- *Law360*, Co-Author, “How Cos. With Cuba Ties Can Fight Helms-Burton Act Suits,” April 25, 2019
- Gowling WLG Webinar, Speaker, “Cuba Policy Under the Trump Administration: Extraterritorial Implications,” February 20, 2019
- *Latin America Advisor*, Contributor, Featured Q&A, “Would Trump’s Cuba Reversal Spark a Legal Firestorm?” February 4, 2019
- *Latin America Advisor*, Contributor, Featured Q&A, “Can Cuba’s New President Attract Foreign Investors?” May 23, 2018
- *Latin America Advisor*, Contributor, Featured Q&A, “What Can Cubans Expect of Their New President?” April 26, 2018
- The Florida Bar International Law Section iLaw2017 Conference, Panelist, “State of the Re-Union,” February 17, 2017
- *Latin America Advisor*, Contributor, Featured Q&A, “How Will New U.S. Financial Rules Affect Cuba?” March 24 - April 6, 2016
- South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference, Speaker, “What You Need to Know About Doing Business in Cuba,” March 11, 2016
- Columbia University, The Cuba and Beyond Series, Speaker, “Update Cuba,” November 2015
- 2015 Lodging Conference, Panelist, “U.S. Hotel Investment in Cuba,” October 2015
- 2015 ULI Fall Meeting, Panelist, “CUBA: Glimpses of Possibility for the Forbidden Island,” October 2015
- Florida Bankers Association Seminar, Speaker, “Understanding the New Cuba Regulations: Analysis and Risk Assessment in the Real World,” April 2015
- Education in Central America: the Commitment of Diasporas, Governments, and the Private Sector in Education for Development hosted by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, the Organization of American States, and the Pan American Development Foundation, Panelist, “Integrating Youth Into Labor Markets,” June 2012
- Columbia Business School Seminar, Panelist, “Empowering Cubans Through Private Enterprise Development,” July 2011
- *Americas Quarterly* Blog, Author, “Cuba Travel Restrictions in the Spotlight in Brooklyn and Beyond,” July 2011
- *Americas Quarterly* Blog, Author, “Bolivarian Socialism Turns Twelve,” February 2011
- *Americas Quarterly*, Author, “Taking Youth To Market,” Winter 2011
- Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy Conference, Panelist, “Empowering the Cuban People Through Access to Technology,” July 2010

Honors and Distinctions

- Fulbright Fellow, Full-Grant, 2002