

## Napolitano Meets Nancy Pelosi, "The first Speaker of Italian Origin. Male or female."

Benedetta Grasso (May 27, 2010)



President Napolitano meets with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi in his official visit to Washington DC. The event boosted Italy-US friendship and honored the Italian-American contribution to the social fabric of this country

Washington, DC. Nancy Patricia D'Alesandro—better known as [Nancy Pelosi](#) [2]—is a woman who knows how to get things done.

Everybody knows the determination with which she engineered the historic vote on Obama's health-care bill and her world-known quote: "You go through the gate. If the gate's closed, you go over the fence. If the fence is too high, we'll pole vault in. If that doesn't work, we'll parachute in. But we're going to get health care reform passed for the American people." American women are justifiably proud of her, and so is Italian President [Giorgio Napolitano](#) [3], who praised her yesterday during their official meeting as "the first lady speaker of Italian origin". To which Mrs Pelosi jokingly replied:



"The first Speaker of Italian origin. Male or female." A member of the [National Organization of Italian American Women](#) [4] (NOIAW), Pelosi indeed has served for 13 years as a board member of the [National Italian American Foundation](#) [5] (NIAF).

Mr. Napolitano, who also was the "Speaker" of Italy's Chambers of Deputies years ago, met Mrs Pelosi on May 26, 2010, as part of a three day busy presidential trip to Washington. During their joint address to the press Mrs Pelosi, with a smile on her face and a loud, clear voice, welcomed Italy's President to Capitol Hill: "President Napolitano, as I mentioned, is a known leader throughout the world: a recognized scholar, a champion of democracy and pluralism, and again, a person who commands respect wherever he goes."

After the meeting with President Obama, the "buzz" around Napolitano in these past days has been high in Washington DC as various members of the Congress looked forward to discuss with him about the European Union and, as the Speaker said, the Italy-US "common agendas," from the economy and the war on terrorism. But in this specific case a somewhat special feeling emerged too, due to Pelosi's Italian origins.

Appreciation for Italian heritage and culture is deeply rooted in the United States, it was remarked. Washington DC, in its utopian conception as a city, owes a lot to Greek-Roman architecture and the Italian Renaissance ideals. Signs of Italian culture, past and present, are very visible everywhere you go, even at Capitol Hill. "The Capitol has been blessed with beautiful Italian contributions," Mrs Pelosi said. "When I became Speaker, Mr. President, I had the curator restore a lot of the Italian artwork that makes our Capitol so beautiful, not only here, but in the Rotunda and throughout the Capitol. It is a sign, another link to Italy. But we have tens of millions of links to Italy in the contributions made by Italian Americans in our country, and we all think that President Napolitano must have the best job in the world to be the President of Italy."

Other topics of the meeting were more similar to those discussed with Barack Obama. Good transatlantic relationship as well as the unity and cohesion of the European Union were reaffirmed as being of primary importance. And Giorgio Napolitano, while stating that Europe is on its way to a solid integration, also underlined that it can still do "much more and much better to reinforce unity." At the same time, he remarked, it is essential for Europe to be "stimulated and urged by a great friend, the American ally, to come together and speak up with one voice."

From Capitol Hill, Mr Napolitano was then taken to the Supreme court for further meetings and for a lunch with Chief Justice John Roberts, Senior Justice Antonin Scalia and then to a visit to the stunning and ancient Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, preserving the earliest books and documents of American history.

The overarching theme of this official visit seems to be a call to action to work together side by side as two strong and self-confident allies. Napolitano said that

Overall, the spirit of the meeting with Nancy Pelosi perfectly captured the overarching theme of this official visit and its different nuances: reaffirming the alliance between Europe and the United States, boosting Italy-US friendship, and honoring the Italian-American contribution to the fabric of this country as the essential basis for their ongoing mutual cooperation in the future.

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