

Dr. Lawrence Spinelli



Dr. Lawrence Spinelli served in senior positions in the legislative and executive branches of the federal government during a distinguished career that spanned more than four decades. His book *Watergate's Unexpected Hero: The Life of Peter W. Rodino, Jr.* will be published in the summer of 2024.

On Capitol Hill, Dr. Spinelli had the unique distinction of being the press secretary for both the House and Senate Judiciary committees. His first congressional position was managing press relations for his political mentor Congressman Peter W. Rodino, Jr. of New Jersey who achieved national prominence after chairing the Nixon impeachment hearings. Following Rodino's retirement, Spinelli became press secretary and legislative director for New York

Congressman Thomas J. Downey and served as his deputy when Downey was appointed to a senior position on the Clinton–Gore Presidential Transition Committee. In 1993, Spinelli became Director of Communications in the office of then Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. where he was responsible for a high profile national press operation. Among the highlights of his association with Biden were the passage of the Violence Against Women Act and the confirmation hearings of Supreme Court justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer.

Dr. Spinelli's longest tenure in government was at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. government's development finance institution, where he served as the Director of Outreach and Public Affairs. At OPIC, Spinelli was responsible for all public diplomacy activities, including communications, outreach and business development, and he served as OPIC's liaison to a wide array of international organizations and government agencies. Dr. Spinelli launched OPIC's Expanding Horizons program of seminars and workshops for small businesses, he organized seven Access to Opportunity international conferences which focused on investment opportunities in emerging markets, and he created and managed OPIC's Partners Program. In January 2009, President Barack Obama named Dr. Spinelli as OPIC's Acting President and CEO, a position he held until June 2010 making him the longest serving acting president in the history of the agency. Dr. Spinelli was a popular keynoter, speaking at conferences and business seminars throughout the world. He is the recipient of many awards and honors including a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for his "outstanding efforts in connecting U.S. businesses with emerging markets." He retired in 2017.

Dr. Spinelli is the author of Dry Diplomacy: the United States, Great Britain and Prohibition. Praised by the Journal of American History for being "engagingly written and comprehensively researched," Dry Diplomacy is the first study of the diplomatic impact of prohibition. Spinelli was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Drew University, where he directed off campus programs in Washington and London, and was a Professorial Lecturer at American University.

Dr. Spinelli received his undergraduate degree from Drew University, a master's degree in government from Georgetown University, and a master's degree and doctorate degree in history from New York University. He currently resides with his wife Arlene in Arlington, Virginia.

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