

Watch out, ROME

by Paul Basile



▲ RENATO TURANO

Ushered into office by a wave of grassroots support, he is poised to continue the work he started when he first served as an Italian senator half a decade ago.

Not content to sit back and let his volunteers do the talking, Turano and key representatives fanned out across the continent for face-to-face encounters with the voters. Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Florida, California and Connecticut were on the itinerary, as were Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Windsor and Vancouver as well as Mexico. And everywhere they went, the response was the same.

“There was a lot of frustration because things are so bad in Italy, and there is a huge desire for change,” Turano explains. “We were bombarded with questions about every issue imaginable, and we were able to answer their questions to their satisfaction.

“They wanted to be able to say that someone came to talk to them and heard them out,” he notes. “The fact that we were present in the flesh helped tremendously.”

And now the real work begins. With the Italian Senate perilously divided among three main parties, building a consensus is job one, according to Turano.

“The leaders of the three parties are going to have to sit down and actually work together for the common good,” he insists. “They’ve done enough to destroy Italy, and at this point they have to start doing what’s best for their country and its citizens, wherever they may live.”

Renato Turano is back.

The Chicago-area business and community leader took the February elections by storm, racking up nearly 10,000 preferences in his bid to return to the Italian Senate. In the process, he helped propel his Partito Democratico to a resounding victory in North and Central America.

Battle-hardened by a grueling campaign, he now travels to Rome armed with an agenda aimed at cutting through the dysfunction that pervades Italian politics.

“My top priority will be to fix our badly broken electoral system, which gives more power to the party than to the person being voted for,” he notes. “We also need to improve consular services, promote Italian language and culture abroad, and make it easier to reclaim Italian citizenship.”

Turano’s success should come as no surprise. A titan of American business with a sterling track record as a community leader and coalition-builder on both sides of the Atlantic, he offered a message of hope and change that resonated with his constituents.

He’s also a proven vote getter, garnering the most preferences in his previous two races, and only losing the last time around because his party fell short. Taking his cues from the past, Turano put his party first on the road to victory.

“We told voters to be sure to put an ‘X’ through the PD logo and not to worry so much about writing in Turano as their preference for the Senate,” he explains. “It definitely reduced my total prefer-

ences, but the end result is what matters.”

The campaign was as brief as it was intense, affording parties only a month and a half to line up their candidates, marshal their resources and get out the vote.

“I’ve been traveling all over the



country since early January, so it’s been exhausting but very rewarding,” Turano explains. “My network came out for me like they did the last two times. They were extremely motivated, and I have to say that they’re the main reason I won.”

Turano used a variety of media to get his message across, from e-blasts and newspaper ads to telephone banks and targeted mailings. But the real driving force behind his campaign was the literally hundreds of volunteers who turned out on his behalf across the continent.

“We had between 10 and 30 volunteers working the phones each day in Chicago alone,” Turano notes with obvious gratitude and pride. “All I had to do was put the word out and they came out in record numbers to support me and work for me. I absolutely cannot thank them enough.”