

A Lesson from Nancy

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From HBC's Sound Bites Blog (www.hellermanbaretz.com/soundbites)

Watch the [clip](#) above with awe or horror (depending on your political persuasion), as Speaker Pelosi successfully anchors her comments about democratic healthcare reform to the Declaration of Independence.

Well, "successfully" might be a little strong. Around the :45 - 1:00 section of the clip above, Speaker Pelosi starts to trip over her allusions to the Declaration pretty good. No matter. The point is, as a rhetorical device, it works very well. Opponents of health care reform have painted the legislation as a form of "socialized medicine." Indeed, the healthcare bill's biggest challenge may have been to overcome a perception that it was somehow un-American. Speaker Pelosi's speech counteracts that viewpoint effectively -- at least on an emotional level -- by asserting consistencies between the healthcare reform legislation and the Declaration of Independence, a quintessentially American document. Her comparison with the Declaration of Independence paves the way for her later assertion, "This is an American proposal that honors the traditions of our country."

As the clip of Speaker Pelosi shows, it is often wise to link your own argument or position to something that has gone before. Interestingly, this is not only an effective rhetorical strategy, but something to consider in connection with marketing on the Web. The more you discuss your own product or service (say, a sports law practice) in connection with something larger (say, the Olympics), the more likely you will be to get noticed when people go searching for the Internet for that other thing.

Forty years from now, kids searching for "Declaration of Independence" might find Nancy Pelosi's comment about having "more liberty to pursue" in the top few spots on Google, leaving "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" on page two.

Scary thought? Yes. One to think about? Definitely.