

WAMU Kojo Nnamdi - February 13 Interview Transcript

AMD On Legislation to prohibit the ICE Warehouse passage: “Well, I would hope so, at this juncture, we will see - I do think that many of my democratic colleagues are jumping on board. But, you know what, I think some of my republican colleagues are starting to get a spine, as you saw with them jumping on board and pushing back against tariffs - including the tariff against Canada. **But, you know, more importantly, I keep talking to my republican colleagues about our values, who we are as Americans, and I ran on common sense, common ground and found neither of any in this administration - it's hard to have common ground with an administration that's completely-**”

Kojo: “Can you find common ground with some of your local officials who actually voted to support the facility, and what's your response to the criticism that you may be going against them?”

AMD: Very good point, you know, I did call the head of the county commissioners in Washington County, and I said ‘listen, I've been in Minnesota in a field hearing, and I've seen the horrific state of what is happening there, I was at the Baltimore ICE facility, and saw - and I'm sure you saw - that this is unconstitutional and a violation of human rights,’ and I told him that. I said ‘this is not about immigration, it's not about public safety, it's actually about chaos, terror, and bending at the will of this administration.’ I said, ‘it's not going to be just immigrants. It's going to be anyone - including maybe you and me.’ Because, think about it - this is the administration that went after six members of congress trying to indict them and send them to prison for just telling the military that they shouldn't follow unlawful orders. So, I did say this to the Washington County people, and I asked for them to pause, and I asked if they'd meet with our two senators and myself on Zoom. And they said they'd get back to us. So, I do think there is a tremendous ground swell of republicans and democrats in Washington County that do not want this, and it is a test case, because we have to fight against these warehouses, because there are 1500 people, it's horrific.”

Kojo: “There is a lot of national reporting now that the Trump fever is breaking, that there are a lot of republicans starting to push back on various issues, like you've discussed. They've withdrawn, they've retreated from Minnesota. There's a great deal of hope that the democrats will win the House back in the November election. What will it mean for the democrats if they take back the House in November in terms of your district area and things happening in the Washington area? How will that be different? What will you guys do if the democrats run the House and kick the republicans out?”

AMD: “We have to do it, because we have to put some sort of boundary on this lawless president that does not, that listens to no one. But, I think, most importantly, we will govern. I represent 35000 government workers, it's figuring out that we will reinvest in research in our government workers, we will actually fund SNAP again and our healthcare - 1 in 7 families in my district are on medicaid, 1 in 9 are on SNAP benefits, half of them children. So, I think there's just destruction, and let's be real - this is all about undermining trust in our government, in our

elected officials, and in one another. And we have to, on a local level and a national level, start solving problems. My biggest thing is we have to do affordability and energy.”

Kojo: You’re up for reelection in the sixth district there. David Trone, who used to hold that seat but gave it up to run for senate, lost to Angela Alsobrooks - he spent something like 60 million or so to win the senate seat and didn’t win, and now you’ve pointed out, he has said he’s trying to regain his old congressional seat that you hold now, and that he will spend whatever it takes to get elected to that seat. What is your reaction to David Trone challenging you?

AMD: Listen - I’m gonna win. And I’m gonna win because I’m 18-19 points ahead, but most importantly, I’m going to stay ahead because I show up everywhere, I do what I’m supposed to do, I’m solving problems. But, you know, he’s a bored billionaire that spent the last 5-6 months in Europe drinking wine - no pun intended with the Total Wine - and he’s running for his ego. And, I don’t think America wants that, or Marylanders want that, and he always goes after a woman. He says he’s the one fighting, but he’s been on the sidelines. I’ve been fighting for SNAP and for healthcare, I’ve been fighting against Trump, I’ve been fighting with the Kennedy Center, ICE Warehouses.”

Kojo: “He put his personal wealth in, and you’re fairly wealthy yourself with your husband. Will you spend your personal money?”

AMD: “I am going to make sure I have the resources to fight him wherever he is, and I will counter his message. And, I will raise money, you know, I’m sure we’ll put some money in. But you know what, he’ll say anything, do anything, and spend anything for his ego, but that is not what it’s about, I think it’s getting out the message about what you do. And there’s a lot of small donation voters who are starting to invest in me through my grassroots-”

Kojo: [transitions abruptly to Laken Riley Act] “You said recently you regret your vote. What was your reason for supporting it then, and why do you disavow it now?”

AMD: “Listen, I think Laken Riley was an act that if you are illegally here as an immigrant, it was for violent crimes, and I do still believe that if you are illegally here and commit a violent crime, that you should be deported. I do not think that people who are here who are asylum seekers, pending cards, or just here, dreamers, I think it’s awful. I would not vote against this because this was in the first two weeks of my term, but I’ve since that time been the most and biggest proponent for immigrants, for services, for opposing ICE, and I’ve never voted to fund DHS, unlike my opponent.”

Kojo: Do you support the state legislature’s plan to redistrict to get your republican colleague Andy Harris out of office? Are you supporting these gerrymandered congressional districts in your state?

AMD: “I would say that we can’t fight with one hand behind our backs, but what the Maryland legislature does is up to the Maryland legislature. I’m going to win, irrespective of where the line’s drawn, but we do have to make sure we’re [meeting the moment]”