



Here's looking at you, kids

Congressman Mark Amodei is in a bit of a pickle after several ill-advised interactions with the media left people wondering if he's always this insufferably arrogant or just a homegrown, smart-aleck-looking fool on a national stage.

As a state legislator, Amodei was known as a bit of a cut-up, never taking himself or the legislative process too seriously. He openly showed his disdain at some legislative traditions, refusing to endure, for example, some of the Congressional speeches before both houses of the legislature. He would stroll into the Assembly chambers with his Senate colleagues and slide out a side door after roll call was taken, leaving the rest of us shaking our heads over his brazen behavior.

Over the years, his sense of ethics and propriety slipped. He saw no conflict between serving as a state senator while simultaneously working as the head of the Nevada Mining Association, even though most everyone else did. His affable and glad-handing manner helped him achieve

his political goals, becoming the chair of the state Republican party and then winning a special election to replace Dean Heller as Northern Nevada's congressman in a district that has never gone blue, thanks to rural Nevadans who vote overwhelmingly red.

But, recently, Amodei has been caught in a whirlwind of his own making after the national media portrayed him as the first House Republican to support the impeachment inquiry, misinterpreting his rambling comments during a conference call to mean he might be open to impeaching Trump. (Spoiler alert: he isn't.)

It was amusing to see how quickly Trump and his base turned on Amodei after the headlines proclaimed him the canary in the coal mine of elected Republican opinion about Trump's travesties. Political pundits pondered the nuances of his "significant" statements, while Amodei furiously backpedaled, saying he only supports an "oversight process," most definitely not an "impeachment inquiry." Nevertheless, President Trump pointedly removed Amodei

from his position as chair of the Nevada re-election team, replacing him with failed gubernatorial candidate—and potential Amodei competitor—Adam Laxalt.

Then things got worse. Amodei has always been an under-the-radar Congressional backbencher, but now the media actively pursues more interviews with our flippant and impudent Congressman. Who knows what he'll say next? He was cornered in Washington by CNN's Manu Raju, who wanted to know if he approved of Trump asking foreign governments to investigate the Bidens, a reasonable question. But our man quickly turned sullen and combative right there on national television, accusing Raju of asking questions for which he'd already drawn conclusions, inarticulately dodging the basic query of whether it was proper for a President to bribe a foreign power to intervene in our elections.

It was a childish and petulant performance, filmed in cringeworthy detail and broadcast throughout the nation. Amodei embarrassed Nevadans by angrily

demanding Raju interview himself. He concluded with a sarcastic "Thanks for doing the best you could" and stormed off.

Amodei later voted against the procedural resolution to release evidence from the closed-door hearings of the Intelligence Committee for the purpose of holding public impeachment hearings. He did tell reporters he wanted to see the committee's report "to see if maybe they pull a rabbit out of the hat."

Amodei won't vote to impeach the President even if a giant rabbit leaps out of the proverbial hat, although that's hardly necessary to understand Trump's perfidy. He's beholden to Trump Republicans and their "see no evil" ways, just as Nevada's rural Republicans are.

The only way to rid ourselves of our Congressman in 2020 is for urban voters to vote in numbers we've never seen before. That means you, Generations X, Y and especially Z. Want to change the world? Here's your chance. □

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