



“Defunding the police means they won’t get the equipment, the safety equipment, the vests, whatever else they need to make sure that they stay alive as they take bullets for you,” Van Drew said.

“Did you see the lady the other day?,” he then said. “The officer, an officer of color by the way, who took three bullets to the head but still was putting the tourniquet around her partner. These are the kinds of people that we’re talking about. And that’s what defunding does.”

Kennedy, who is in her first run for elected office, agreed with the statement. She then accused Van Drew of accusing her, falsely, of supporting defunding police. The dispute goes back to a forum before NAACP officials.

“I believe, as you do, that we need to have (police) that are better trained, that are addressing bias,” Kennedy said. “As we said earlier, bias in our system needs to be addressed. That when we are talking about how we move together as a country and mitigate the violence that we’re seeing in this nation right now. That we should be talking about solutions to that by bringing both parties to the table, making sure law enforcement has a voice at the table as well as community members.”

Kennedy said attack ads against her seem to be from a national Republican template. "I would like to be seen as an individual," she said.

"Maybe look at my policies on my page before slamming me as phony, liberal, elitist, radical," Kennedy said. "You know. All of those things that I think anyone that went and took a look at the website would say, 'Oh. That really doesn't seem to fit that school teacher. I don't think that's her.'"

"Mrs. Kennedy, respectfully, I don't think you're just that 'homespun school teacher,'" Van Drew responded, with a shadow of a smile. "You're a little different. And I don't mean that in a negative way, but you are attempting to achieve something very different. And your family is very different, and there's nothing wrong with any of that. But, you're just not a 'little homespun school teacher.'

"Secondly, I think that, you know, a lot of the ads are offensive because sometimes we don't want to hear what is the truth," Van Drew said.

There were agreements among the two.

Kennedy and Van Drew agreed that the theory of global warming should be taken seriously, that beach replenishment is not an optimum option but needs to continue, and that flood insurance for shore residents must be maintained while at the same time making houses more flood resistant.

Both also agreed that economic development in the region, and especially Atlantic City, requires better public transportation.

Both said that abortion should not be eliminated. Van Drew, though, said unrestricted abortion is not right and specifically said he could not support late term abortions or "live birth abortions."

Both also said they would like to see the federal government stop classifying marijuana as a controlled drug. It would help with research, for exam

Kennedy said “mixed messaging” on public health measures left people uncertain of what was best. Van Drew said the first step in reviewing the pandemic’s history is understanding how it happened. “It did start in China,” Van Drew said. “And we have to understand that our CDC was not allowed

system works.”

Kennedy said paper ballots are secure. “And the whole narrative that President Trump has been pushing, I think, is destructive,” she said.

***Joe Smith is a N.E. Philly native transplanted to South Jersey more than 30 years ago. 'The truth is like a lion. You don't have to defend it.' He is a former editor and current senior staff writer at The Daily Journal in Vineland. Have a news tip? Reach out at (856) 563-5252 or [jsmith@thedailyjournal.com](mailto:jsmith@thedailyjournal.com) or follow me on Twitter, @jpsmith-dj. Help support local journalism with a subscription to The Daily Journal.***