

have been attacked by primates in the last 10 years . . . 100 that we know of. The most important issue of the world? Maybe not, until tragedy strikes your family or your community.

The second notion, that somehow it would not magically stop overnight the ability to have a wild animal, that is not domesticated, that has no business being treated as a pet in somebody's home, is an excuse not to act. That betrays lack of knowledge of what we have done dealing with animal welfare for the last 50 years.

To be able to deal with frameworks moving forward, establishing protections is important. In 2003 we dealt with the problem of having large cats, tigers, lions, panthers that people kept as pets. We're also going to have to do something in the long run with other inappropriate pets like crocodiles and pythons.

These are not trivial items. This is not appropriate treatment for some of God's creatures, and they put families at risk. We in Congress should establish these frameworks to avoid future problems.

The most important point is that, if the provisions of our bill had been established policy, that poor woman wouldn't be in a hospital in Cleveland because the monkey that attacked her would not have been shipped from Missouri (along with others that were disbursed around the country) to Connecticut to her neighbor.

I would suggest that it's important for people to take a step back and look at critical areas of animal welfare and the relationship that we have with them. It is important to pass this legislation, as the House did overwhelmingly last session, only to have it die in the Senate. It's important to pass it again, but it's also important for people to be able to deal with establishing an appropriate framework for relationships with animals so that it doesn't have to become the most important thing in the world for one family or one community. Instead, we have a logical, rational set of policies that are good for the welfare of animals, that protect our families and have the Federal Government playing its appropriate role.

Already 20 States around the country have done their job with an outright prohibition. It's time for the Federal Government to amend the Lacey Act to extend the protections dealing with captive primates, to help in a small but critical way make all our communities more livable and our families safer, healthier and more economically secure.

OUR STANDARD SHOULD BE WHAT UPHOLDS THE DIGNITY OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, yesterday I introduced a privileged resolution

here in the House which asked the Ethics Committee to look into the relationship between campaign contributions and earmarks. This has been a problem, as we know, for a long time but it was brought to a head just recently when a lobby firm, a powerhouse lobby firm that had \$14 million in revenue just last year, it was revealed that they were being investigated by the FBI.

This firm was quite prominent. It passed a lot of campaign contributions to Members here on Capitol Hill. In return, clients of this lobbying firm received in one defense appropriation bill \$300 million. So it was quite lucrative for this firm obviously to do what it was doing.

Anyway, it was revealed that the FBI was investigating this firm, and within days, the firm completely imploded. It has dissolved. One week or so after it was revealed, it's gone, but the damage has been wrought to the dignity and decorum of this House. We sit here today all under suspicion because a firm spread so many campaign contributions around, and many earmarks were received. And no matter what the intent was or the motive here, the appearance of this does not reflect well on the dignity and decorum of the House.

We have to remember that most of the earmarks sought by this firm, this firm that is now under investigation, are for for-profit entities, private businesses. These earmarks are essentially no-bid contracts. A Member of Congress will simply say, I want an earmark for this firm. Maybe it might be in his district, it might not, but it's a private, for-profit-making company, getting a Federal contract without scrutiny otherwise, with nothing and no other bids. Nobody else can bid on it.

Here, let me just step back for a second. One thing that is unbelievable here is we will be considering an omnibus appropriation bill, a \$410 billion bill, tomorrow. We received a list of the earmarks that will be in that bill yesterday. So I think within 36 hours or so of receiving the list of 9,000 earmarks, we will be considering the bill.

Now, we have had rules in this House, and good rules, passed which stipulate that we have transparency, that we are supposed to be given notice of these earmarks well in advance. I would submit that 36 hours for 9,000 is hardly transparency, but even if it were, transparency has to be followed by accountability. Accountability means that somebody should be able to stand up and challenge any of these earmarks, to challenge whether or not a for-profit entity, a company in somebody's district, ought to be getting a sole-source contract by a Member, with no scrutiny by other Members of this body. I cannot come to the floor tomorrow, nor can any other Member, and challenge any of these earmarks, to look at the relationship between earmarks, campaign contributions, or to

simply say is this a good use of Federal spending.

Then we found that—add insult to injury, 9,000 earmarks with minimal notice—we found that the PMA Group, who lobbied for many earmarks in last year's defense bill the year before that, clients of the PMA Group received as many as up to a dozen earmarks in this omnibus appropriation bill that we'll be considering tomorrow. Let me say that again. A firm under investigation by Federal authorities, for what might be misused or mishandled campaign contributions to Members of Congress, clients of that firm are receiving earmarks in the appropriation bill that we'll be passing tomorrow, and not one Member here has the ability to go in and challenge a single one of those earmarks. It's take-it-or-leave-it on the whole bill, one vote at the end, take-it-or-leave-it, no ability to challenge. That simply isn't right, Madam Speaker. That's not right.

That's why we need the Ethics Committee to take a look at this. We know from press reports that somebody's taking a look at it. Politico reported on February 12 that, "Several sources said FBI agents have spent months laying the groundwork for their current investigation, including conducting research on earmarks and campaign contributions."

Now, we may not want to look at it, but the Justice Department is. We have the obligation here to uphold the dignity and decorum of the House. Our standard should not be investigations, convictions, and imprisonment. It ought to be what upholds the dignity of the House. Let's pass this resolution.

THE ESSENCE OF THE GREATNESS OF AMERICA LIES IN ITS PEOPLE, NOT IN ITS GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting sitting on the floor listening to the speeches during this period of time.

On the one hand, I listened to the gentleman from Virginia talk about a bipartisan approach to deal with our problem of fiscally irresponsibility and the load of debt that we are placing on our children and grandchildren. On the other hand, I did hear a gentleman from the other side of the aisle talk about why it's Bush's fault.

When I was in school, they were teaching us debate. We talked about the ad hominem argument, the personalization of the argument. Usually that meant that when you didn't have the facts you tried to make it personal.

There was also discussion by a gentleman from the other side of the aisle about the fact that we're finally going to be concerned about the people of America, as if those who disagree with you would be people who are not interested in Americans. I'm not sure that

gets us anywhere. As a matter of fact, I think that gets us nowhere. It is that kind of quasi-debate which leads down the wrong path.

We are without a doubt facing a very difficult economic situation, and as did others, I returned to my district to talk to constituents about that. I had a tele-town hall where we had over 6,000 people on the line, and I listened to their comments. I also sent out a questionnaire by e-mail, and thus far we've received over 1,800 responses. I thought it might be informative to tell this body the feelings of the people in my district, at least as reflected in this survey; although I realize it is not a scientific survey.

In response to the question, what is the most immediate economic concern you face, overwhelmingly, 53 percent of the respondents said they were most concerned about declining value of retirement accounts. We ought to be very concerned about that, because if we send a message to the world that we are fiscally irresponsible, that more and more spending and more and more debt is the way to get out of the situation that we got into because of spending and debt, those retirement accounts are going to lose more value. We ought to be concerned about the future, as well as the immediate present.

Secondly, in response to the question, what is the most important element of an economic stimulus package, the number one response was tax cuts. Why? Because many of the American people do believe the argument that raising taxes in the midst of a recession doesn't make sense and that tax cuts, properly articulated, properly enforced, create a stimulus to the private sector, particularly the small- and medium-sized businesses where the jobs are really created, not the government sector. Secondly, the biggest response was, nothing, the economy is strongest when government does not interfere. And the third response was funding for infrastructure projects. And unfortunately, the percentage of money that goes to infrastructure projects is relatively small, as is the percentage that goes towards tax cuts.

The next question: Are you satisfied with the economic stimulus package Congress passed? Thirty-four percent of the people in my district said, no, the details of the size and scope needed to be worked out. Perhaps they thought having less than 24 hours to look at a 1,076 page bill was inappropriate. The second largest response, 33 percent, was, no, Congress shouldn't have passed any stimulus package. Those are concerned that a stimulus package does not stimulate. And third, by a much, much smaller margin, yes, anything the government can do is better than nothing.

The next question: I expect the worse of the economic crisis to be over within—and this is truly difficult to read because it said that 42 percent of the respondents thought it would take 24 months or more. Second largest re-

sponse was 13 to 18 months by 21 percent. And then 17 percent believe it would be 19 to 24 months. In other words, the American people, at least reflected in my district by this survey, understand the seriousness and the depth of this economic difficulty.

And lastly, I asked them: The economic crisis' impact on me is such that—and the response, number one, was, I am okay right now, but I'm worried about what will happen to me if the economy continues to get worse, 59 percent. Thirty-three percent of the people said, I will face tough decisions but I will survive. And less than 9 percent said, I do not know how I will make it through the time.

Interesting thing about that response is the resiliency of the American people. They do believe, they do have faith that we will get out of this, but they believe that we will get out of it through the ingenuity, the creativity, the stick-to-it-iveness of the work ethic of the American people, not government.

While certain government programs might be able to assist, we should not forget that the essence of the greatness of America lies in its people, not in its government. This government reflects its people. This government is one that was set up to protect the rights of the people but also to be protected against an overweening government. If we are to work ourselves out of this economy, we must rely on the people for their creativity and do nothing that impinges upon that.

□ 1100

CONGRATULATING DANCE MARATHON AT PENN STATE UNIVERSITY IN ITS MONEY RAISING EFFORT TO COMBAT CHILDREN'S CANCER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a great cause and to congratulate the over 15,000 young men and women at Penn State University who participated in the largest student-run philanthropy in the world—THON.

THON, which is short for Dance Marathon, is a student-run venture led by the Penn State University Interfraternity and the Panhellenic Council whose mission is to conquer pediatric cancer by providing outstanding emotional and financial support for the children, families, researchers and staff at the Penn State Children's Hospital.

Madam Speaker, this is no ordinary student organization. Dating back to 1972 when the first THON was held, a small group of dancers raised approximately \$2,000. This past weekend, over 15,000 student volunteers raised \$7.49 million to fight pediatric cancer. Since its inception in 1972, THON has raised

more than \$52 million for this worthy cause. And while this is a yearlong, never-ending fight against pediatric cancer, it culminates each year with a 46-hour dance marathon. With 708 dancers this year representing over 350 student organizations and 180 individual groups, THON has shattered previous year's record.

Madam Speaker, it is this type of leadership and dedication that gives me renewed hope that our Nation's best days are still ahead of us. As a proud Penn State alumnus, I join with colleagues such as Congressman WOLF, a Penn State alumni, in saying it is not only an honor to be associated with a first class institution, it is a privilege to share that association with the 15,000 students that participated in THON.

We Penn Staters have a saying: "We are Penn State." But, Madam Speaker, as you can see, it goes without question that these students are truly the "we" in Penn State.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 3 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord of history and Father of all humanity, as we mark Black History Month this year, anxiety gives us much to pray about. Yet we have much to celebrate as well.

The Honorable JOHN LEWIS tells a story which may serve as a parable for African American history in the United States. On a Sunday afternoon, he was one of 15 children who took refuge in Aunt Sevena's house because a storm was brewing. As the storm let loose, the house began to sway. The wood beneath their feet began to bend. A corner of the room started lifting up.

That was when Aunt Sevena told the children to line up and hold hands. Then she had them walk as a group back and forth from kitchen to the front of the house toward every corner of the room that was rising. Fifteen children were walking with the wind, holding that trembling house down from flying to the sky with the weight of their own bodies. They had learned that You, Lord, were right in the midst of the storm and Your voice could be heard in the thunder.

Throughout history, Lord, Your presence can be found. Be with this House