

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