

2012 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 332

Commending Vanessa Reese Crawford, Sheriff of the City of Petersburg.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 10, 2012

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2012

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford was born and reared in Petersburg, and attended the Petersburg public schools; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, Vanessa Reese Crawford served the Commonwealth as an administrator at the Virginia Department of Corrections for more than 28 years prior to her retirement in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford's extensive administrative, supervisory, security, and treatment experience as a Superintendent of two state correctional facilities, Assistant Superintendent rehabilitation counselor, and successful fiscal manager qualified her for the position of sheriff of Petersburg, and after her retirement she was sworn in on December 15, 2005, as the first African American female sheriff in the history of Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, as sheriff, Vanessa Reese Crawford has become one of the most important leaders in the city, and under her leadership, the Petersburg Sheriff's Office can take pride in having one of the most competent and dedicated staff in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford and her staff have raised the visibility of the Petersburg Sheriff's Office in the community through the implementation of more than 30 programs designed to meet the needs of the community, including partnerships with the Petersburg Department of Parks and Leisure Services to sponsor a Law Enforcement Camp for Girls and Boys, a Bike Rodeo, and summer programs to students, all of which are provided free of charge to citizens; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Vanessa Reese Crawford, the Petersburg Sheriff's Office also collaborates with other city agencies, the faith community, and civic organizations to offer the annual Back-to-School Celebration, and during the school year, sheriff's deputies are involved in the Petersburg public schools teaching students gun safety that emphasizes "Stop, don't touch, leave the area and tell an adult"; and

WHEREAS, the Parents And Teens Riding It Out Together program (P.A.T.R.I.O.T.), an initiative inspired by Vanessa Reese Crawford, is offered to new teenage drivers by the Petersburg Sheriff's Office in collaboration with Judge Valentine W. Southall, Jr., of the Petersburg Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, the Virginia Department of State Police, and the Southside Regional Medical Center; the program will be expanded next school year to include the driver's education program in the public schools; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford has led the Petersburg Sheriff's Office in providing cultural and educational programs for seniors in the community, such as information concerning identity theft, Internet and telephone scams, and other safety issues; and

WHEREAS, to help reduce recidivism through public awareness and involvement, the Petersburg Sheriff's Office hosted a Community Re-Entry Forum for ex-offenders, a multi-agency effort led by Vanessa Reese Crawford to provide services to ex-offenders and assist and encourage them to pursue productive options and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford was unanimously elected President of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute in April 2011, becoming the first female president as well as the first sheriff from Petersburg to be elected president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute; and

WHEREAS, as president, Vanessa Reese Crawford is leading the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, a statewide nonprofit organization, to embrace its mission in exemplary fashion to promote education and training for Virginia's youth, provide scholarships for criminal justice majors attending Virginia colleges and universities, and provide training opportunities for sheriffs and deputies; and

WHEREAS, among her many professional responsibilities as Sheriff of Petersburg, Vanessa Reese Crawford willingly shares her gifts, time, talent, experience, and expertise with numerous community and civic organizations: she is an active member and trustee of Good Shepherd Baptist Church in Petersburg; a member of the Civilian Review Board, Petersburg Athletic League Board, Petersburg American Cancer Board, and Women's Committee of Petersburg Symphony Orchestra; President of Petersburg High School Boosters Club; Vice President of the Petersburg Kiwanis Lunch Club; former member of the Petersburg School Board and the District 19 Community Service Board; a member of Camelot Neighborhood Watch Association, which she organized; and she was appointed by the Governor to the Adult Fatality Review Board and to the Governor's Focus Group on Re-Entry; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Reese Crawford's noteworthy accomplishments and achievements and her

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contributions to the citizens of Petersburg are worthy of commendation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Vanessa Reese Crawford, the first African American female sheriff of Petersburg; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Vanessa Reese Crawford as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation of her outstanding service to the Commonwealth and the citizens of the City of Petersburg.