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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 274

Offered February 14, 2018

Commending Vanessa R. Crawford.

Patrons—Aird; Senators: Dance, Lucas, Mason, McClellan and McPike

WHEREAS, Vanessa R. Crawford, who has served and protected the residents of Petersburg as sheriff for more than a decade, was elected as president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association in September 2017; and

WHEREAS, a proud native of Petersburg, Vanessa Crawford previously served with the Department of Corrections for nearly 29 years, working her way up the ranks to become the first female superintendent to run an all-male correctional facility; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the community, Vanessa Crawford ran for and was elected as sheriff of Petersburg in 2005; she was the first woman sheriff in the city's history and was the only African American woman serving as a sheriff in the nation until January 2017; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure as sheriff, Vanessa Crawford has ably and effectively managed the Petersburg Sheriff's Office, supervising more than 100 deputies and staff members; she has increased public safety, while building relationships based on trust and mutual respect between law enforcement and members of the public; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Crawford and her staff have raised the visibility of the Petersburg Sheriff's Office in the community through the implementation of innovative programs designed to meet the needs of all Petersburg residents, including the TRIAD program, which aims to reduce the fear of crime and victimization among senior citizens, and gun safety and distracted driving programs for students; and

WHEREAS, to help reduce recidivism through public awareness and involvement, Vanessa Crawford organizes an annual re-entry program for ex-offenders, a multi-agency effort that provides services to ex-offenders and encourages them to pursue productive options and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, responsible for the administration of the Petersburg City Jail and Jail Annex, Vanessa Crawford achieved certification as a certified jail manager through the Jail Manager Certification Commission, and she is the only sheriff in the Commonwealth to become a United States Department of Justice certified auditor for the Prison Rape Elimination Act; and

WHEREAS, deeply respected by her peers in law enforcement, Vanessa Crawford was unanimously elected by the 123 sheriffs in the Commonwealth to serve as president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute in 2010 and unanimously elected to serve on the Virginia Sheriffs' Association Board of Directors in 2012; and

WHEREAS, during her one-year term as president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association, Vanessa Crawford will represent and advocate for sheriffs, sheriff's deputies, and sheriff's office personnel, as well as work to enhance the criminal justice system in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Crawford also serves the community as a member and leader of numerous local and state service organizations, and she enjoys fellowship and worship with the congregation of Good Shepherd Baptist Church, where she is a member of the Trustee Ministry; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Vanessa R. Crawford on being elected as president of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association in 2017; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Vanessa R. Crawford as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her exceptional leadership in law enforcement and her commitment to serving the residents of Petersburg and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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