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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 312
Offered March 9, 2026

Commending Task Force Francine.

Patrons—Carr, Cousins, Fowler, LeVere Bolling, McGuire and Schmidt; Senators: Bagby, Jones and VanValkenburg

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2025, the Richmond community came together on behalf of a beloved downtown resident, Francine the cat, who had vanished from her home in the Lowe's Home Improvement store on Broad Street, forming a coalition of individuals and organizations known as Task Force Francine to lead the interstate search and rescue operation; and

WHEREAS, Francine, a calico cat known for her serene disposition, became a local celebrity after making her home in the Central Richmond Lowe's several years ago, with shoppers often posting photos on social media of the store's "queen" as she lounged upon thrones of boxes and surveyed her domain; and

WHEREAS, in September 2025, members of the community noticed that Francine had gone missing, and subsequent reviews of security camera footage confirmed that on September 18, she had boarded a delivery truck and was accidentally sealed inside upon its departure; and

WHEREAS, on September 20, Francine was spotted 85 miles away from Richmond at the Lowe's Regional Distribution Center in Garysburg, North Carolina; workers attempted to contain her in the delivery truck, but she ultimately escaped into the massive, high-security facility; and

WHEREAS, as concern grew in the Richmond community, Task Force Francine began to take shape on September 28, with the launch of an Instagram account, @wheresfrancine, which gained tens of thousands of followers and turned the local search into a viral, multi-state movement; and

WHEREAS, on October 4, Task Force Francine utilized the Best Friends Animal Society Petition Platform to launch the "Urgent Action to Recover Francine, the Missing Lowe's Cat" petition; the organization leveraged its national influence to garner nearly 10,000 signatures and presented Lowe's with a professional framework for a safe rescue; and

WHEREAS, Task Force Francine along with allied groups advocated for Lowe's to grant entry to vetted trappers from the Richmond SPCA and the pet tracking organization Carmen Brothers, allow experts to review security cameras to pinpoint Francine's location, and permit the deployment of thermal drones and specialized 360-degree cameras in and around the facility; and

WHEREAS, representatives from the Central Richmond Lowe's traveled to North Carolina, bringing Francine's bowl and favorite food in an attempt to draw her out, and Lowe's took an active role in the search, coordinating data sharing and allowing experts to place humane traps around the facility; and

WHEREAS, Francine was secured on the night of October 5-6, and at 4:00 AM on October 6, Central Richmond Lowe's managers Mike Sida and Wayne Schneider drove to North Carolina to bring her home; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, Francine officially returned to the Central Richmond Lowe's, now sporting a colorful harness and a new AirTag for safety; and

WHEREAS, numerous individuals played an important role in the rescue of Francine, particularly Elise Gilmore, Chas Nabi, Aeron Spencer, Heather Maupin, Eric Maupin, Britt Nova, Richmond SPCA, Christie Peters, Elise Traub, and Peggy Lynch; and

WHEREAS, members of Task Force Francine held the Francine Fest on October 8 at Main Line Brewery, urging fans of Francine to celebrate from afar while she remained at the store to decompress; hundreds of guests gathered for live music and fellowship, raising significant funds for the Richmond SPCA, Richmond Animal Care and Control, and SOS Cats RVA; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Task Force Francine for coordinating a multistate rescue operation for a beloved Richmond resident; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Task Force Francine as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its incredible efforts to bring Francine the cat home.

INTRODUCED

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