MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

By: Representative Montgomery (15th)

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 379

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO AWARD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS TO WORLD WAR II VETERANS WHO WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR SCHOOL CURRICULUM DUE TO THEIR MILITARY SERVICE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR THE DIPLOMA; TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE RECOGNITION IN AWARDING DIPLOMAS TO VETERANS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. (1) The school board of a local school district may award a standard high school diploma in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education to veterans of World War II who were unable to complete their school curriculum due to their military service. The diploma is available to any honorably discharged veteran residing in Mississippi who was scheduled to graduate between 1941 and 1950 but was inducted into military service between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946, before completing the necessary graduation requirements. Family members of deceased eligible veterans may apply for the diploma to be awarded posthumously.

(2) The State Board of Education shall develop a uniform application for persons seeking a diploma under subsection (1) of this section. The application shall request no less than the following information:

(a) The veteran's name, social security number and date of birth;

(b) The last year the veteran was in school and the veteran's grade level during that year;

(c) The year the veteran left school to enter World War II;
(d) The year the veteran would have graduated from high school;
(e) The name and location of the school attended;
(f) The date of the veteran's enlistment or draft;
(g) The veteran's service number;
(h) The veteran's date of honorable discharge;
(i) A copy of the veteran's DD-214 form, if available;
and
(j) Any other information deemed relevant by the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education shall provide the State Veterans Affairs Board, local school districts and county departments of human services with copies of the uniform application.

(3) A person may request an application from a local school district, any county department of human services, the State Department of Education or the State Veterans Affairs Board. Completed applications for a diploma may be submitted to the school board of the local school district in which the veteran resides (or resided if the veteran is deceased), although attendance in that particular school district is not a requirement for a diploma. Upon verifying the information contained in the application, including verifying the veteran's military service information with the State Veterans Affairs Board, the school district may award a standard high school diploma to the veteran.

(4) Local school districts are encouraged to provide appropriate recognition, which may include special ceremonies, to veterans who are awarded high school diplomas under this section.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.