HOUSE BILL NO. 396
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO AWARD HONORARY
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS TO WORLD WAR II AND KOREAN CONFLICT VETERANS
WHO WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION DUE TO THEIR MILITARY
SERVICE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE
 VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD TO DEVELOP A UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR THE
DIPLOMA; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE
 VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD TO PROVIDE COMMUNITIES WITH INFORMATION ON
HOSTING DIPLOMA CEREMONIES FOR 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 an honorary high school diploma in a form prescribed and
supplied to school districts by the State Board of Education to
veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict who were unable
to complete their education due to their military service. The
honorary diploma is available to any honorably discharged veteran
residing in Mississippi who was scheduled to graduate between 1941
and 1955 but was inducted into military service 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 and State Veterans Affairs
Board jointly 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 or the Korean Conflict;
(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 or State Veterans Affairs Board.

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

(3) A person may request an application from any local school district, county department of human services or local veterans services office. Completed applications for a diploma may be submitted to the veteran's local school district, regardless of whether or not the veteran attended school in that district. Upon verifying the information contained in the application, including verifying the veteran's military service information with the State Veterans Affairs Board, and determining the veteran's eligibility for the honorary high school diploma, the local school board may award the diploma to the veteran. The diploma shall indicate clearly that the recipient is a veteran of World War II or the Korean Conflict and that the diploma was issued at a later date due to the veteran's participation in the war. The State Department of Education and the State Veterans Affairs Board may work together to provide communities with information about hosting a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans Day. The diploma shall be provided to the veteran or, if the veteran is deceased, to the veteran's family.
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.