SENATE BILL NO. 2242

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD, TO DEVISE AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM WHICH AWARDS FULL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS TO QUALIFYING WORLD WAR II VETERANS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, during the 1940's, thousands of young men and women across the United States left high school to serve valorously in the armed forces during World War II; and

WHEREAS, the sacrifices of these young men and women earned America its freedom, helped the United States gain status as a superpower, and shaped the course of history throughout the entire world; and

WHEREAS, after World War II ended, many of these brave veterans were unable to finish high school for various reasons, but they led productive lives and served their communities throughout their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, awarding high school diplomas to qualifying World War II veterans would be a small and overdue gesture of our society's profound gratitude for the sacrifice these courageous individuals made in the name of freedom; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

SECTION 1. The State Department of Education, with the cooperation of the State Veterans' Affairs Board, shall devise and implement a program which awards full high school diplomas to qualifying World War II veterans. The purpose of the program is to award high school diplomas to World War II veterans who left high school prior to graduation to enter United States military service. The department and the board shall jointly develop an application procedure, distribute applications and publicize the
program. All honorable discharged World War II veterans who are residents or former residents of the state, who served between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946, and who did not return to school and complete their education after the war shall be eligible to receive a diploma. Diplomas may be issued posthumously. Upon approval of an application, the department shall issue an honorary high school diploma for an eligible veteran. The diploma shall indicate the veteran's school of attendance. The department and board shall work together to provide communities with information about hosting a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans Day. The diploma shall be mailed 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.