HOUSE BILL NO. 776

AN ACT TO CREATE A NEW CODE SECTION 27-19-56.32, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF DISTINCTIVE LICENSE TAGS IN SUPPORT OF MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC EDUCATION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE IMPOSITION OF AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH LICENSE TAGS; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FEES COLLECTED FOR SUCH DISTINCTIVE LICENSE TAGS SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE MISSISSIPPI FIRE FIGHTER’S MEMORIAL BURN CENTER FUND AND THE STATE HIGHWAY FUND; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The following shall be codified as Section 27-19-56.32, Mississippi Code of 1972:

27-19-56.32. (1) Any owner of a motor vehicle who is a resident of this state, upon payment of the road and bridge privilege taxes, ad valorem taxes and registration fees as prescribed by law for private carriers of passengers, pickup trucks and other noncommercial motor vehicles, and upon payment of an additional fee in the amount provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall be issued a distinctive license tag for each motor vehicle registered in his name identifying such person as a supporter of Mississippi public education. The distinctive license tags so issued shall be of such color and design as the State Tax Commission, with the advice of the State Board of Education, may prescribe, and shall consist of such letters or numbers, or both, as may be necessary to distinguish each license tag.

(2) Application for the distinctive license tags authorized by this section shall be made to the county tax collector on forms prescribed by the State Tax Commission. The application and the additional fee imposed under subsection (3) of this section, less...
five percent (5%) thereof to be retained by the tax collector, shall be remitted to the State Tax Commission within seven (7) days of the date the application is made. The portion of the additional fee retained by the tax collector shall be deposited into the county general fund.

(3) Beginning with any registration year commencing on or after July 1, 2002, any person applying for a distinctive license tag under this section shall pay an additional fee in the amount of Fifty Dollars ($50.00) for each distinctive license tag applied for under this section, which shall be in addition to all other taxes and fees. The additional fee paid shall be for a period of time to run concurrent with the vehicle’s established license tag year. The additional fee is due and payable at the time the original application is made for a distinctive license tag under this section and thereafter annually at the time of renewal registration as long as the owner retains the distinctive license tag. If the owner does not wish to retain the distinctive license tag, he must surrender it to the local county tax collector.

(4) The State Tax Commission shall deposit all fees into the State Treasury on the day collected. At the end of each month, the State Tax Commission shall certify to the State Treasurer the total fees collected under this section from the issuance of the distinctive license tags issued under this section. The State Treasurer shall distribute an amount equal to Seven Dollars ($7.00) of the additional fees collected for each such distinctive license tag issued under this section to the State General Fund, and the remainder of such additional fees collected shall be distributed by the State Treasurer as follows:

(a) Thirty-seven Dollars and Fifty Cents ($37.50) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the Public Education Support Fund created under Section 2 of House Bill No.____, 2002 Regular Session.
(b) One Dollar ($1.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the Mississippi Fire Fighter's Memorial Burn Center Fund created pursuant to Section 7-9-70.

(c) Two Dollars ($2.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited to the credit of the State Highway Fund to be expended solely for the repair, maintenance, construction or reconstruction of highways.

(5) A regular license tag must be properly displayed as required by law until replaced by a distinctive license tag under this section. The regular license tag must be surrendered to the tax collector upon issuance of the distinctive license tag under this section. The tax collector shall issue up to two (2) license decals for each distinctive license tag issued under this section, which will expire the same month and year as the regular license tag.

(6) In the case of loss or theft of a distinctive license tag issued under this section, the owner may make application and affidavit for a replacement distinctive license tag as provided by Section 27-19-37. The fee for a replacement distinctive license tag shall be Ten Dollars ($10.00). The tax collector receiving such application and affidavit shall be entitled to retain and deposit into the county general fund five percent (5%) of the fee for such replacement license tag and the remainder shall be distributed proportionately in the same manner as funds from the sale of regular distinctive license tags issued under this section.

SECTION 2. (1) There is established in the State Treasury a fund known as the "Mississippi Public Education Support Fund" (hereinafter referred to as "fund"). The fund shall consist of monies required to be deposited therein under Section 1 of House Bill No. ____, 2002, Regular Session, and such other monies as the
Legislature may authorize or direct to be deposited into the fund. Monies in the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, may be expended by the Mississippi Department of Education to develop, implement and administer reading, character education and drop-out prevention programs. Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned on amounts in the fund shall be deposited to the credit of the fund.

**SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.