HOUSE BILL NO. 1246

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 27-19-56.5 AND 27-55-41, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE UNREMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE OF A PURPLE HEART MEDAL RECIPIENT SHALL BE ENTITLED TO EXEMPTION FROM MOTOR VEHICLE AD VALOREM TAXES, PRIVILEGE TAXES AND OTHER TAXES AND FEES FOR ONE PURPLE HEART DISTINCTIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAG; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 27-19-56.5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

27-19-56.5. In recognition of the patriotic service rendered by Mississippians who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and by Mississippians who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal, any such person is privileged to obtain one (1) distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag identifying him as a Pearl Harbor survivor or not more than two (2) distinctive motor vehicle license plates or tags identifying him as a Purple Heart Medal recipient. The distinctive plates or tags shall be of a color and design designated by the State Tax Commission.

The distinctive license plates shall be prepared by the State Tax Commission and shall be issued through the tax collectors of the counties in the same manner as are other motor vehicle license plates or tags. A tag fee of Fifteen Dollars ($15.00), in addition to all other taxes and fees, shall be collected by the tax collector for the Pearl Harbor distinctive tag. The first distinctive tag issued to Purple Heart Medal recipients under the provisions of this section shall be exempt from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes and all other taxes and fees. There shall be no exemption from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes or other taxes and fees for the issuance of a second distinctive tag to Purple Heart Medal recipients.
Heart Medal recipients. However, the surviving spouse of a deceased person who was issued a Purple Heart Medal distinctive license plate or tag under this section shall be entitled to apply for or retain one (1) such license tag and may continue annually to renew registration for such distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag for as long as the spouse remains unmarried. At the time of application or renewal registration, a surviving spouse who desires to retain such distinctive plate or tag shall file with the county tax collector a sworn statement that the spouse is unmarried, and any such vehicle when so registered shall be exempt from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes and all other taxes and fees. The tax collector shall monthly forward the additional fee of Fifteen Dollars ($15.00) charged for issuance of a Pearl Harbor distinctive tag to the State Tax Commission which shall deposit such fee to the credit of the State General Fund. An applicant for a distinctive tag under this section shall present to the issuing official either (a) written proof that the applicant is an honorably discharged former member of one (1) of the Armed Forces of the United States and, while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, was present during the attack on the island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, between the hours of 7:55 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., Hawaii time, or (b) written proof that the applicant is a Purple Heart Medal recipient. The distinctive license plates or tags so issued shall be used only upon a personally or jointly owned private passenger vehicle (to include station wagons, recreational motor vehicles and pickup trucks) registered in the name, or jointly in the name, of the person making application therefor, and when issued to such person shall be used upon the vehicle for which issued in lieu of the standard license plate or license tag normally issued for such vehicle.

The distinctive license plates shall not be transferable between motor vehicle owners; and in the event the owner of a
vehicle bearing a distinctive plate shall sell, trade, exchange or otherwise dispose of the vehicle, such plate shall be retained by such owner and returned to the tax collector.

SECTION 2. Section 27-51-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

27-51-41. (1) The exemptions from the provisions of this chapter shall be confined to those persons or property exempted by this chapter or by the provisions of the Constitution of the United States or the State of Mississippi. No exemption as now provided by any other statute shall be valid as against the tax levied by this chapter. Any subsequent exemption from the tax levied hereunder shall be provided by amendment to this section which shall be inserted in the bill at length.

(2) The following shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation:

(a) All motor vehicles, as defined in this chapter, and including motor-propelled farm implements and vehicles, while in the hands of bona fide dealers as merchandise and which are not being operated upon the highways of this state.

(b) All motor vehicles belonging to the federal government or the State of Mississippi or any agencies or instrumentalities thereof.

(c) All motor vehicles owned by any school district in the state.

(d) All motor vehicles owned by any fire protection district incorporated in accordance with Sections 19-5-151 through 19-5-207 or by any fire protection grading district incorporated in accordance with Sections 19-5-215 through 19-5-243.

(e) All motor vehicles owned by units of the Mississippi National Guard.

(f) All motor vehicles which are exempted from highway privilege taxes under Section 27-19-1 et seq.

(g) All motor vehicles operated in this state as common and contract carriers of property, private commercial carriers of
property, private carriers of property and buses, all of which have a gross weight in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds.

(h) Antique automobiles as defined in Section 27-19-47, and antique pickup trucks as provided for under Section 27-19-47.2, Mississippi Code of 1972.

(i) Street rods as defined in Section 27-19-56.6.

(j) Motor vehicles owned by disabled American veterans, or by spouses of deceased disabled American veterans, in accordance with Section 27-19-53.

(k) One (1) motor vehicle owned by the unremarried surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while on active duty, is killed or dies and one (1) motor vehicle owned by the unremarried surviving spouse of a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States or of the National Guard who, while on active duty for training, is killed or dies.

(l) Motor vehicles owned by recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor or by former prisoners of war, or by spouses of such deceased persons, in accordance with Section 27-19-54.

(m) (i) One (1) private carrier of passengers, as defined in Section 27-19-3, owned by any religious society, ecclesiastical body or any congregation thereof which is used exclusively for such society and not for profit.

(ii) All motor vehicles owned by any such religious society or any educational institution having a seating capacity greater than seven (7) passengers and used exclusively for transporting passengers for religious or educational purposes and not for profit.

(n) All motor vehicles primarily used as rentals under rental agreements with a term of not more than thirty (30) continuous days each and under the control of persons who are

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engaged in the business of renting such motor vehicles and who are
subject to the tax under Section 27-65-231.

(o) Antique motorcycles as defined in Section
27-19-47.1.

(p) One (1) motor vehicle owned by a recipient of the
Purple Heart, and one (1) motor vehicle owned by the unremarried
surviving spouse of a recipient of the Purple Heart, as provided
in Section 27-19-56.5.

(q) Motor vehicles that are eligible to display an
authentic historical license plate as provided for in Section
27-19-56.11.

(3) Any claim for tax exemption by authority of the
above-mentioned code sections or by any other legal authority
shall be set out in the application for the road and bridge
privilege license, and the specific legal authority for such tax
exemption claim shall be cited in said application, and such
authority cited shall be shown by the tax collector on the tax
receipt as his authority for not collecting such ad valorem taxes,
and the tax collector shall carry forward such information in his
tax collection reports.

(4) Any motor vehicle driven over the highways of this state
to the extent that the owner of such motor vehicle is required to
purchase a road and bridge privilege license in this state, yet
the legal situs of such motor vehicle is located in another state,
shall be exempt from ad valorem taxes authorized by this chapter.

(5) If a taxpayer shall sell, trade or otherwise dispose of
a vehicle on which the ad valorem and road and bridge privilege
taxes have been paid in any county in the state, he shall remove
the license plate from the vehicle. Such license plate must be
surrendered to the issuing authority with the corresponding tax
receipt, if required, and credit shall be allowed for the taxes
paid for the remaining tax year on like privilege or ad valorem
taxes due on another vehicle owned by the seller or transferor or
by the seller's or transferor's spouse or dependent child. If the
seller or transferor does not elect to receive such credit at the
time the license plate is surrendered, the issuing authority shall
issue a certificate of credit to the seller or transferor, or to the
seller's or transferor's spouse or dependent child, or to any
other person, business or corporation, at the direction of the
seller or transferor, for the remaining unexpired taxes prorated
from the first day of the month following the month in which the
license plate is surrendered. The total of such credit may be
used by the person or entity to whom the certificate of credit is
issued, regardless of the relative amounts attributed to privilege
taxes or to county, school or municipal ad valorem taxes. Any
credit allowed for taxes due or any certificate of credit issued
may be applied to like taxes owed in any county by the person to
whom the credit is allowed or by the person possessing the
certificate of credit. No credit, however, shall be allowed on
the charge made for the license plate. Such license plates
surrendered to the tax collector shall be retained by him, and in
no event shall such license plate be attached to any vehicle after
being surrendered to the tax collector, nor shall any license
plate be transferred from one (1) vehicle to any other vehicle.

(6) If the person owning a vehicle subject to taxation under
the provisions of this chapter does not operate such vehicle on
the highways of this state from the date of acquisition or, if
previously registered, from the end of the anniversary month of
the tag and decals to the date on which he makes application for a
current license tag or decals, he shall pay such ad valorem tax
for a period of twelve (12) months beginning with the first day of
the month in which he applies for a current license tag or decals
under Chapter 19, Title 27, Mississippi Code of 1972. The owner
shall submit an affidavit with an application attesting to the
fact that the vehicle was not operated on the highways of this
state from the date of acquisition or, if previously registered,
from the end of the anniversary month of the tag and decals to the
date on which he makes application for the current license tag or
decals.

(7) Any person found violating any of the provisions of this
section shall be arrested and tried, and if found guilty shall be
fined in an amount double the total amount of taxes involved.

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