

By: Senator(s) Furniss

To: Finance

SENATE BILL NO. 2985

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 27-19-44, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REQUIRE DECALS ISSUED FOR DISTINCTIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE
3 TAGS OR PLATES TO IDENTIFY THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE MOTOR VEHICLE
4 IS REGISTERED; TO AMEND SECTION 27-19-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
5 1972, IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 27-19-44, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 27-19-44. (1) (a) For any distinctive license tag or plate
10 authorized by the Legislature from and after July 1, 2000, the
11 requirements of this subsection must be met before the State Tax
12 Commission may prepare or issue any such license tag or plate.
13 The organization or other entity for which the Legislature
14 authorized the distinctive license tag or plate must submit proof
15 satisfactory to the State Tax Commission that at least one hundred
16 (100) of such license tags or plates will be purchased and must
17 deposit with the commission an amount necessary to purchase one
18 hundred (100) of such license tags or plates. The organization or
19 other entity for which the Legislature authorized the distinctive
20 license tag or plate must satisfy the requirements of this
21 subsection (1) within two (2) years after the effective date of
22 the law authorizing the license tag or plate in order to permit
23 the license tag or plate to be prepared and issued.

24 (b) If the organization or other entity for which the
25 Legislature authorized the distinctive license tag or plate meets
26 the requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection, the State
27 Tax Commission shall prepare and issue the distinctive license tag
28 or plate. If the State Tax Commission prepares and issues a



29 distinctive license tag or plate for the organization or other
30 entity, the commission shall review the number of such license
31 tags or plates issued during the period for the license tag or
32 plate series. If the number of distinctive license tags or plates
33 falls below one hundred (100) in the last year of the series, the
34 license tag or plate shall be discontinued at the end of the
35 period for the series.

36 (c) If a distinctive license tag or plate is
37 discontinued under paragraph (b) of this subsection, the
38 organization or other entity for which the license tag or plate
39 was discontinued may prepare a distinctive license tag or plate
40 decal. The distinctive license tag or plate decal shall be of
41 such size, color and design as may be agreed upon by the
42 organization or other entity and the State Tax Commission.
43 However, the State Tax Commission shall have final approval of the
44 size, color and design of the decal. The distinctive license tag
45 or plate decals shall be prepared and sold by the organization or
46 other entity, and the proceeds derived from the sale of such
47 decals shall be retained by the organization or other entity for
48 any use deemed appropriate by the organization or other entity.

49 (2) From and after July 1, 2002, one of the decals issued
50 for all distinctive license tags or plates shall identify the
51 county in which the motor vehicle is registered. The State Tax
52 Commission shall prescribe the manner in which the county of
53 registration is identified on the decal.

54 **SECTION 2.** Section 27-19-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
55 amended as follows:

56 27-19-31. (1) The State Tax Commission is authorized and
57 directed to establish and maintain a vehicle registration renewal
58 system whereby the license tag attached upon a motor vehicle or
59 trailer may be issued for five (5) years with the approval of the
60 License Tag Commission, except for motor vehicles registered in
61 excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds gross vehicle weight, and



62 motor vehicles in a fleet registered under Section 27-19-66,
63 apportioned vehicles, rental and commercial trailers and buses,
64 which shall be issued for a period of time determined by the State
65 Tax Commission. During each intervening year of the period for
66 which license tags are issued, the State Tax Commission shall
67 issue up to two (2) license decals, in lieu of the license tags,
68 which will specify the month and year in which the license tag
69 shall expire. Motor vehicles in a corporate fleet registered
70 under Section 27-19-66, shall not be issued decals specifying the
71 month and year of expiration.

72 Any series of tags may be cancelled by the commissioner with
73 the approval of the License Tag Commission and a new series of
74 tags issued.

75 (2) The license decals issued in lieu of the license tags
76 shall indicate the month and the last two (2) figures of the year
77 for which such license shall expire, and these decals shall be
78 color coded so that it shall be possible to distinguish the year
79 and the month for which such decals shall expire. One (1) of the
80 license decals issued for distinctive license tags or plates shall
81 also indicate the county of registration of the motor vehicle as
82 provided for in Section 27-19-44(2). The license decals shall be
83 attached to the license tag of the motor vehicle or trailer, and
84 when so attached shall be deemed to be the license tag for the
85 ensuing registration year. The month decal shall be attached in
86 an upright position in the lower left corner of the license tag,
87 and the year decal shall be attached in an upright position in the
88 lower right corner of the license tag. Decals specifying the
89 month and year of expiration shall not be required to be attached
90 to license tags on motor vehicles in a corporate fleet registered
91 under Section 27-19-66.

92 Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the
93 registration year shall be a period of one (1) year commencing on
94 the first day of the month following the month in which the



95 vehicle was acquired. Beginning October 1, 1982, original
96 registrations of motor vehicles, except motor vehicles registered
97 in excess of ten thousand (10,000) pounds gross vehicle weight,
98 apportioned vehicles and buses, may be made and shall be prorated
99 for a period of from six (6) to eleven (11) months according to
100 regulations established by the State Tax Commission to reduce a
101 disproportionate number of registrations for a particular month.
102 Beginning July 1, 1995, original registrations and renewal
103 registrations of motor vehicles in corporate fleets registered
104 under Section 27-19-66, shall be prorated according to regulations
105 established by the State Tax Commission so as to cause the
106 registration of such fleet motor vehicles to coincide with the
107 anniversary month for corporate fleets established by the State
108 Tax Commission. Where a vehicle is registered for a period less
109 than twelve (12) months, the anniversary month shall be the month
110 of the expiration of the original license tag.

111 Beginning July 1, 1996, original registrations and renewal
112 registrations of motor vehicles in individual fleets registered
113 under Section 27-19-66 shall be prorated according to regulations
114 established by the State Tax Commission so as to cause the
115 registration of such fleet motor vehicles to coincide with the
116 anniversary month for individual fleets established by the county
117 tax collector. Where a vehicle is registered for a period less
118 than twelve (12) months, the anniversary month shall be the month
119 of the expiration of the original license tag.

120 The State Tax Commission, with the approval of the License
121 Tag Commission, shall so specify the area or areas on the license
122 tag where the license decals shall be attached. The number of the
123 license tag shall be written across its face, and the number of
124 the tag shall represent the registration number; and upon all the
125 tags for private passenger vehicles the word "MISSISSIPPI" shall
126 be written across the top of the tag in capital letters
127 sufficiently large to be easily read, but upon all other tags such



128 word may be abbreviated. The number of the license tag shall not
129 exceed seven (7) letters, numbers or a combination of such letters
130 and numbers. Also, on all tags sold and issued, an appropriate
131 place will be provided thereon to place license decals indicating
132 the expiration date of the tag. For the purposes of this section
133 and Section 27-19-32, Mississippi Code of 1972, the term "decal,"
134 "decals" or "license decal" shall mean a tab, sticker or other
135 similar device attached to a license tag which validates same for
136 a stated period of time. One (1) license tag and up to two (2)
137 license decals shall be furnished for all vehicles and shall be
138 fastened immovably twelve (12) inches or more above the ground, at
139 the rear of the vehicle under or over the rear light, with the
140 number in upright position so that it will be plainly visible and
141 legible at all times, and at night at a distance of sixty (60)
142 feet. In the case of tractors or other motor vehicles drawing or
143 pulling trailers, semitrailers or farm implements, the tag shall
144 be fastened upon such vehicle twelve (12) inches or more above the
145 ground, upon the front or back of such vehicle, with the number in
146 an upright position. Such license plate, all characters and any
147 legally affixed decals shall not be defaced, covered or obstructed
148 from view by any object, decal, sticker, paint, marking or license
149 plate bracket or holder. Any person who defaces, covers or
150 obstructs any portion of a license tag with any sticker,
151 decoration, paint, marking, license plate bracket or holder or any
152 other thing or device, in such a manner that the characters and
153 any legally affixed decals on the tag cannot be read, shall be
154 guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by
155 a fine of not more than Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00). However, it
156 shall not be unlawful for the county name to be partially or
157 completely obstructed from view by any object, decal, sticker or
158 license plate bracket or holder. Unless the license tag with
159 current decals is fastened to the vehicle as herein provided, the
160 said vehicle shall be regarded as operating without a license tag,



161 and the owner or operator shall be liable for the penalties herein
162 provided.

163 In addition to the above requirements, license tags for
164 private passenger vehicles shall have a county designation thereon
165 referencing the name of the county in which such vehicle is
166 registered.

167 Law enforcement officers of this state shall remove from a
168 motor vehicle or trailer any license tag and/or decals which are
169 so defaced that proper identification cannot be reasonably made.
170 The officer shall issue to the driver of such vehicle a tag permit
171 which shall be valid for a period of five (5) days. Each person
172 receiving such tag permit shall purchase, within five (5) days
173 from the date of the issuance of the permit, a new tag and/or
174 decals for the fee set forth in Section 27-19-37, Mississippi Code
175 of 1972, for a substitute tag.

176 Any person who has a license tag or decals on a vehicle which
177 may be so defaced that proper identification cannot be reasonably
178 made may remove such and purchase another license tag and/or
179 decals for the same fee required for a substitute tag. If any
180 license tag shall deteriorate due to age so that identification
181 cannot be reasonably made, the owner may surrender such tag to the
182 issuing authority and be issued a new tag and like decals at no
183 cost.

184 (3) The State Tax Commission is authorized to promulgate
185 appropriate rules and regulations to govern the use and display of
186 license decals and to publish a summary thereof which shall be
187 available to state officials and the public upon request.

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

