HOUSE BILL NO. 804

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF DISTINCTIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAGS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE; TO PRESCRIBE AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH TAGS; TO PROVIDE FOR DISTRIBUTION OF THE ADDITIONAL FEES COLLECTED; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) Owners of motor vehicles upon complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles, and 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 annual fee in the amount provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall be entitled to a distinctive license tag that demonstrates their support for the prevention of child abuse. The tags shall be of such color and design as the State Tax Commission prescribes subject to the approval of the Mississippi License Tag Commission; however, each tag shall display the words "Stop Child Abuse" 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 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 Two Dollars ($2.00) thereof to be retained by the tax collector, shall be remitted to the State Tax Commission on a monthly basis as prescribed by the commission. 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, 2003, any person applying for a distinctive license tag under this section shall pay an additional fee in the amount of Thirty Dollars ($30.00) 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 the total fees collected under this section to the State Treasurer who shall distribute such collections as follows:

(a) Twenty-four Dollars ($24.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the special fund created in subsection (7) of this section.

(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.
(d) One Dollar ($1.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited to the credit of the special fund created in Section 27-19-44.2.

(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 in the same manner as funds from the sale of regular distinctive license tags issued under this section.

(7) There is established in the State Treasury a special fund which shall consist of monies required to be deposited therein under subsection (4) of this section. Monies in the special fund, upon legislative appropriation, shall be expended by the Mississippi Department of Human Services to help defray the operational expenses of the Division of Family and Children's Services at the county level. Unexpended amounts remaining in the special fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in the special fund shall be deposited to the credit of the special fund.
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2003.