To: Finance

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2003
By: Senator(s) Smith

SENATE BILL NO. 2128

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF A SPECIAL MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAG FOR SUPPORTERS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO ARE CLASSIFIED AS MISSING IN ACTION OR PERSONS WHO WERE PRISONERS OF WAR WHILE SERVING IN THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FEE CHARGED FOR SUCH TAG SHALL BE DEPOSITED TO THE CREDIT OF A FUND TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE BOARD OVERSEEING THE VETERANS NURSING HOMES IN THIS STATE FOR THE BENEFIT OF INDIGENT VETERANS WHO ARE RESIDENTS OF SUCH NURSING HOMES; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FEE CHARGED FOR SUCH LICENSE TAG SHALL BE DEPOSITED TO THE CREDIT OF THE VETERANS MONUMENT TRUST FUND; TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISPERSAL OF THE REMAINDER OF THE FEE FOR SUCH TAG; TO AMEND SECTION 55-15-59, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT AFTER COMPLETION OF THE MISSISSIPPI VETERANS MONUMENT, MONEY IN THE MISSISSIPPI VETERANS MONUMENT TRUST FUND SHALL BE UTILIZED BY THE MISSISSIPPI WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL COMMISSION FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE VETERANS MONUMENT AND MEMORIALS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (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 members of the United States Armed Forces who are classified as missing in action or persons who were prisoners of war while serving in the United States Armed Forces. The distinctive license tags so issued shall be of such color and design as the State Tax Commission, with the advice of the American Ex-POW's, Department of Mississippi, 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 Two Dollars ($2.00) 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) Twelve Dollars ($12.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited to the credit of a fund to be administered by the board overseeing the veterans nursing homes in
this state for the benefit of indigent veterans who are residents of such nursing homes.

(b) Twelve Dollars ($12.00) of each additional fee collected on distinctive license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the Mississippi Veterans Monument Trust Fund created in Section 55-15-59.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

(e) 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
ST: Distinctive motor vehicle license tag; authorize issuance for supporter of POW's and MIA's.

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.

SECTION 2. Section 55-15-59, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

55-15-59. The Mississippi Veterans Monument Commission is hereby authorized to accept gifts, grants and donations from individuals and organizations, to be deposited in the Veterans Monument Trust Fund which is hereby created in the State Treasury. The State Treasurer shall invest all monies in the Veterans Monument Trust Fund and any interest earned shall be deposited into the fund. All appropriated funds and funds deposited in the Veterans Monument Trust Fund shall be used exclusively for the purpose of designing, erecting, maintaining and dedication of the veterans monument, except that not more than Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($7,500.00) may be expended annually to pay the administrative costs of the commission. Costs associated with the designing, erecting, maintaining and dedication of the veterans monument are not considered commission administrative costs for purposes of this section. Upon completion of the monument, money in the trust fund shall be utilized by the Mississippi War Veterans Memorial Commission for maintenance of the veterans monument and memorials.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2003.