

By: Representatives Montgomery, Bondurant,  
Broomfield, Chism, Cummings, Davis, Dedeaux,  
Eaton, Fillingane, Green, Hamilton (109th),  
Hamilton (6th), Holloway, Hudson, Ishee,  
Markham, Masterson, Mayo, McCoy, Miles,  
Moore, Moss, Myers, Nicholson, Patterson, Reed, Reynolds, Robinson  
(84th), Rogers (14th), Rogers (61st), Smith (59th), Sullivan, Thomas,  
Turner, Upshaw, Ward, Weathersby, Whittington, Zuber, Buck, Scott

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 998

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO AWARD HONORARY HIGH SCHOOL  
3 DIPLOMAS TO VIETNAM VETERANS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-16-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
6 amended as follows:

7 37-16-13. (1) The school board of a local school district  
8 may award an honorary high school diploma in a form prescribed and  
9 supplied to school districts by the State Board of Education to  
10 veterans of World War II, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War  
11 who were unable to complete their education due to their military  
12 service. The honorary diploma is available to any honorably  
13 discharged veteran residing in Mississippi who was scheduled to  
14 graduate between 1941 and 1955 or between 1964 and 1973, but was  
15 inducted into military service before completing the necessary  
16 graduation requirements. Family members of deceased eligible  
17 veterans may apply for the diploma to be awarded posthumously.

18 (2) The State Board of Education and State Veterans Affairs  
19 Board jointly shall develop a uniform application for persons  
20 seeking a diploma under subsection (1) of this section. The  
21 application shall request no less than the following information:

22 (a) The veteran's name, social security number and date  
23 of birth;

24 (b) The last year the veteran was in school and the  
25 veteran's grade level during that year;

26 (c) The year the veteran left school to enter World War  
27 II, the Korean Conflict or the Vietnam War;

- 28           (d) The year the veteran would have graduated from high  
29 school;
- 30           (e) The name and location of the school attended;
- 31           (f) The date of the veteran's enlistment or draft;
- 32           (g) The veteran's service number;
- 33           (h) The veteran's date of honorable discharge;
- 34           (i) A copy of the veteran's DD-214 form, if available;
- 35 and
- 36           (j) Any other information deemed relevant by the State  
37 Board of Education or State Veterans Affairs Board.

38           The State Board of Education shall provide local school  
39 districts, county departments of human services and local veterans  
40 services offices with copies of the uniform application.

41           (3) A person may request an application from any local  
42 school district, county department of human services or local  
43 veterans services office. Completed applications for a diploma  
44 may be submitted to the veteran's local school district,  
45 regardless of whether or not the veteran attended school in that  
46 district. Upon verifying the information contained in the  
47 application, including verifying the veteran's military service  
48 information with the State Veterans Affairs Board, and determining  
49 the veteran's eligibility for the honorary high school diploma,  
50 the local school board may award the diploma to the veteran. The  
51 diploma shall indicate clearly that the recipient is a veteran of  
52 World War II, the Korean Conflict or the Vietnam War, and that the  
53 diploma was issued at a later date due to the veteran's  
54 participation in the war. The State Department of Education and  
55 the State Veterans Affairs Board may work together to provide  
56 communities with information about hosting a diploma ceremony on  
57 or around Veterans Day. The diploma shall be provided to the  
58 veteran or, if the veteran is deceased, to the veteran's family.

59           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
60 and after July 1, 2004.