

By: Senator(s) Little, Albritton, Brown, Browning, Butler, Carmichael, Chamberlin, Chaney, Clarke, Dawkins, Dearing, Flowers, Frazier, Harvey, Hewes, Hyde-Smith, Jackson (11th), Jackson (15th), King, Kirby, Lee (35th), Lee (47th), Mettetal, Michel, Moffatt, Nunnelee, Robertson, Ross, Simmons, Thames, Thomas, Tollison, Walls, White, Wilemon, Williamson

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2446  
(As Sent to Governor)

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 WAR VETERANS WHO WERE UNABLE TO GRADUATE DUE  
4 TO MILITARY SERVICE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

8 37-16-13. (1) The school board of a local school district  
9 may award an honorary high school diploma in a form prescribed and  
10 supplied to school districts by the State Board of Education to  
11 veterans of World War II, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam  
12 Conflict who were unable to complete their education due to their  
13 military service. The honorary diploma is available to any  
14 honorably discharged veteran residing in Mississippi who was (a)  
15 scheduled to graduate between 1941 and 1955 but was inducted into  
16 military service before completing the necessary graduation  
17 requirements, or (b) was scheduled to graduate between 1963 and  
18 1973 but volunteered for military service and received the Vietnam  
19 Service Ribbon. Family members of deceased eligible veterans may  
20 apply for the diploma to be awarded posthumously.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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