

By: Senator(s) Carmichael, Mettetal, King,  
Burton, White

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and  
Parks

SENATE BILL NO. 2240

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 55-3-33, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 PROVIDE A LIFETIME STATE PARK PASS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND  
3 FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR; TO SET A FEE FOR THE PASS; AND FOR  
4 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 55-3-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 55-3-33. (1) The \* \* \* department \* \* \* shall \* \* \*:

9 (a) Take charge and have full jurisdiction and control  
10 over all state parks, which \* \* \* shall be operated for the  
11 purpose of providing outdoor recreational activities and enjoyment  
12 for the citizens of the State of Mississippi and for the purpose  
13 of attracting visitors to the state.

14 (b) Set up a uniform accounting procedure for the state  
15 parks and prescribe the manner in which books, records and  
16 accounts shall be kept. The procedure shall account for all  
17 monies taken in and expended by the various parks and shall  
18 provide for periodic audits of such books.

19 (c) Accept gifts, bequests of money or other property,  
20 real or personal, to be used for the purpose of advancing the  
21 recreation and conservation interests in state parks. The  
22 department may, subject to approval by the State  
23 Legislature, \* \* \* purchase property, real or personal, to be used  
24 for state park purposes.

25 (d) Contract with the Mississippi Transportation  
26 Commission, any municipality or board of supervisors of the state  
27 for locating, constructing and maintaining roads and other  
28 improvements in state parks and for payment of a part of the costs

29 thereof; however, no county or municipality more than twenty-five  
30 (25) miles distant from a state park may contract for, or do, or  
31 pay for any such work for a state park other than the  
32 International Gardens of Mississippi. Any county or municipality  
33 authorized to assist financially under the provisions of Sections  
34 55-3-31 through 55-3-51 is authorized, in the discretion of its  
35 respective governing authority, to set aside, appropriate and  
36 expend monies from the General Fund for the purpose of defraying  
37 such expense after a mandatory election is held on the question  
38 within the county or municipality.

39 (e) Designate employees as peace officers with power to  
40 make arrests for infraction of the rules and regulations of the  
41 department. Such officers are authorized to carry weapons and to  
42 enforce the laws of the State of Mississippi within the confines  
43 of a state park.

44 (f) Enforce and delegate the responsibility to enforce  
45 all reasonable rules and regulations governing the occupancy and  
46 use of lands and waters in state parks under its jurisdiction,  
47 supply recreational and conservation facilities and charge fees  
48 for the use of same; review all rates and charges for facilities  
49 and accommodations furnished at the various state parks annually,  
50 making such charges as are justified; and establish fees for  
51 entrance to state parks. Any resident who is a veteran with a  
52 service-connected disability rated at fifty percent (50%) or  
53 greater or who is a former Prisoner of War may obtain a lifetime  
54 pass to all state parks. The person must show proof of residency  
55 in this state and provide a letter from the U.S. Department of  
56 Veterans Affairs verifying the service-connected disability or  
57 former Prisoner of War status. The fee for the lifetime pass  
58 shall be Three Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$3.50).

59 Each park shall retain from revenues generated therein, a sum  
60 sufficient to pay necessary expenses of operation, but in no event  
61 to be less than seventy-five percent (75%) of such revenues.

62           (2) The department shall have the authority to lease to any  
63 entity, sell and convey or otherwise transfer to any county or  
64 municipality, or close any state park or historical site within  
65 its jurisdiction which received a General Fund subsidy in Fiscal  
66 Year 1985 in excess of Two Dollars (\$2.00) per visitor to such  
67 state park or historical site; provided, however, that this  
68 authority shall not include the authority to sell, lease or convey  
69 any park that was not in operation under the jurisdiction of the  
70 department for a full fiscal year prior to fiscal year 1986.

71           (3) The department may execute agreements with  
72 rails-to-trails and recreational districts by which the department  
73 will assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of  
74 trails developed under Sections 55-25-1 through 55-25-15.

75           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
76 and after July 1, 2007.