

By: Representatives Carpenter, Stamps

To: Military Affairs

HOUSE BILL NO. 187

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-3-21, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 REVISE CERTAIN QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTY VETERAN
3 SERVICE OFFICERS AND TO REQUIRE THE COUNTIES TO PROVIDE NECESSARY
4 OFFICE SPACE AND COMMUNICATIONS CONNECTIVITY; AND FOR RELATED
5 PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 35-3-21, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 35-3-21. In order to maintain offices and pay personnel for
10 the purpose of assisting all residents of the State of Mississippi
11 who served in the military or naval forces of the United States
12 during any war, their relatives, beneficiaries or dependents, to
13 receive from the United States any and all compensation,
14 hospitalization, insurance or other aid or benefits to which they
15 may be entitled under existing or hereafter enacted laws of the
16 United States, the boards of supervisors in the various counties
17 in the state are hereby authorized and empowered, in their
18 discretion, to expend out of the general county fund, or special
19 veterans' fund herein authorized to be set up, or from both of



20 such funds, such monies necessary to defray the office operating
21 expenses and salary of the county veteran service officers.

22 Two (2) or more counties may, upon resolution duly adopted by
23 the board of supervisors of each of such counties, agree to
24 establish one (1) veteran service office for all of such counties.
25 When two (2) or more counties enter into such an agreement, each
26 county shall pay such amount mutually agreed upon and duly adopted
27 by resolution of the respective boards of supervisors.

28 County veteran service officers shall be (a) honorably
29 discharged or honorably released veterans * * * in which the Armed
30 Forces of the United States have been, are or shall be committed
31 for action; (b) the surviving spouse or child of any such deceased
32 veteran; or (c) any person employed as a county veteran service
33 officer in any county of this state on March 30, 1990. From and
34 after July 1, 1990, county veteran service officers shall be
35 certified by the Mississippi State Veterans' Affairs Board which,
36 among any other criteria it may establish, shall require such
37 officers to (a) attend * * * one (1) of the * * * annual training
38 programs provided for such officers by the Mississippi State
39 Veterans' Affairs Board, * * * (b) successfully complete a written
40 examination each year on the duties and responsibilities of and
41 assistance available to such officers and veterans, (c) have
42 certification and be accredited according to 38 CFR Section 2.629
43 administered by the Mississippi State Veterans' Affairs Board, and
44 (d) follow the rules and regulations promulgated by the



45 Mississippi State Veterans' Affairs Board. * * * County veteran
46 service officers who annually receive and complete such
47 instruction in a manner satisfactory to the Veterans' Affairs
48 Board and in accordance with this section shall be certified by
49 the board. No county veteran service officer shall be entitled to
50 receive any compensation for his services, to which he is
51 otherwise entitled by law, unless he is annually certified by the
52 board.

53 County veteran service officers may be employed, in the
54 discretion of the boards of supervisors, either full time or part
55 time.

56 The boards of supervisors of the various counties are
57 authorized and directed to provide necessary office space and
58 communications connectivity for county veteran service officers.

59 The boards of supervisors of the various counties are further
60 authorized and empowered to pay all necessary and actual expenses
61 of county veteran service officers who attend a school of
62 instruction within the State of Mississippi for such county
63 veteran service officers.

64 It shall also be the duty of the boards of supervisors to aid
65 the United States to defeat all unjust claims for aid or benefit
66 therefrom.

67 Such expenditures may be made by the several counties acting
68 alone, or in cooperation with other counties, and in cooperation
69 with any federal or state agency carrying out such purposes.



70 In the event that the general revenues of the county levied
71 under and within the limits of existing taxing statutes are not
72 sufficient to pay the expenses authorized herein, the board of
73 supervisors may, in its discretion, levy an additional tax not to
74 exceed one (1) mill on all taxable property in the county to
75 defray such expenses or any part thereof. Any tax levy made under
76 authority of this chapter shall not be considered in refunding
77 homestead exemption losses under Title 27, Chapter 33, Mississippi
78 Code of 1972.

79 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
80 and after July 1, 2021.

