

By: Senator(s) Seymour, Jackson (11th),  
England

To: Veterans and Military  
Affairs; Accountability,  
Efficiency, Transparency

SENATE BILL NO. 2165

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

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

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

8 35-3-21. In order to maintain offices and pay personnel for  
9 the purpose of assisting all residents of the State of Mississippi  
10 who served in the military or naval forces of the United States  
11 during any war, their relatives, beneficiaries or dependents, to  
12 receive from the United States any and all compensation,  
13 hospitalization, insurance or other aid or benefits to which they  
14 may be entitled under existing or hereafter enacted laws of the  
15 United States, the boards of supervisors in the various counties  
16 in the state are hereby authorized and empowered, in their  
17 discretion, to expend out of the general county fund, or special  
18 veterans' fund herein authorized to be set up, or from both of



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

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

27 County veteran service officers shall be (a) honorably  
28 discharged or honorably released veterans \* \* \* in which the Armed  
29 Forces of the United States have been, are or shall be committed  
30 for action; (b) the surviving spouse or child of any such deceased  
31 veteran; or (c) any person employed as a county veteran service  
32 officer in any county of this state on March 30, 1990. From and  
33 after July 1, 1990, county veteran service officers shall be  
34 certified by the Mississippi State Veterans' Affairs Board which,  
35 among any other criteria it may establish, shall require such  
36 officers to (a) attend \* \* \* one (1) of the \* \* \* annual training  
37 programs provided for such officers by the Mississippi State  
38 Veterans' Affairs Board, \* \* \* (b) successfully complete a written  
39 examination each year on the duties and responsibilities of and  
40 assistance available to such officers and veterans, (c) have  
41 certification and be accredited according to 38 CFR Section 14.629  
42 administered by the Mississippi State Veterans' Affairs Board, and  
43 (d) follow the rules and regulations promulgated by the



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

