

By: Representative Denton

To: Apportionment and
Elections

HOUSE BILL NO. 248

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 23-15-673, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF "ABSENT VOTER" FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE
3 ARMED SERVICES ABSENTEE VOTING LAW TO INCLUDE ANY PERSON WHO IS A
4 CITIZEN OF MISSISSIPPI WHO IS TEMPORARILY RESIDING AND WORKING
5 WITHIN THE NAVIGABLE FEDERAL WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES; TO AMEND
6 SECTION 23-15-169.4, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE
7 PRECEDING SECTION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 23-15-673, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
10 amended as follows:

11 23-15-673. (1) For the purposes of this subarticle, the
12 term "absent voter" shall mean and include the following persons
13 if they are absent from their county of residence and are
14 otherwise qualified to vote in Mississippi:

15 (a) Any enlisted or commissioned members, male or
16 female, of the United States Army, or any of its respective
17 components or various divisions thereof; any enlisted or
18 commissioned members, male or female, of the United States Navy,
19 or any of its respective components or various divisions thereof;
20 any enlisted or commissioned members, male or female, of the



21 United States Air Force, or any of its respective components or
22 various divisions thereof; any enlisted or commissioned members,
23 male or female, of the United States Marines, or any of its
24 respective components or various divisions thereof; or any persons
25 in any division of the armed services of the United States, who
26 are citizens of Mississippi;

27 (b) Any member of the Merchant Marine and the American
28 Red Cross who is a citizen of Mississippi;

29 (c) Any disabled war veteran who is a patient in any
30 hospital and who is a citizen of Mississippi;

31 (d) Any civilian attached to and serving outside of the
32 United States with any branch of the Armed Forces or with the
33 Merchant Marine or American Red Cross, and who is a citizen of
34 Mississippi;

35 (e) Any trained or certified emergency response
36 provider who is deployed during the time period authorized by law
37 for absentee voting, on election day, or during any state of
38 emergency declared by the President of the United States or any
39 Governor of any state within the United States;

40 (f) Any citizen of Mississippi temporarily residing
41 outside the territorial limits of the United States and the
42 District of Columbia;

43 (g) Any citizen of Mississippi enrolled as a student at
44 the United States Naval Academy, the United States Coast Guard
45 Academy, the United States Merchant Marine Academy, the United



46 States Air Force Academy or the United States Military
47 Academy * * *;

48 (h) Any citizen of Mississippi who is temporarily
49 residing and working within the navigable federal waters of the
50 United States.

51 (2) The spouse and dependents of any absent voter as set out
52 in paragraphs (a) through (g) of subsection (1) of this section
53 shall also be included in the meaning of absent voter and may
54 register to vote and vote an absentee ballot as provided in this
55 subarticle if also absent from the county of their residence on
56 the date of the election and otherwise qualified to vote in
57 Mississippi.

58 (3) For the purpose of this subarticle, the term "election"
59 shall mean and include the following sets of elections: special
60 and runoff special elections, preferential and general elections,
61 first and second primary elections or general elections without
62 preferential elections, whichever system is applicable.

63 **SECTION 2.** Section 23-15-169.4, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
64 amended as follows:

65 23-15-169.4. The Secretary of State shall be responsible for
66 providing to all absent uniformed services voters * * *, overseas
67 voters and other absent voters as defined in Section 23-15-673 who
68 wish to vote or register to vote in this state information
69 required by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 regarding voter
70 registration procedures and absentee ballot procedures to be used



71 by absent uniformed services voters * * *, overseas voters and
72 other absent voters as defined in Section 23-15-673 with respect
73 to elections, including procedures relating to the use of the
74 federal write-in absentee ballot.

75 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
76 and after July 1, 2022.

