

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Butler (36th),
Simmons (12th), Thomas, Horhn

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

SENATE BILL NO. 2848

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-1-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972; TO
2 AUTHORIZE THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD TO ENTER INTO
3 AGREEMENTS WITH AMERICAN LEGION ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE VETERANS
4 WITH TRANSPORTATION TO THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITAL AND
5 COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH CLINICS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

9 35-1-7. (1) The duties of the State Veterans Affairs Board
10 shall be to assist former and present members of the Armed Forces
11 of the United States, and their dependents, in securing any
12 benefits or privileges under any federal or state law or
13 regulation to which they are entitled and to advise the Governor
14 and Legislature on veterans affairs. Moreover, veterans or their
15 dependents shall be given their choice of organizations to
16 represent them in instances where a case is appealed, and the
17 board shall lend its full cooperation in connection therewith.

18 (2) The board and its employees shall cooperate fully with
19 all congressionally chartered veterans organizations within the



20 state, including servicing the power of attorney of the
21 congressionally chartered veterans organizations upon the request
22 of the organizations to the State Veterans Affairs Board in the
23 prosecution of all claims on behalf of veterans. However, all
24 powers of attorney to the State Veterans Affairs Board shall be
25 processed first, and thereafter, powers of attorney shall be
26 processed for veterans organizations in the ratio that the
27 membership of the organization bears to the total number of
28 veterans residing in Mississippi.

29 (3) The State Veterans Affairs Board is designated as the
30 "state approving agency" for the State of Mississippi. It shall
31 be the duty of the State Veterans Affairs Board to inspect,
32 approve and supervise schools, institutions and establishments for
33 war orphan and veteran training as provided in Section 1771,
34 Title 38, Chapter 35, United States Code, and in any subsequent
35 acts passed by the Congress of the United States for the purpose
36 of education and training of war orphans or former and present
37 members of the Armed Forces of the United States. The State
38 Veterans Affairs Board is authorized to employ the needed
39 personnel to perform the duties as outlined in Section 1771, Title
40 38, Chapter 35, United States Code, and in any subsequent acts as
41 enacted by the Congress of the United States, and to enter into
42 contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs for salary and
43 travel reimbursement for personnel employed for this purpose.



44 (4) The State Veterans Affairs Board shall operate all
45 Mississippi state veterans homes when established as authorized by
46 Sections 35-1-19 through 35-1-29.

47 (5) The powers of the State Veterans Affairs Board in
48 relation to operating the State Veterans Homes shall specifically
49 include, but not be limited to, the following authority:

50 (a) To expend, upon appropriation by the Legislature,
51 any revenue generated by the State Veterans Homes in support of
52 the State Veterans Homes;

53 (b) To enter into loan or scholarship agreements with
54 employees or students to provide educational assistance where such
55 student or employee agrees to work for a stipulated period of time
56 for the board. Under this agreement the employee will agree to
57 commit to up to three (3) years but no less than one (1) year, to
58 be determined by the employment position and the amount of student
59 debt; provided, however, no State General Fund monies shall be
60 used for such purposes and the majority of funds for such purposes
61 shall be provided through programs established by the Mississippi
62 Department of Health, the United States Department of Health and
63 Human Services and the United States Department of Veterans
64 Affairs; and

65 (c) To sell or otherwise dispose of any chattel
66 property of the State Veterans Affairs Board used in operation of
67 the State Veterans Homes where such disposition is consistent with
68 the homes' purposes or where such property is deemed by the board



69 or its designee to be surplus or otherwise unneeded. The State
70 Veterans Affairs Board shall develop and submit an annual report
71 to the Legislature on any such sale or disposition and shall
72 ensure that the proceeds shall be used to defray the operation of
73 the State Veterans Homes.

74 (6) The State Veterans Affairs Board is authorized to adopt
75 such policies and to prescribe such rules and regulations as it
76 may deem necessary for the proper administration of this chapter.
77 However, such policies and regulations shall not be in conflict
78 with any of the provisions of this chapter.

79 (7) The State Veterans Affairs Board is authorized to enter
80 into agreements with local American Legion organizations to
81 provide transportation for veterans to the Veterans Administration
82 Hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, and to community-based health
83 clinics for medical appointments, to be provided at no cost to the
84 state.

85 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
86 and after July 1, 2022.

