

By: Representatives Carpenter, Arnold, Byrd, Hopkins, Williamson, Tullos, Stamps To: Military Affairs

HOUSE BILL NO. 675

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-1-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD SHALL HAVE THIRTY
3 DAYS AFTER RECEIVING WRITTEN NOTICE OF AN APPEAL OF A CLAIM
4 THROUGH POWER OF ATTORNEY ON BEHALF OF A VETERAN IN ORDER TO
5 PROCESS THE APPEAL; TO PROVIDE THAT IF THE APPEAL TIME IS LESS
6 THAN THIRTY DAYS THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD MAY ONLY ADVISE
7 THE VETERAN WITH THE CLAIM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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



20 (2) The board and its employees shall cooperate fully with  
21 all congressionally chartered veterans organizations within the  
22 state, including servicing the power of attorney of the  
23 congressionally chartered veterans organizations upon the request  
24 of the organizations to the State Veterans Affairs Board in the  
25 prosecution of all claims on behalf of veterans. However, all  
26 powers of attorney to the State Veterans Affairs Board shall be  
27 processed first, and thereafter, powers of attorney shall be  
28 processed for veterans organizations in the ratio that the  
29 membership of the organization bears to the total number of  
30 veterans residing in Mississippi. The State Veterans Affairs  
31 Board shall have thirty (30) days after written notice of an  
32 appeal of a claim through power of attorney in order to process  
33 the appeal of the claim. If the appeal time is less than thirty  
34 (30) days the State Veterans Affairs Board may only advise the  
35 veteran with the claim.

36 (3) The State Veterans Affairs Board is designated as the  
37 "state approving agency" for the State of Mississippi. It shall  
38 be the duty of the State Veterans Affairs Board to inspect,  
39 approve and supervise schools, institutions and establishments for  
40 war orphan and veteran training as provided in Section 1771,  
41 Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code, and in any subsequent  
42 acts passed by the Congress of the United States for the purpose  
43 of education and training of war orphans or former and present  
44 members of the Armed Forces of the United States. The State



45 Veterans Affairs Board is authorized to employ the needed  
46 personnel to perform the duties as outlined in Section 1771,  
47 Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code, and in any subsequent  
48 acts as enacted by the Congress of the United States, and to enter  
49 into contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs for salary  
50 and travel reimbursement for personnel employed for this purpose.

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

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

57 (a) To expend, upon appropriation by the Legislature,  
58 any revenue generated by the State Veterans Homes in support of  
59 the State Veterans Homes;

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



70 Human Services, and the United States Department of Veterans  
71 Affairs; and

72 (c) To sell or otherwise dispose of any chattel  
73 property of the State Veterans Affairs Board used in operation of  
74 the State Veterans Homes where such disposition is consistent with  
75 the homes' purposes or where such property is deemed by the board  
76 or its designee to be surplus or otherwise unneeded. The State  
77 Veterans Affairs Board shall develop and submit an annual report  
78 to the Legislature on any such sale or disposition and shall  
79 ensure that the proceeds shall be used to defray the operation of  
80 the State Veterans Homes.

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

86 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
87 and after July 1, 2023.

