

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

HOUSE BILL NO. 677

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-3-21, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 REVISE CERTAIN QUALIFICATIONS FOR COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICES;
3 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

7 35-3-21. In order to maintain offices and pay personnel for
8 the purpose of assisting all residents of the State of Mississippi
9 who served in the military or naval forces of the United States
10 during any war, their relatives, beneficiaries or dependents, to
11 receive from the United States any and all compensation,
12 hospitalization, insurance or other aid or benefits to which they
13 may be entitled under existing or hereafter enacted laws of the
14 United States, the boards of supervisors in the various counties
15 in the state are hereby authorized and empowered, in their
16 discretion, to expend out of the general county fund, or special
17 veterans' fund herein authorized to be set up, or from both of



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

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

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



43 complete such instruction in a manner satisfactory to the Veterans
44 Affairs Board and in accordance with this section shall be
45 certified by the board. No county veteran service officer shall
46 be entitled to receive any compensation for his services, to which
47 he is otherwise entitled by law, unless he is annually certified
48 by the board. Persons who cannot meet the accreditation standards
49 of hours worked for county veteran service officers may be
50 certified by the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board as
51 Veterans Resource Advisors and be entitled to receive any
52 compensation for his services as authorized by law.

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

