

**Adopted
COMMITTEE AMENDMENT NO 1 PROPOSED TO**

House Bill No. 677

BY: Committee

**Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting
in lieu thereof the following:**

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

13 35-3-21. In order to maintain offices and pay personnel for
14 the purpose of assisting all residents of the State of Mississippi
15 who served in the military or naval forces of the United States
16 during any war, their relatives, beneficiaries or dependents, to
17 receive from the United States any and all compensation,
18 hospitalization, insurance or other aid or benefits to which they
19 may be entitled under existing or hereafter enacted laws of the
20 United States, the boards of supervisors in the various counties



21 in the state are hereby authorized and empowered, in their
22 discretion, to expend out of the general county fund, or special
23 veterans' fund herein authorized to be set up, or from both of
24 such funds, such monies necessary to defray the office operating
25 expenses and salary of the county veteran service officers.

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

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



46 State Veterans Affairs Board, and (d) follow the rules and
47 regulations promulgated by the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs
48 Board. County veteran service officers who annually receive and
49 complete such instruction in a manner satisfactory to the Veterans
50 Affairs Board and in accordance with this section shall be
51 certified by the board. No county veteran service officer shall
52 be entitled to receive any compensation for his services, to which
53 he is otherwise entitled by law, unless he is annually certified
54 by the board. Persons who cannot meet the accreditation standards
55 of hours worked for county veteran service officers may be
56 certified by the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board as
57 Veterans Resource Advisors and be entitled to receive any
58 compensation for his services as authorized by law.

59 County veteran service officers may be employed, in the
60 discretion of the boards of supervisors, either full time or part
61 time.

62 County veteran service officers shall be authorized and
63 empowered to act for a veteran under a written power of attorney
64 authorized by the veteran for the purpose of assisting with
65 claims, benefits, and appeals in an administrative hearing before
66 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and any of its
67 boards or departments, and shall be immune from legal action only
68 for such actions except in cases of abuse, fraud or breach of
69 fiduciary duty.



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

73 The boards of supervisors of the various counties are further
74 authorized and empowered to pay all necessary and actual expenses
75 of county veteran service officers who attend a school of
76 instruction within the State of Mississippi for such county
77 veteran service officers.

78 It shall also be the duty of the boards of supervisors to aid
79 the United States to defeat all unjust claims for aid or benefit
80 therefrom.

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

84 In the event that the general revenues of the county levied
85 under and within the limits of existing taxing statutes are not
86 sufficient to pay the expenses authorized herein, the board of
87 supervisors may, in its discretion, levy an additional tax not to
88 exceed one (1) mill on all taxable property in the county to
89 defray such expenses or any part thereof. Any tax levy made under
90 authority of this chapter shall not be considered in refunding
91 homestead exemption losses under Title 27, Chapter 33, Mississippi
92 Code of 1972.

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



**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-3-21, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 AUTHORIZE COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS TO ACT FOR A VETERAN FOR
3 CERTAIN SERVICES UNDER A WRITTEN POWER OF ATTORNEY AUTHORIZED BY
4 THE VETERAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSISTING WITH CLAIMS, BENEFITS,
5 AND APPEALS IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING BEFORE THE UNITED STATES
6 DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS; TO PROVIDE COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE
7 OFFICERS WITH LEGAL IMMUNITY FOR SUCH ACTIONS EXCEPT IN CASES OF
8 ABUSE, FRAUD OR BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY; TO REVISE CERTAIN
9 QUALIFICATIONS FOR COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS; AND FOR
10 RELATED PURPOSES.

