

By: Representative Carpenter

To: Accountability,
Efficiency, Transparency

HOUSE BILL NO. 977

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 35-1-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 REVISE THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD; AND
3 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

7 35-1-1. (1) (a) There is hereby created a State Veterans
8 Affairs Board, which may also be referred to as the "Mississippi
9 Veterans Affairs," to consist of seven (7) members, to be
10 appointed by the Governor, one (1) from each congressional
11 district as they existed on January 1, 1952, of the State of
12 Mississippi. One (1) shall be appointed for one (1) year, another
13 for two (2) years, another for three (3) years, another for four
14 (4) years, another for five (5) years, another for six (6) years,
15 and another for seven (7) years, thus staggered. At the end of
16 such term for each of said seven (7) members, a successor shall be
17 appointed for a term of seven (7) years, thus providing for seven
18 (7) members, one (1) of whom shall be appointed each year. In the



19 event of death, resignation or removal of a member of the board,
20 such person appointed to fill the vacancy shall be a legal
21 resident of the congressional district in which the vacancy shall
22 occur, and shall serve for the remainder of the term to which such
23 member was appointed. Members of the board shall be veterans of
24 any war or police action in which the Armed Forces of the United
25 States have been, are, or shall be committed for action, who have
26 been honorably discharged or honorably released.

27 (b) From and after May 14, 1992, terms of all members
28 then serving on the State Veterans Affairs Board shall terminate,
29 and the board shall be reconstituted as follows: The board shall
30 consist of seven (7) members. All members shall be appointed by
31 the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. One (1)
32 member shall be appointed from each congressional district as such
33 districts existed on March 1, 1992, and two (2) members shall be
34 appointed from the state at large. Of the initial congressional
35 district appointees to the board, one (1) shall serve for a term
36 of one (1) year, one (1) for a term of two (2) years, one (1) for
37 a term of three (3) years, one (1) for a term of four (4) years
38 and one (1) for a term of five (5) years. Of the initial at-large
39 appointees, one (1) (who shall be that person appointed in January
40 1992 from the First Congressional District under the provisions of
41 paragraph (a) of this subsection) shall serve for a term of three
42 (3) years and one (1) (who shall be that person appointed in
43 January 1992 from the Seventh Congressional District under the



44 provisions of paragraph (a) of this subsection) shall serve for a
45 term of five (5) years. All appointees after the initial
46 appointees shall serve for terms of five (5) years each. In the
47 event of death, resignation or removal of a member of the board,
48 the vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Governor, with
49 the advice and consent of the Senate, from the congressional
50 district in which the vacancy occurs, for the length of the
51 unexpired term only. Members of the board shall be honorably
52 discharged or released veterans of any war or police action in
53 which the Armed Forces of the United States have been, are, or
54 shall be committed for action. No state/department commander of
55 any federally recognized veterans organization, no national
56 officer of any federally recognized veterans organization and no
57 member of the Mississippi Council of Veterans Organizations shall
58 be eligible for appointment to the board until the expiration of a
59 period of three (3) years after the termination of their service
60 in such disqualifying positions.

61 (c) From and after July 1, 2024, the State Veterans
62 Affairs Board shall consist of seven (7) members, to be appointed
63 by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. There
64 shall be one (1) member appointed from each of the four (4)
65 congressional districts created in Section 23-15-1037 and three
66 (3) members shall be appointed from the state at large. Members
67 serving before July 1, 2024, will continue to serve in accordance
68 with their term and when such a member's term ends, the seat will



69 be filled by appointment of the Governor, with the advice and
70 consent of the Senate, from the appropriate congressional district
71 or from the state at large, as the case may be. All members
72 appointed from and after July 1, 2024, shall serve for terms of
73 five (5) years each. In the event of death, resignation or
74 removal of a member of the board, the vacancy shall be filled by
75 appointment of the Governor, with the advice and consent of the
76 Senate, from the congressional district in which the vacancy
77 occurs or from the state at large, as the case may be, for the
78 length of the unexpired term only. Members of the board shall be
79 honorably discharged or released veterans of any war or police
80 action in which the Armed Forces of the United States have been,
81 are, or shall be committed for action.

82 (2) Members of the board shall annually elect as chairman
83 one of their number and another member as vice chairman. Members
84 of the board shall hold regular monthly meetings and such other
85 meetings as may be called by the chairman or the vice chairman in
86 his absence.

87 (3) Beginning July 1, 2019, any reference in this code to
88 the State Veterans Affairs Board shall also mean the Mississippi
89 Veterans Affairs.

90 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
91 and after July 1, 2024.

