

By: Senator(s) Tate

To: Veterans and Military
Affairs; Finance

SENATE BILL NO. 2445

1 AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE "STRENGTHENING TROOP RETENTION FOR
2 OUR NATIONAL GUARD (STRONG) ACT"; TO AMEND SECTION 27-7-15,
3 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, RELATING TO INCOME TAX EXEMPTIONS, TO
4 INCREASE THE INCOME TAX EXEMPTION FOR NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE
5 FORCES MEMBERS; TO AMEND SECTION 27-19-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
6 1972, RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION AND LICENSE FEES, TO
7 PROVIDE A CREDIT FOR MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAG FEES FOR
8 MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD SERVICEMEMBERS; TO CREATE A PROGRAM
9 WITHIN THE MISSISSIPPI MILITARY DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE A
10 REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICE MEMBERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL
11 GUARD FOR THE COST OF TRICARE RESERVE SELECT FOR THE PURPOSE OF
12 INCREASING MEDICAL READINESS AND IMPACTING RECRUITING AND
13 RETENTION WITHIN THE NATIONAL GUARD; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
16 "Strengthening Troop Retention for Our National Guard (STRONG)
17 Act."

18 **SECTION 2.** Section 27-7-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
19 amended as follows:

20 27-7-15. (1) For the purposes of this article, except as
21 otherwise provided, the term "gross income" means and includes the
22 income of a taxpayer derived from salaries, wages, fees or
23 compensation for service, of whatever kind and in whatever form



24 paid, including income from governmental agencies and subdivisions
25 thereof; or from professions, vocations, trades, businesses,
26 commerce or sales, or renting or dealing in property, or
27 reacquired property; also from annuities, interest, rents,
28 dividends, securities, insurance premiums, reinsurance premiums,
29 considerations for supplemental insurance contracts, or the
30 transaction of any business carried on for gain or profit, or
31 gains, or profits, and income derived from any source whatever and
32 in whatever form paid. The amount of all such items of income
33 shall be included in the gross income for the taxable year in
34 which received by the taxpayer. The amount by which an eligible
35 employee's salary is reduced pursuant to a salary reduction
36 agreement authorized under Section 25-17-5 shall be excluded from
37 the term "gross income" within the meaning of this article.

38 (2) In determining gross income for the purpose of this
39 section, the following, under regulations prescribed by the
40 commissioner, shall be applicable:

41 (a) **Dealers in property.** Federal rules, regulations
42 and revenue procedures shall be followed with respect to
43 installment sales unless a transaction results in the shifting of
44 income from inside the state to outside the state.

45 (b) **Casual sales of property.**

46 (i) Prior to January 1, 2001, federal rules,
47 regulations and revenue procedures shall be followed with respect
48 to installment sales except they shall be applied and administered



49 as if H.R. 3594, the Installment Tax Correction Act of 2000 of the
50 106th Congress, had not been enacted. This provision will
51 generally affect taxpayers, reporting on the accrual method of
52 accounting, entering into installment note agreements on or after
53 December 17, 1999. Any gain or profit resulting from the casual
54 sale of property will be recognized in the year of sale.

55 (ii) From and after January 1, 2001, federal
56 rules, regulations and revenue procedures shall be followed with
57 respect to installment sales except as provided in this
58 subparagraph (ii). Gain or profit from the casual sale of
59 property shall be recognized in the year of sale. When a taxpayer
60 recognizes gain on the casual sale of property in which the gain
61 is deferred for federal income tax purposes, a taxpayer may elect
62 to defer the payment of tax resulting from the gain as allowed and
63 to the extent provided under regulations prescribed by the
64 commissioner. If the payment of the tax is made on a deferred
65 basis, the tax shall be computed based on the applicable rate for
66 the income reported in the year the payment is made. Except as
67 otherwise provided in subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph (b),
68 deferring the payment of the tax shall not affect the liability
69 for the tax. If at any time the installment note is sold,
70 contributed, transferred or disposed of in any manner and for any
71 purpose by the original note holder, or the original note holder
72 is merged, liquidated, dissolved or withdrawn from this state,



then all deferred tax payments under this section shall immediately become due and payable.

(iii) If the selling price of the property is reduced by any alteration in the terms of an installment note, including default by the purchaser, the gain to be recognized is recomputed based on the adjusted selling price in the same manner as for federal income tax purposes. The tax on this amount, less the previously paid tax on the recognized gain, is payable over the period of the remaining installments. If the tax on the previously recognized gain has been paid in full to this state, the return on which the payment was made may be amended for this purpose only. The statute of limitations in Section 27-7-49 shall not bar an amended return for this purpose.

(c) **Reserves of insurance companies.** In the case of insurance companies, any amounts in excess of the legally required reserves shall be included as gross income.

(d) **Affiliated companies or persons.** As regards sales, exchanges or payments for services from one to another of affiliated companies or persons or under other circumstances where the relation between the buyer and seller is such that gross proceeds from the sale or the value of the exchange or the payment for services are not indicative of the true value of the subject matter of the sale, exchange or payment for services, the commissioner shall prescribe uniform and equitable rules for determining the true value of the gross income, gross sales,



exchanges or payment for services, or require consolidated returns of affiliates.

(e) **Alimony and separate maintenance payments.** The federal rules, regulations and revenue procedures in determining the deductibility and taxability of alimony payments shall be followed in this state.

(f) **Reimbursement for expenses of moving.** There shall be included in gross income (as compensation for services) any amount received or accrued, directly or indirectly, by an individual as a payment for or reimbursement of expenses of moving from one (1) residence to another residence which is attributable to employment or self-employment.

(3) In the case of taxpayers other than residents, gross income includes gross income from sources within this state.

(4) The words "gross income" do not include the following items of income which shall be exempt from taxation under this article:

(a) The proceeds of life insurance policies and contracts paid upon the death of the insured. However, the income from the proceeds of such policies or contracts shall be included in the gross income.

(b) The amount received by the insured as a return of premium or premiums paid by him under life insurance policies, endowment, or annuity contracts, either during the term or at maturity or upon surrender of the contract.



123 (c) The value of property acquired by gift, bequest,
124 devise or descent, but the income from such property shall be
125 included in the gross income.

126 (d) Interest upon the obligations of the United States
127 or its possessions, or securities issued under the provisions of
128 the Federal Farm Loan Act of 1916, or bonds issued by the War
129 Finance Corporation, or obligations of the State of Mississippi or
130 political subdivisions thereof.

131 (e) The amounts received through accident or health
132 insurance as compensation for personal injuries or sickness, plus
133 the amount of any damages received for such injuries or such
134 sickness or injuries, or through the War Risk Insurance Act, or
135 any law for the benefit or relief of injured or disabled members
136 of the military or naval forces of the United States.

137 (f) Income received by any religious denomination or by
138 any institution or trust for moral or mental improvements,
139 religious, Bible, tract, charitable, benevolent, fraternal,
140 missionary, hospital, infirmary, educational, scientific,
141 literary, library, patriotic, historical or cemetery purposes or
142 for two (2) or more of such purposes, if such income be used
143 exclusively for carrying out one or more of such purposes.

144 (g) Income received by a domestic corporation which is
145 "taxable in another state" as this term is defined in this
146 article, derived from business activity conducted outside this
147 state. Domestic corporations taxable both within and without the



state shall determine Mississippi income on the same basis as provided for foreign corporations under the provisions of this article.

(h) In case of insurance companies, there shall be excluded from gross income such portion of actual premiums received from an individual policyholder as is paid back or credited to or treated as an abatement of premiums of such policyholder within the taxable year.

(i) Income from dividends that has already borne a tax as dividend income under the provisions of this article, when such dividends may be specifically identified in the possession of the recipient.

(j) Amounts paid by the United States to a person as added compensation for hazardous duty pay as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States in a combat zone designated by Executive Order of the President of the United States.

(k) Amounts received as retirement allowances, pensions, annuities or optional retirement allowances paid under the federal Social Security Act, the Railroad Retirement Act, the Federal Civil Service Retirement Act, or any other retirement system of the United States government, retirement allowances paid under the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System, Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol Retirement System or any other retirement system of the State of Mississippi or any political subdivision thereof. The exemption allowed under this paragraph



(k) shall be available to the spouse or other beneficiary at the death of the primary retiree.

(l) Amounts received as retirement allowances, pensions, annuities or optional retirement allowances paid by any public or governmental retirement system not designated in paragraph (k) or any private retirement system or plan of which the recipient was a member at any time during the period of his employment. Amounts received as a distribution under a Roth Individual Retirement Account shall be treated in the same manner as provided under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The exemption allowed under this paragraph (l) shall be available to the spouse or other beneficiary at the death of the primary retiree.

(m) Beginning January 1, 2025, National Guard or Reserve Forces of the United States compensation not to exceed the aggregate sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for any taxable year through the 2005 taxable year, and not to exceed the aggregate sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) for taxable years 2006 through the 2024 taxable year, and not to exceed the aggregate sum of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) for any taxable year thereafter.

(n) Compensation received for active service as a member below the grade of commissioned officer and so much of the compensation as does not exceed the maximum enlisted amount received for active service as a commissioned officer in the Armed



Forces of the United States for any month during any part of which such members of the Armed Forces (i) served in a combat zone as designated by Executive Order of the President of the United States or a qualified hazardous duty area as defined by federal law, or both; or (ii) was hospitalized as a result of wounds, disease or injury incurred while serving in such combat zone. For the purposes of this paragraph (n), the term "maximum enlisted amount" means and has the same definition as that term has in 26 USCS 112.

(o) The proceeds received from federal and state forestry incentive programs.

(p) The amount representing the difference between the increase of gross income derived from sales for export outside the United States as compared to the preceding tax year wherein gross income from export sales was highest, and the net increase in expenses attributable to such increased exports. In the absence of direct accounting, the ratio of net profits to total sales may be applied to the increase in export sales. This paragraph (p) shall only apply to businesses located in this state engaging in the international export of Mississippi goods and services. Such goods or services shall have at least fifty percent (50%) of value added at a location in Mississippi.

(q) Amounts paid by the federal government for the construction of soil conservation systems as required by a conservation plan adopted pursuant to 16 USCS 3801 et seq.



223 (r) The amount deposited in a medical savings account,
224 and any interest accrued thereon, that is a part of a medical
225 savings account program as specified in the Medical Savings
226 Account Act under Sections 71-9-1 through 71-9-9; provided,
227 however, that any amount withdrawn from such account for purposes
228 other than paying eligible medical expense or to procure health
229 coverage shall be included in gross income.

230 (s) Amounts paid by the Mississippi Soil and Water
231 Conservation Commission from the Mississippi Soil and Water
232 Cost-Share Program for the installation of water quality best
233 management practices.

234 (t) Dividends received by a holding corporation, as
235 defined in Section 27-13-1, from a subsidiary corporation, as
236 defined in Section 27-13-1.

237 (u) Interest, dividends, gains or income of any kind on
238 any account in the Mississippi Affordable College Savings Trust
239 Fund, as established in Sections 37-155-101 through 37-155-125, to
240 the extent that such amounts remain on deposit in the MACS Trust
241 Fund or are withdrawn pursuant to a qualified withdrawal, as
242 defined in Section 37-155-105.

243 (v) Interest, dividends or gains accruing on the
244 payments made pursuant to a prepaid tuition contract, as provided
245 for in Section 37-155-17.

246 (w) Income resulting from transactions with a related
247 member where the related member subject to tax under this chapter



was required to, and did in fact, add back the expense of such transactions as required by Section 27-7-17(2). Under no circumstances may the exclusion from income exceed the deduction add-back of the related member, nor shall the exclusion apply to any income otherwise excluded under this chapter.

(x) Amounts that are subject to the tax levied pursuant to Section 27-7-901, and are paid to patrons by gaming establishments licensed under the Mississippi Gaming Control Act.

(y) Amounts that are subject to the tax levied pursuant to Section 27-7-903, and are paid to patrons by gaming establishments not licensed under the Mississippi Gaming Control Act.

(z) Interest, dividends, gains or income of any kind on any account in a qualified tuition program and amounts received as distributions under a qualified tuition program shall be treated in the same manner as provided under the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended. For the purposes of this paragraph (z), the term "qualified tuition program" means and has the same definition as that term has in 26 USCS 529.

(aa) The amount deposited in a health savings account, and any interest accrued thereon, that is a part of a health savings account program as specified in the Health Savings Accounts Act created in Sections 83-62-1 through 83-62-9; however, any amount withdrawn from such account for purposes other than paying qualified medical expenses or to procure health coverage



shall be included in gross income, except as otherwise provided by Sections 83-62-7 and 83-62-9.

(bb) Amounts received as qualified disaster relief payments shall be treated in the same manner as provided under the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

(cc) Amounts received as a "qualified Hurricane Katrina distribution" as defined in the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

(dd) Amounts received by an individual which may be excluded from income as foreign earned income for federal income tax purposes.

(ee) Amounts received by a qualified individual, directly or indirectly, from an employer or nonprofit housing organization that are qualified housing expenses associated with an employer-assisted housing program. For purposes of this paragraph (ee):

(i) "Qualified individual" means any individual whose household income does not exceed one hundred twenty percent (120%) of the area median gross income (as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development), adjusted for household size, for the area in which the housing is located.

(ii) "Nonprofit housing organization" means an organization that is organized as a not-for-profit organization under the laws of this state or another state and has as one of its purposes:



298 1. Homeownership education or counseling;
299 2. The development of affordable housing; or
300 3. The development or administration of
301 employer-assisted housing programs.

302 (iii) "Employer-assisted housing program" means a
303 separate written plan of any employer (including, without
304 limitation, tax-exempt organizations and public employers) for the
305 exclusive benefit of the employer's employees to pay qualified
306 housing expenses to assist the employer's employees in securing
307 affordable housing.

308 (iv) "Qualified housing expenses" means:
309 1. With respect to rental assistance, an
310 amount not to exceed Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) paid for the
311 purpose of assisting employees with security deposits and rental
312 subsidies; and
313 2. With respect to homeownership assistance,
314 an amount not to exceed the lesser of Ten Thousand Dollars
315 (\$10,000.00) or six percent (6%) of the purchase price of the
316 employee's principal residence that is paid for the purpose of
317 assisting employees with down payments, payment of closing costs,
318 reduced interest mortgages, mortgage guarantee programs, mortgage
319 forgiveness programs, equity contribution programs, or
320 contributions to homebuyer education and/or homeownership
321 counseling of eligible employees.



(ff) For the 2010 taxable year and any taxable year thereafter, amounts converted in accordance with the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended, from a traditional Individual Retirement Account to a Roth Individual Retirement Account. The exemption allowed under this paragraph (ff) shall be available to the spouse or other beneficiary at the death of the primary retiree.

(gg) Amounts received for the performance of disaster or emergency-related work as defined in Section 27-113-5.

(hh) The amount deposited in a catastrophe savings account established under Sections 27-7-1001 through 27-7-1007, interest income earned on the catastrophe savings account, and distributions from the catastrophe savings account; however, any amount withdrawn from a catastrophe savings account for purposes other than paying qualified catastrophe expenses shall be included in gross income, except as otherwise provided by Sections 27-7-1001 through 27-7-1007.

(ii) Interest, dividends, gains or income of any kind on any account in the Mississippi Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Trust Fund, as established in Chapter 28, Title 43, to the extent that such amounts remain on deposit in the ABLE Trust Fund or are withdrawn pursuant to a qualified withdrawal, as defined in Section 43-28-11.

(jj) Subject to the limitations provided under Section 27-7-1103, amounts deposited into a first-time homebuyer savings



347 account and any interest or other income earned attributable to an
348 account and monies or funds withdrawn or distributed from an
349 account for the payment of eligible costs by or on behalf of a
350 qualified beneficiary; however, any monies or funds withdrawn or
351 distributed from a first-time homebuyer savings account for any
352 purpose other than the payment of eligible costs by or on behalf
353 of a qualified beneficiary shall be included in gross income. For
354 the purpose of this paragraph (jj), the terms "first-time
355 homebuyer savings account," "eligible costs" and "qualified
356 beneficiary" mean and have the same definitions as such terms have
357 in Section 27-7-1101.

358 (kk) Amounts paid by an agricultural disaster program
359 as compensation to an agricultural producer, cattle farmer or
360 cattle rancher who has suffered a loss as the result of a disaster
361 or emergency, including, but not limited to, the following United
362 States Department of Agriculture programs:

- 363 (i) Livestock Forage Disaster Program;
- 364 (ii) Livestock Indemnity Program;
- 365 (iii) Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey
366 Bees and Farm-raised Fish Program;
- 367 (iv) Emergency Conservation Program;
- 368 (v) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- 369 (vi) Pasture, Rangeland, Forage Pilot Insurance
370 Program;
- 371 (vii) Annual Forage Pilot Program;



(viii) Livestock Risk Protection Insurance
Program; and

(ix) Livestock Gross Margin Insurance Plan.

(ll) Amounts received as advances and/or grants under
the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act,
the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American
Rescue Plan Act.

(mm) Any and all cancelled indebtedness provided for
under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and
the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

(nn) Amounts received as payments under Section
27-3-85.

(oo) Amounts received as grants under the 2020 COVID-19
Mississippi Business Assistance Act.

(pp) Amounts received as grants under Section 57-1-521.

(* * * qq) Amounts received as grants under the
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program and Restaurant
Revitalization Fund authorized by the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit
Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act, and amended by the
American Rescue Plan Act.

(* * * rr) Amounts received as grants under the
Mississippi Agriculture Stabilization Act.

(5) Prisoners of war, missing in action-taxable status.

(a) **Members of the Armed Forces.** Gross income does not
include compensation received for active service as a member of



the Armed Forces of the United States for any month during any part of which such member is in a missing status, as defined in paragraph (d) of this subsection, during the Vietnam Conflict as a result of such conflict.

(b) **Civilian employees.** Gross income does not include compensation received for active service as an employee for any month during any part of which such employee is in a missing status during the Vietnam Conflict as a result of such conflict.

(c) **Period of conflict.** For the purpose of this subsection, the Vietnam Conflict began February 28, 1961, and ends on the date designated by the President by Executive Order as the date of the termination of combatant activities in Vietnam. For the purpose of this subsection, an individual is in a missing status as a result of the Vietnam Conflict if immediately before such status began he was performing service in Vietnam or was performing service in Southeast Asia in direct support of military operations in Vietnam. "Southeast Asia," as used in this paragraph, is defined to include Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and waters adjacent thereto.

(d) "Missing status" means the status of an employee or member of the Armed Forces who is in active service and is officially carried or determined to be absent in a status of (i) missing; (ii) missing in action; (iii) interned in a foreign country; (iv) captured, beleaguered or besieged by a hostile force; or (v) detained in a foreign country against his will; but



does not include the status of an employee or member of the Armed Forces for a period during which he is officially determined to be absent from his post of duty without authority.

(e) "Active service" means active federal service by an employee or member of the Armed Forces of the United States in an active duty status.

(f) "Employee" means one who is a citizen or national of the United States or an alien admitted to the United States for permanent residence and is a resident of the State of Mississippi and is employed in or under a federal executive agency or department of the Armed Forces.

(g) "Compensation" means (i) basic pay; (ii) special pay; (iii) incentive pay; (iv) basic allowance for quarters; (v) basic allowance for subsistence; and (vi) station per diem allowances for not more than ninety (90) days.

(h) If refund or credit of any overpayment of tax for any taxable year resulting from the application of this subsection (5) is prevented by the operation of any law or rule of law, such refund or credit of such overpayment of tax may, nevertheless, be made or allowed if claim therefor is filed with the Department of Revenue within three (3) years after the date of the enactment of this subsection.

(i) The provisions of this subsection shall be effective for taxable years ending on or after February 28, 1961.



(6) A shareholder of an S corporation, as defined in Section 27-8-3(1)(g), shall take into account the income, loss, deduction or credit of the S corporation only to the extent provided in Section 27-8-7(2).

SECTION 3. Section 27-19-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

27-19-51. (1) (a) In recognition of their many and varied patriotic services rendered the state, the United States and the citizens thereof, Mississippians who have completed an active duty career with the Armed Forces of the United States and active duty and retired members of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and the United States Reserves, including both enlisted and officer personnel, upon application and subject to the provisions of this section may be issued distinctive motor vehicle license plates or tags identifying these persons with such organizations. For the purposes of this section the term "Armed Forces" includes the United States Merchant Marines and members thereof in maritime service during the period from December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945. The distinctive plates or tags so issued shall comply with the provisions of Section 27-19-41 and shall be of such color and design as may be agreed upon by the Adjutant General and the Department of Revenue for the Army National Guard or Air National Guard, by the Mississippi chapters of the Retired Officers Association and the Retired Non-Commissioned Officers Association and the Department of Revenue for retired active duty members of



the Armed Forces of the United States, and by the Department of Revenue for retired members of the United States Merchant Marines. Each distinctive license plate shall bear the words "National Guard" or the name of the appropriate armed service and need not bear prefixed numbers identifying the county of issuance.

(b) In recognition of their many and varied patriotic services rendered the state, the United States and the citizens thereof, Mississippians who are active duty and retired members of the Army National Guard and/or the Air National Guard, including both enlisted and officer personnel, upon application and subject to the provisions of this section may be issued distinctive motorcycle license plates or tags identifying these persons with such organizations. The distinctive plates or tags so issued shall comply with the provisions of Section 27-19-41 and shall be of such color and design as may be agreed upon by the Adjutant General and the Department of Revenue. Each distinctive license plate shall bear the words "National Guard" and need not bear prefixed numbers identifying the county of issuance.

(2) The surviving spouse of any person who was issued a distinctive license plate or tag under subsection (1) of this section because of completion of an active duty career with the Armed Forces of the United States or because of retirement from the Army National Guard, Air National Guard or United States Reserves, or any prisoner of war issued a distinctive license plate or tag under Section 27-19-54, shall be eligible to receive



496 the same type of distinctive license plate or tag which the
497 deceased spouse was issued.

498 (3) The distinctive license plates here provided for shall
499 be prepared by the Department of Revenue and shall be issued
500 through the tax collectors of the several counties of the state in
501 like manner as are other motor vehicle license plates or tags and
502 motorcycle license plates or tags and such officers shall be
503 entitled to their regular fees for such service. Applicants for
504 such distinctive plates shall present to the issuing official
505 proof of their membership in the Army National Guard, Air National
506 Guard, or United States Reserves by means of certificate signed by
507 the commanding officer of such applicant on forms prescribed by
508 the Adjutant General of Mississippi. Retired members of the Armed
509 Forces of the United States applying for such plates shall present
510 to the issuing officials a copy of their active duty retirement
511 orders or other proof of retirement from active service with one
512 of the Armed Forces of the United States. The distinctive license
513 plates or tags so issued shall be used only upon and for
514 personally or jointly owned private passenger vehicles (to include
515 station wagons, recreational motor vehicles and pickup trucks)
516 and/or motorcycles registered in the name, or jointly in the name,
517 of the member making application therefor, and when so issued to
518 such applicant shall be used upon the vehicle or motorcycle for
519 which issued in lieu of the standard license plate or license tag
520 normally issued for such vehicle or motorcycle.



521 (4) In addition to use of such distinctive license plates or
522 tags on such personally or jointly owned vehicles, such
523 distinctive plate or tag may be used on state-owned vehicles
524 operated by the State Military Department provided the prefix
525 "MNG" is placed ahead of the number thereon. Motor vehicles for
526 which such distinctive license plates or tags are issued shall be
527 registered by the proper official as are other motor vehicles.

528 (5) The distinctive license plates issued hereunder shall
529 not be transferable between motor vehicle or motorcycle owners;
530 and in the event the owner of a vehicle or motorcycle bearing such
531 distinctive plate shall sell, trade, exchange or otherwise dispose
532 of the vehicle or motorcycle, such plate shall be retained by the
533 owner to whom issued and returned by the owner to the tax
534 collector of the county or the Department of Revenue, as the case
535 may be.

536 (6) The Adjutant General is authorized to recognize not more
537 than one hundred (100) senior staff officers, commanders, command
538 sergeants major and senior enlisted advisors by designating the
539 issue of National Guard distinctive license plates or tags
540 numbered "1" through "100." These license plates or tags shall be
541 retained by the individual so designated and may be transferred
542 between vehicles or individuals under procedures established by
543 the Department of Revenue. The Adjutant General is responsible
544 for furnishing the Department of Revenue necessary information to



effect issue or transfer of these specially numbered license plates or tags.

(7) National Guard plates or tags shall be prepared and furnished for the licensing year commencing November 1, 1962, and annually thereafter. The Adjutant General shall furnish the Department of Revenue with an estimate of the number of such distinctive plates or tags required in each of the several counties of the state.

(8) (a) A credit of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per year shall be applied towards the motor vehicle license tag fees for one or more motor vehicles titled in the name of a service member, their spouse, or their dependent, not to exceed a total credit of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per year per service member.

(b) To receive the credit, the applicant shall provide the following documentation to their county tag office:

(i) Proof of membership in the Mississippi National Guard (e.g., unit provided member letter, military orders).

(ii) Proof of spousal relationship (e.g., marriage certificate) or dependent status (e.g., dependent ID card, tax records).

(iii) Proof of vehicle ownership (e.g., vehicle title).

(c) Limitations.



(i) A total credit of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) credit shall be allowed per service member, regardless of the number of vehicles owned.

(ii) The credit shall be applied to the annual license tag fees for privilege tax and ad valorem only and shall not be applied to other fees or taxes associated with vehicle registration.

(iii) This credit is nontransferable.

(iv) The member must choose the approved National Guard specific license plate to receive this credit.

(* * *9) The provisions of this section are supplementary to the laws of this state pertaining to the licensing of motor vehicles and nothing herein shall be construed as abridging or repealing any of such laws.

SECTION 4. Mississippi National Guard Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program. (1) There is hereby established within the Mississippi Military Department the "Mississippi National Guard Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program" (hereinafter referred to as the "program").

(2) The purpose of the program is to award grants to reimburse certain members of the National Guard for the cost of premiums for Tricare Reserve Select health care plans; require the department to promulgate rules to administer and implement the program in order to enhance the medical readiness of the Mississippi National Guard and assist members with their



healthcare needs, thereby promoting retention of qualified personnel.

(3) A member of the Mississippi National Guard shall be eligible for this program if he or she meets the following criteria:

(a) The member is eligible for Tricare Reserve Select Coverage.

(b) The member is an actively drilling member of the Mississippi National Guard.

(4) Eligible members who meet the reimbursement application requirements as established by the department shall receive a reimbursement for eligible Tricare Reserve Select premiums paid at the current Tricare Reserve Select premium rate for an individual member for members with no dependents and at the published family rate for members with dependents covered under Tricare Reserve Select.

(5) The Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard shall administer the program and shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for its implementation, including procedures for application, verification of eligibility, disbursement of funds, and tracking of program impact on readiness and retention.

(6) The funds for this program shall be appropriated annually by the Legislature.

(7) The Adjutant General shall provide an annual report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the program, including the



619 number of participants, the impact on medical readiness, and any
620 recommendations for improvement.

621 **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
622 and after its passage.

