

By: Representatives Clark, Montgomery
(15th), Rogers

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 396
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO AWARD HONORARY
2 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS TO WORLD WAR II AND KOREAN CONFLICT VETERANS
3 WHO WERE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION DUE TO THEIR MILITARY
4 SERVICE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE
5 VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD TO DEVELOP A UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR THE
6 DIPLOMA; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STATE
7 VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD TO PROVIDE COMMUNITIES WITH INFORMATION ON
8 HOSTING DIPLOMA CEREMONIES FOR AWARDING DIPLOMAS TO VETERANS; AND
9 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 SECTION 1. (1) The school board of a local school district
12 may award an honorary high school diploma in a form prescribed and
13 supplied to school districts by the State Board of Education to
14 veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict who were unable
15 to complete their education due to their military service. The
16 honorary diploma is available to any honorably discharged veteran
17 residing in Mississippi who was scheduled to graduate between 1941
18 and 1955 but was inducted into military service before completing
19 the necessary graduation requirements. Family members of deceased
20 eligible veterans may apply for the diploma to be awarded
21 posthumously.

22 (2) The State Board of Education and State Veterans Affairs
23 Board jointly shall develop a uniform application for persons
24 seeking a diploma under subsection (1) of this section. The
25 application shall request no less than the following information:

26 (a) The veteran's name, social security number and date
27 of birth;

28 (b) The last year the veteran was in school and the
29 veteran's grade level during that year;

- 30 (c) The year the veteran left school to enter World War
31 II or the Korean Conflict;
- 32 (d) The year the veteran would have graduated from high
33 school;
- 34 (e) The name and location of the school attended;
- 35 (f) The date of the veteran's enlistment or draft;
- 36 (g) The veteran's service number;
- 37 (h) The veteran's date of honorable discharge;
- 38 (i) A copy of the veteran's DD-214 form, if available;
- 39 and
- 40 (j) Any other information deemed relevant by the State
41 Board of Education or State Veterans Affairs Board.

42 The State Board of Education shall provide local school
43 districts, county departments of human services and local veterans
44 services offices with copies of the uniform application.

45 (3) A person may request an application from any local
46 school district, county department of human services or local
47 veterans services office. Completed applications for a diploma
48 may be submitted to the veteran's local school district,
49 regardless of whether or not the veteran attended school in that
50 district. Upon verifying the information contained in the
51 application, including verifying the veteran's military service
52 information with the State Veterans Affairs Board, and determining
53 the veteran's eligibility for the honorary high school diploma,
54 the local school board may award the diploma to the veteran. The
55 diploma shall indicate clearly that the recipient is a veteran of
56 World War II or the Korean Conflict and that the diploma was
57 issued at a later date due to the veteran's participation in the
58 war. The State Department of Education and the State Veterans
59 Affairs Board may work together to provide communities with
60 information about hosting a diploma ceremony on or around Veterans
61 Day. The diploma shall be provided to the veteran or, if the
62 veteran is deceased, to the veteran's family.

63 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
64 and after July 1, 2001.