

By: Representatives Montgomery, Bondurant,
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 Markham, Masterson, Mayo, McCoy, Miles,
 Moore, Moss, Myers, Nicholson, Patterson, Reed, Reynolds, Robinson
 (84th), Rogers (14th), Rogers (61st), Smith (59th), Sullivan, Thomas,
 Turner, Upshaw, Ward, Weathersby, Whittington, Zuber, Buck, Scott

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 998

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
 2 TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO AWARD HONORARY HIGH SCHOOL
 3 DIPLOMAS TO VIETNAM VETERANS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-16-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 6 amended as follows:

7 37-16-13. (1) The school board of a local school district
 8 may award an honorary high school diploma in a form prescribed and
 9 supplied to school districts by the State Board of Education to
 10 veterans of World War II, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War
 11 who were unable to complete their education due to their military
 12 service. The honorary diploma is available to any honorably
 13 discharged veteran residing in Mississippi who was scheduled to
 14 graduate between 1941 and 1955 or between 1964 and 1973, but was
 15 inducted into military service before completing the necessary
 16 graduation requirements. Family members of deceased eligible
 17 veterans may apply for the diploma to be awarded posthumously.

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

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

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

26 (c) The year the veteran left school to enter World War
 27 II, the Korean Conflict or the Vietnam War;

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

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

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

59 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
60 and after July 1, 2004.