

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. PRESIDENT AND MR. SPEAKER:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

S. B. No. 3045: Appropriation; Veterans Affairs Board.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

- 1. That the House recede from its Amendment No. 1.
- 2. That the Senate and House adopt the following amendment:

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

5 **SECTION 1.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
6 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State
7 General Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of
8 defraying the expenses and paying salaries of the State Veterans
9 Affairs Board for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and
10 ending June 30, 2025.....\$ 5,640,041.00.

11 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
12 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the special
13 fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the State Veterans
14 Affairs Board which is comprised of special source funds collected
15 by or otherwise available to the board, for the support and
16 maintenance of said board for the fiscal year beginning
17 July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....\$ 5,688,035.00.



18 **SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
19 Section 1 of this act and authorized for expenditure under the
20 provisions of Section 2 of this act, the following positions are
21 authorized:

22 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

23 Permanent: 40

24 Time-Limited: 26

25 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
26 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal
27 Services for Fiscal Year 2026 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2025 funds
28 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
29 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 budget by the Mississippi
30 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's
31 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board
32 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may
33 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year
34 2025 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2024
35 headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that
36 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount
37 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments
38 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current
39 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee
40 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the
41 Mississippi State Personnel Board.



42 Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and
43 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current
44 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to
45 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 do
46 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
47 the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 projected cost exceeds the
48 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
49 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
50 essential for the agency.

51 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
52 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
53 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
54 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
55 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
56 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
57 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions
58 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
59 appropriated level.

60 No general funds authorized to be expended herein shall be
61 used to replace federal funds and/or other special funds used for
62 salaries authorized under the provisions of this act and which are
63 withdrawn and no longer available.

64 None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in
65 violation of the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A



66 relating to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as
67 interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.

68 **SECTION 4.** In addition to all other sums herein
69 appropriated, the following sum, or so much thereof as may be
70 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State
71 General Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of
72 defraying the operating expenses and paying salaries of the
73 Mississippi State Veterans Homes as established in Section 35-1-19
74 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending
75 June 30, 2025.....\$ 6,357,359.00.

76 **SECTION 5.** In addition to all other sums herein
77 appropriated, the following sum, or so much thereof as may be
78 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the special
79 fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the State Veterans
80 Affairs Board, which is comprised of special source funds
81 collected by or otherwise available to the board, for the purpose
82 of defraying the expenses and paying salaries of the Mississippi
83 State Veterans Homes as established in Section 35-1-19 for the
84 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....
85 \$ 74,231,360.00.

86 **SECTION 6.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
87 Section 4 of this act and authorized for expenditure under the
88 provision of Section 5 of this act, the following positions are
89 authorized:

90 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:



91 Permanent: 308

92 Time Limited: 389

93 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
94 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law.

95 No general funds authorized to be expended herein shall be
96 used to replace federal funds and/or other special funds which are
97 being used for salaries authorized under the provisions of this
98 act and which are withdrawn and no longer available.

99 None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in
100 violation of Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A relating
101 to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as
102 interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.

103 **SECTION 7.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
104 Executive Director of the State Veterans Affairs Board has the
105 authority to transfer spending authority between and within the
106 budgets of the State Veterans Affairs Board and the Mississippi
107 State Veterans Homes, in an amount not to exceed twenty-five
108 percent (25%) of the authorized budgets in the aggregate. The
109 purpose of this authority is to use available cash reserves more
110 efficiently. It is further the intention of the Legislature that
111 the State Veterans Affairs Board shall submit written
112 justification for the transfer to the Legislative Budget Office
113 and the Department of Finance and Administration on or before the
114 fifteenth of the month prior to the effective date of the
115 transfer.



116 **SECTION 8.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
117 Sections 1 and 2 of this act, funds in the amount of Two Hundred
118 Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) are provided to defray the
119 cost of providing care to indigent/low-income Mississippi veterans
120 and the nonveteran surviving spouses of Mississippi veterans if
121 the surviving spouse was a resident of a state veterans home at
122 the time of the veteran's death and who, subsequent to the
123 veteran's death, meets the indigent/low-income criteria
124 established by the State Veterans Affairs Board in the state
125 veterans homes. It is the intention of the Legislature that the
126 provision pertaining to use of indigent/low-income surviving
127 spouses be retroactive for any such period, prior to the effective
128 date of this act, that a current surviving spouse may have met the
129 criteria. This section and its provisions shall be known and
130 cited as the "Hilton R. 'Jack' Vance Act of 1997."

131 **SECTION 9.** The State Veterans Affairs Board shall have
132 continued authority for all actions related to the planning,
133 development, construction, and outfitting of the Mississippi
134 Veterans Memorial Cemeteries, pursuant to Section 35-1-41.

135 **SECTION 10.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
136 State Veterans Affairs Board shall maintain complete accounting
137 and personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds
138 appropriated under the provisions of this act and that such
139 records shall be in the same format and level of details as
140 maintained for Fiscal Year 2024. It is further the intention of



141 the Legislature that the budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 shall
142 be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format
143 and level of detail comparable to the format and level of detail
144 provided during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget request process.

145 **SECTION 11.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
146 State Veterans Affairs Board and the Mississippi State Veterans
147 Homes are hereby authorized to escalate, budget and expend funds
148 from fund number 3373200000, in an amount not to exceed Five
149 Million Dollars (\$5,000,000.00), for the purpose of operating the
150 state veterans homes as authorized by law, in accordance with
151 rules and regulations of the Department of Finance and
152 Administration in a manner consistent with the escalation of
153 federal funds.

154 **SECTION 12.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
155 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
156 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
157 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
158 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
159 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
160 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
161 made without competitive bids.

162 **SECTION 13.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
163 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Capital
164 Expense Fund not otherwise appropriated for the Mississippi State
165 Veterans Affairs Board for the purpose of reauthorizing the



166 expenditure of Capital Expense Funds, as authorized in SB 3018,
167 2023 Regular Session, to defray operational expenses related to
168 stand-up operating costs at the Tradition State Veterans Home for
169 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending
170 June 30, 2025.....\$ 3,200,000.00.

171 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
172 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
173 section, shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
174 remaining as of June 30, 2024, from the amount authorized for the
175 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
176 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

177 **SECTION 14.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
178 of Section 2, Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars
179 (\$2,500,000.00), or so much thereof, shall be derived out of any
180 money in the State Treasury to the credit of the Capital Expense
181 Fund, as created in Section 27-103-303, Mississippi Code of 1972,
182 and allocated in a manner as determined by the Treasurer's Office.

183 It is the intention of the Legislature, with the funds
184 appropriated in this section, to fund the construction of a new
185 Veteran's Home in Rankin County to replace the Jackson Home and
186 fund this move over three years.

187 **SECTION 15.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
188 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
189 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
190 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal



191 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
192 proper person, officer or officers in the manner provided by law.

193 **SECTION 16.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
194 and after July 1, 2024.

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

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING
2 THE EXPENSES OF THE STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD AND THE
3 MISSISSIPPI STATE VETERANS HOMES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025.

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

X (SIGNED)
Hopson

X (SIGNED)
Deweese

X (SIGNED)
Williams

X (SIGNED)
Read

X (SIGNED)
Tate

X (SIGNED)
Turner

