MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Arnold To: Ways and Means

HOUSE BILL NO. 1065

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 27-19-56.5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DISTINCTIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAGS THAT MAY BE ISSUED TO A PERSON IDENTIFYING SUCH PERSON AS A RECIPIENT OF THE PURPLE HEART MEDAL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 27-19-56.5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

27-19-56.5. (1) (a) In recognition of the patriotic service rendered by Mississippians who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and by Mississippians who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal, any such person is privileged to obtain two (2) distinctive motor vehicle license plates or tags identifying such person as a Pearl Harbor survivor or not more than *** * *** five (5) distinctive motor vehicle license plates or tags and one (1) distinctive motorcycle license plate or tag identifying such person as a Purple Heart Medal recipient.

(b) A person who is privileged to obtain a distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag identifying such person as a Purple Heart Medal recipient and who is eligible to obtain a

special license plate under Section 27-19-56, is privileged to obtain one (1) distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag bearing the International Symbol of Access adopted by Rehabilitation International in 1969 at its Eleventh World Congress on Rehabilitation of the disabled and identifying such person as a Purple Heart Medal recipient.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection, the distinctive plates or tags shall be of a color and design designated by the Department of Revenue.

(2) (a) The distinctive license plates shall be prepared by the Department of Revenue and shall be issued through the tax collectors of the counties in the same manner as are other motor vehicle license plates or tags.

(b) A tag fee of Fifteen Dollars ($15.00), in addition to all other taxes and fees, shall be collected by the tax collector for the Pearl Harbor distinctive tag.

(c) The first distinctive tag issued to Purple Heart Medal recipients under the provisions of this section shall be exempt from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes and all other taxes and fees. There shall be no exemption from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes or other taxes and fees for the issuance of an additional distinctive tag to Purple Heart Medal recipients. However, the surviving spouse of a deceased person who was issued a Purple Heart Medal distinctive license plate or tag under this section shall be entitled to apply for or retain one (1) such

license tag and may continue annually to renew registration for such distinctive license plate or tag for as long as the spouse remains unmarried. At the time of application or renewal registration, a surviving spouse who desires to retain such distinctive plate or tag shall file with the county tax collector a sworn statement that the spouse is unmarried, and any such vehicle when so registered shall be exempt from ad valorem taxes, privilege taxes and all other taxes and fees.

(d) The tax collector shall monthly forward the additional fee of Fifteen Dollars ($15.00) charged for issuance of a Pearl Harbor distinctive tag to the Department of Revenue which shall deposit such fee to the credit of the State General Fund.

(e) An applicant for a distinctive tag under this section shall present to the issuing official either:

(i) Written proof that the applicant is an honorably discharged former member of one (1) of the Armed Forces of the United States and, while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, was present during the attack on the Island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, between the hours of 7:55 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., Hawaii time; or

(ii) Written proof that the applicant is a Purple Heart Medal recipient; however, if the person is applying for a distinctive tag pursuant to subsection (1)(b) of this section, the applicant shall also meet the requirements of Section 27-19-56.

(f) The distinctive license plates or tags so issued shall be used only upon a personally or jointly owned private passenger vehicle (to include station wagons, recreational motor vehicles and pickup trucks) or motorcycle registered in the name, or jointly in the name, of the person making application therefor, and when issued to such person shall be used upon the vehicle for which issued in lieu of the standard license plate or license tag normally issued for such vehicle.

(3) The distinctive license plates shall not be transferable between motor vehicle owners; and in the event the owner of a vehicle bearing a distinctive plate shall sell, trade, exchange or otherwise dispose of the vehicle, such plate shall be retained by such owner and returned to the tax collector.

(4) A vehicle that displays a distinctive license plate issued under this section may park free of charge in any state parking space or state parking facility when the person to whom the license plate was issued is operating or occupying the vehicle.

(5) Any person evading or violating any of the provisions of this section, or attempting to secure benefits under this section to which he or she is not entitled, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) or imprisoned in the county jail for not less than six (6) months, or both.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

ST: Distinctive motor vehicle license tag; increase number that may be issued to a person who is a recipient of the Purple Heart Medal.