

By Representative Villalobos

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to empowerment zones; creating
3 s. 290.0501, F.S.; creating the "Florida
4 Empowerment Zone Act"; providing definitions
5 and intent; providing for program
6 administration by the Department of Community
7 Affairs; providing for annual funding;
8 providing requirements for eligibility;
9 providing for powers of the department to
10 implement the program; providing an
11 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15 Section 1. Section 290.0501, Florida Statutes, is
16 created to read:

17 290.0501 Florida Empowerment Zone Program.--

18 (1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be cited as the
19 "Florida Empowerment Zone Act."

20 (2) DEFINITIONS.--For purposes of this section:

21 (a) "Department" means the Department of Community
22 Affairs.

23 (b) "Federal Empowerment Zone Program" means the
24 empowerment zone program passed by the United States Congress
25 and codified at 29 U.S.C. s. 1391 et seq.

26 (c) "Nominated area" means an area nominated for
27 participation in the Federal Empowerment Zone Program.

28 (3) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--The Legislature recognizes
29 that it is in the best interest of the citizens of this state
30 that the state create economic opportunity in poverty-stricken
31 areas and rebuild such areas by empowering the people and

1 communities within these areas to create jobs and
2 opportunities. The United States Congress, in 1997, provided
3 that an additional 20 areas may be designated as federal
4 empowerment zones by January 1, 1999, and, as such, be
5 eligible for federal funding and under the Federal Empowerment
6 Zone Program. The Legislature seeks to promote Florida local
7 governments in submitting the strongest possible proposals
8 under the Federal Empowerment Zone Program, by establishing a
9 companion state empowerment zone program.

10 (4) ADMINISTRATION.--There is hereby created an
11 economic development program to be known as the Florida
12 Empowerment Zone Program. The program shall operate for 10
13 years and, except as otherwise provided by law, shall be
14 administered by the Department of Community Affairs in
15 conjunction with the Federal Empowerment Zone Program.

16 (5) FUNDING.--Beginning in fiscal year 1999-2000, the
17 Legislature shall appropriate funds on an annual basis for 10
18 years to implement this section. Such funds shall be
19 distributed by the department to any local government within
20 the state that has applied for and has been awarded the
21 federal empowerment zone designation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. s.
22 1391(g). Such funds shall be used for the benefit of the
23 nominated area and shall be contingent upon the local
24 government receiving federal matching funds under the Federal
25 Empowerment Zone Program and meeting the local match
26 requirements imposed by the federal program regulations.

27 (6) GENERAL POWERS OF DEPARTMENT.--The department
28 shall have all the powers necessary or appropriate to carry
29 out the purposes and provisions of the program, including the
30 power to adopt and enforce rules not inconsistent with this
31 section for the administration of the program funds.

1 Section 2. There is hereby appropriated from the
2 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Community Affairs
3 for fiscal year 1999-2000 the sum of \$5 million to carry out
4 the purposes of s. 290.0501, Florida Statutes, as created by
5 this act.

6 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1 of the
7 year in which enacted.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

11

12 Creates the Florida Empowerment Zone Program, to be
13 administered by the Department of Community Affairs in
14 conjunction with the Federal Empowerment Zone Program, to
15 provide funds to local governments for creation of
16 economic opportunities in poverty-stricken areas of the
17 state. Provides for annual funding for a 10-year period.
18 Provides an appropriation for fiscal year 1999-2000.

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