

By Senator Joyner

18-1622-07

See HB

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to children's zones; creating

3 s. 409.147, F.S.; providing legislative

4 findings and intent; establishing the Magic

5 City Children's Zone pilot project; providing

6 for management by an entity organized as a

7 corporation not for profit; providing purposes

8 for the project; providing geographic

9 boundaries for the zone; providing for election

10 of a board of directors; requiring the board to

11 enter into a contract to develop a business

12 plan; providing an effective date.

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14 WHEREAS, the State of Florida is often referred to as

15 the Sunshine State, a term that suggests warm weather, a

16 carefree lifestyle, and unlimited potential for nurturing hope

17 and realizing dreams for a fulfilling and productive life, and

18 WHEREAS, communities within the state suffering from

19 fragile infrastructures and multiple social ills are home to

20 families for whom those obstacles limit, or completely

21 preclude, their ability to create a good quality of life for

22 themselves and for their children, and

23 WHEREAS, a proposed community initiative known as a

24 children's zone, which is modeled after the long-established

25 and successful Harlem Children's Zone, seeks to change that

26 experience, and

27 WHEREAS, the initiative will be based on the belief

28 that in order to help children from troubled communities

29 become healthy adults and responsible, fulfilled members of

30 their communities, two things must happen: first, they must be

31 surrounded by a critical mass of adults who are effective

1 | parents engaged in activities with their children and second,
2 | early in their lives, they must be exposed to sound health
3 | care, intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent
4 | guidance from loving, attentive adults, and

5 | WHEREAS, the initiative seeks to establish a
6 | comprehensive, community-based, coordinated, and targeted
7 | system of strategies and services to revitalize communities
8 | with an increased sense of culture, pride, and togetherness;
9 | to support parents; and to provide comprehensive care for all
10 | children within the zone, NOW, THEREFORE,

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12 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14 | Section 1. Section 409.147, Florida Statutes, is
15 | created to read:

16 | 409.147 Children's zones.--

17 | (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.--

18 | (a) The Legislature finds that:

19 | 1. There are neighborhoods in Florida where conditions
20 | and opportunities that middle-class communities take for
21 | granted, such as quality schools, useable playgrounds, support
22 | from religious institutions, functioning civic organizations,
23 | and safe streets, are nonexistent or so marginal that they are
24 | ineffective.

25 | 2. The vibrancy of these neighborhoods is further
26 | compromised by adult illiteracy, high unemployment, low
27 | incomes, high crime rates, and the lack of safe, affordable
28 | housing.

29 | 3. Children in these neighborhoods attend a
30 | prekindergarten education program and are read to by an adult
31 | on a regular basis at a much lower rate than children in other

1 communities. They experience below-average performance on
2 standardized tests and graduate from high school in fewer
3 numbers. Most are eligible for the free or reduced-price
4 school lunch program.

5 4. Children in these neighborhoods often suffer from
6 high rates of asthma, a higher risk of lead poisoning, and
7 inadequate health care, and they are routinely exposed to
8 violence and crime.

9 5. In spite of these obstacles, most of these
10 neighborhoods are rich in diversity and are inhabited by
11 families representing many cultures, languages, belief
12 systems, and life experiences and residents who are
13 individuals with tremendous talents, strengths, and
14 resiliency.

15 6. These communities are also many times home to
16 leaders, stakeholders, and institutions that are committed to
17 making a difference in the lives of children and their
18 families.

19 (b) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to
20 assist these disadvantaged areas within the state in creating
21 a full-service community network that includes preschools,
22 schools, after-school programs, community centers, places of
23 worship, and housing and employment initiatives. The
24 Legislature further intends that these zones shall function as
25 models that effectively develop, coordinate, and deliver
26 integrated support and services to support family stability
27 through the availability of quality education, accessible
28 health care, youth development programs, opportunities for
29 employment, and safe and affordable housing for children and
30 families living within its boundaries.

31 (2) MAGIC CITY CHILDREN'S ZONE, INC., PILOT PROJECT.--

1 (a) There is created within the Liberty City
2 neighborhood in Miami-Dade County a 10-year pilot project zone
3 that, within 3 months after the effective date of this act,
4 shall be managed by an entity organized as a corporation not
5 for profit incorporated under the provisions of chapter 617
6 and approved by the Secretary of State. The zone shall be
7 known as the Magic City Children's Zone, Inc.

8 (b) The purpose of the pilot project is to develop a
9 new social service paradigm intended to overcome the
10 limitations of traditional approaches by systematically
11 coordinating programs that are focused on addressing the
12 critical needs of children and their families and targeted
13 efforts to rebuild the basic infrastructure of the community.

14 (c) Creation of the pilot project zone allows the
15 paradigm to be applied to an area that is large enough to
16 include all of the necessary components of community life,
17 including, but not limited to, schools, places of worship,
18 recreational facilities, commercial areas, and common space,
19 yet small enough to allow programs and services to reach every
20 willing member of the neighborhood. Therefore, the geographic
21 boundaries of the pilot project zone are:

- 22 1. Northwest 79th Street to the North;
- 23 2. Northwest 54th Street to the South;
- 24 3. North Miami Avenue to the East; and
- 25 4. Northwest 27th Avenue to the West.

26 (d) Programs within the pilot project zone shall
27 support the fact that funding is most effective when spent on
28 prevention. Effective early intervention results in long-term
29 benefits by making later interventions less necessary for many
30 children and adolescents and by making those later
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1 interventions more likely to be successful when they are
2 needed.

3 (e) After incorporation, the incorporators shall hold
4 an organizational meeting at the call of a majority of the
5 incorporators to elect a board of directors who shall complete
6 the organization of the corporation.

7 (f) The board shall enter into a contract with a
8 management consultant with experience working with social
9 service and educational entities to develop a 10-year business
10 plan to carry out the provisions of this section.

11 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

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