

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 3 Children's Zones
SPONSOR(S): Bendross-Mindingall and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 500

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) <u>Committee on Healthy Families</u>	<u>7 Y, 0 N</u>	<u>Preston</u>	<u>Schoolfield</u>
2) <u>Healthcare Council</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
3) <u>Policy & Budget Council</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
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SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill implements idea #69 from the book *100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future*. It creates a statutory mechanism for communities to create "Children's Zones," using the Harlem Children's Zone as a model. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides a nominating process for areas within communities to be designated as children's zones;
- Provides for the creation of a planning team, a strategic community plan, and focus areas to be included in the plan;
- Provides for the creation of a not for profit corporation to implement and govern a designated children's zone; and
- Creates the Magic City Children's Zone pilot, specifies geographical boundaries of the zone, provides for a board of directors, specifies membership on the board, provides duties for the board, and provides for a report.

\$3.6 million in non-recurring General Revenue and \$28,362 in non-recurring tobacco settlement funds are appropriated in the bill to the Department of Children and Family Services, for the 2008-2009 fiscal year as a grant for a three-year period for the purposes of implementing the provisions of this act, to include contracting for the development of a business plan and for evaluation and fiscal management and oversight of the pilot project.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2008.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Empower families – Implementation of a “children’s zone” may increase the stability, security, self support, and success of children and their families which may, in turn, strengthen relationships between family members.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Harlem Children’s Zone

Founded in 1970, Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. (HCZ) is an innovative, non-profit, community-based organization that works to enhance the quality of life for children and families in some of New York City's most desolate neighborhoods. Formerly known as Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families, HCZ's 15 centers serve more than 12,500 children and adults, including over 8,600 at-risk children. The work of the Children's Zone focuses not only on education, social service, and recreation, but also on rebuilding the basic fabric of community life.

The Harlem Children's Zone Project is a comprehensive community building initiative of the Harlem Children's Zone. The HCZ Project's mission is to create significant, positive opportunities for all children living in a 60-block area of Central Harlem by helping parents, residents, teachers, and other stakeholders create a safe learning and living environment for youth. Behind this mission lie two main principles:

- Children from troubled communities are far more likely to grow into healthy, productive adults if a critical mass of the adults around them are knowledgeable about the techniques of effective parenting, and are engaged in local educational, social, and religious activities with their children; and
- The earlier a child is touched by sound health care, intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from loving, attentive adults, the more likely that child will be to grow into a responsible and fulfilled member of the community.

While the HCZ Project acknowledges that intervention with older children is still important, there is also the recognition that later intervention is more costly and the outcome is not always as successful. If earlier intervention is adequate and appropriate, families should need later efforts to a lesser degree and in declining amounts.

The HCZ operates around a new social service paradigm intended to overcome the limitations of traditional approaches by systematically coordinating two related areas of effort: programs focused on addressing the critical needs of children and families, and targeted efforts to rebuild the basic community infrastructure. The work of the HCZ Project has evolved over the past 10 years into a resident-driven, community-building initiative that serves over 8,600 children annually. An integrated network of services and support that provides family stability, opportunities for employment, adequate and affordable housing, a quality education, and youth development activities for adolescents has been developed. Of the ten programs that make up the HCZ Project, nine focus directly on the needs of children and one on the broader community:

Youth Services

- **The Baby College** is a 9-week Saturday series of workshops that offers parents and other caregivers of children between the ages of 0 and 3 both the information and the supports necessary to raise happy and healthy children who enter school ready to learn.
- **Harlem Gems** is a universal pre-k program that prepares four-year-old children for entry into kindergarten. Harlem Gems offers extended day activities throughout the school year.
- **Family Support Center** is a walk-in storefront social services facility that provides families in crisis with immediate access to professional social services including foster care prevention, domestic violence workshops, parenting skill classes, and group and individual counseling.
- **Parents Help Center** is a drop-out prevention program that serves children with severe academic and attendance problems.
- **Harlem Peacemakers/SMART** identifies and trains college aged young people who are committed to making their neighborhoods safe places for children and families. Peacemakers work in elementary school classrooms and run after school and summer programs enriching children's educational and recreational experiences. SMART (Shaping Minds Around Reading and Technology) is designed to significantly improve the reading skills of each participating student. Using trained staff, this computer-based literacy program offers children personalized reading instruction, tutoring support during and after school, and lending libraries.
- **Fifth Grade Institute** recruits and prepares local students for the transition from elementary to middle school. The 5th Grade Institute operates in four Harlem elementary schools, providing eight 5th grade classrooms with daily after-school academic help and enrichment. During this three-hour period, a certified teacher and 3 assistants provide focused attention and academic coaching to small groups of students.
- **TRUCE (The Renaissance University for Community Education)** is a comprehensive leadership program for adolescents that promotes academic growth and career readiness using the arts, media literacy, health and multimedia technology. Participating students work on a community newspaper, a cable television show, a theater program, and/or a violence prevention initiative.
- **TRUCE Fitness and Nutrition Center** offers a free, 8,000 square foot exercise facility to youth and the broader Harlem community. The program promotes academic growth and helps youth develop skills in nutrition, fitness, presentation, and advocacy.
- **The Employment and Technology Center** provides dropout prevention services for young people, aged 14-18 who are enrolled in and attending school full-time. The center also provides free use of computers and participation in computer training classes to neighborhood residents as well as a Saturday literacy program.

Community Development

- **Community Pride** is a resident and community-driven neighborhood revitalization and community building program. The program organizes community beautification projects, helps tenants become homeowners, and works with tenant and block associations.

Over the next decade, the primary focus of the HCZ will be on children aged 0-18 living in the Harlem Children's Zone Project, a 100-block area of Central Harlem. The main objective of the Harlem Children's Zone will be to prepare the greatest possible number of the children in the HCZ Project to make a successful transition to an independent, healthy adulthood.

The Bill

The bill implements idea #69 from the book *100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future* which is to create a statutory mechanism for communities to create "Children's Zones," using the Harlem Children's Zone as a model.

The bill provides a nominating process for areas within communities to be designated as children's zones, provides for the creation of a planning team, a strategic community plan, and focus areas to be included in the plan. The bill provides for the creation of a not for profit corporation to implement and govern a designated children's zone.

The bill creates a 10-year pilot zone to be known as the Magic City Children's Zone pilot, specifies geographical boundaries of the zone, provides for a board of directors, specifies membership on the board, provides duties for the board, and provides for a report.

The bill provides an appropriation and requires the Department of Children and Family Services to contract with an existing private nonprofit corporation, incorporated for certain specified purposes, to implement the Magic City Children's Zone Pilot.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates s. 409.147, Florida Statutes, relating to children's zones.

Section 2. Provides for a contract between the department and an existing private nonprofit corporation.

Section 3. Provides for an appropriation.

Section 4. Provides for an effective date of July 1, 2008.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The sum of \$3.6 million in non-recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund and the sum of \$28,362 in non-recurring funds is appropriated from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Family Services during the 2008-2009 fiscal year as a grant for a three-year period for the purposes of implementing the provisions of this act, to include contracting for the development of a business plan and for evaluation and fiscal management and oversight of the pilot project.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

This legislation introduces a new opportunity to address the needs of families in a meaningful way that will bring about success. These are our children, we must take care of them now.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES