

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to children's zones; creating s. 409.147,
3 F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent; providing
4 policy and purpose; providing definitions; providing a
5 process for nominating and selecting a children's zone;
6 providing for the governing body of a county or
7 municipality to adopt a resolution designating a
8 children's zone; specifying contents of the resolution;
9 requiring the governing body to establish a children's
10 zone planning team; providing powers and responsibilities
11 of the planning team; requiring the planning team to
12 designate working groups; specifying focus areas for the
13 working groups; providing for the development of a
14 strategic community plan; providing objectives for each
15 focus area; requiring the governing body to create a
16 corporation not for profit for specified purposes;
17 establishing the Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., pilot
18 project; providing for management by an entity organized
19 as a corporation not for profit; providing geographic
20 boundaries for the zone; providing for designation and
21 appointment of a board of directors; providing for
22 meetings and duties of the board of directors; providing
23 per diem and travel expenses; requiring the board to enter
24 into a contract to develop a business plan; providing for
25 reports to the Legislature; requiring the Department of
26 Children and Family Services to contract with certain
27 private nonprofit corporations for specified purposes;
28 requiring the corporation to implement the Magic City

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29 Children's Zone, Inc., pilot project; providing
30 appropriations; providing an effective date.
31

32 WHEREAS, the State of Florida is often referred to as the
33 Sunshine State, a term that suggests warm weather, a carefree
34 lifestyle, and unlimited potential for nurturing hope and
35 realizing dreams for a fulfilling and productive life, and

36 WHEREAS, communities within the state suffering from
37 fragile infrastructures and multiple social ills are home to
38 families for whom those obstacles limit, or completely preclude,
39 their ability to create a good quality of life for themselves
40 and for their children, and

41 WHEREAS, a proposed community initiative known as a
42 children's zone, which is modeled after the long-established and
43 successful Harlem Children's Zone, seeks to change that
44 experience, and

45 WHEREAS, the initiative will be based on the belief that in
46 order to help children from troubled communities become healthy
47 adults and responsible, fulfilled members of their communities,
48 two things must happen: first, they must be surrounded by a
49 critical mass of adults who are effective parents engaged in
50 activities with their children; and second, early in their
51 lives, they must be exposed to sound health care, intellectual
52 and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from loving,
53 attentive adults, and

54 WHEREAS, the initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive,
55 community-based, coordinated, and targeted system of strategies
56 and services to revitalize communities with an increased sense

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57 of culture, pride, and togetherness, to support parents, and to
 58 provide comprehensive care for all children within the zone,
 59 NOW, THEREFORE,

60

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

62

63 Section 1. Section 409.147, Florida Statutes, is created
 64 to read:

65 409.147 Children's zones.--

66 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.--

67 (a) The Legislature finds that:

68 1. There are neighborhoods in the state where the
 69 infrastructure and opportunities that middle-class communities
 70 take for granted are nonexistent or so marginal that they are
 71 ineffective.

72 2. Children living in these neighborhoods are read to by
 73 an adult on a regular basis and attend a prekindergarten
 74 education program at a much lower rate than children in other
 75 communities. These children experience below-average performance
 76 on standardized tests and graduate from high school in fewer
 77 numbers. Most of these children are eligible for the free or
 78 reduced-price school lunch program.

79 3. Children in these neighborhoods often suffer from high
 80 rates of asthma, a higher risk of lead poisoning, and inadequate
 81 health care, and they are routinely exposed to violence and
 82 crime.

83 4. In spite of these obstacles, these neighborhoods are
 84 many times home to strong individuals and institutions that are

85 committed to making a difference in the lives of children and
 86 their families.

87 (b) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to
 88 assist disadvantaged areas within the state in creating a
 89 community-based service network that develops, coordinates, and
 90 provides quality education, accessible health care, youth
 91 development programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and
 92 affordable housing for children and families living within its
 93 boundaries.

94 (2) POLICY AND PURPOSE.--It is the policy of this state to
 95 provide the necessary means to assist local communities, the
 96 children and families who live in those communities, and the
 97 private sector in creating a sound educational, social, and
 98 economic environment. To achieve this objective, the state
 99 intends to provide investments sufficient to encourage community
 100 partners to commit financial and other resources to severely
 101 disadvantaged areas. The purpose of this section is to establish
 102 a process that clearly identifies the severely disadvantaged
 103 areas and provides guidance for developing a new social service
 104 paradigm that systematically coordinates programs that address
 105 the critical needs of children and their families and for
 106 directing efforts to rebuild the basic infrastructure of the
 107 community. The Legislature, therefore, declares the creation of
 108 children's zones, through the collaborative efforts of
 109 government and the private sector, to be a public purpose.

110 (3) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

111 (a) "Governing body" means the commission or other
 112 legislative body charged with governing a county or

113 municipality.

114 (b) "Ounce" means the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida,
 115 Inc.

116 (c) "Planning team" means a children's zone planning team
 117 established under this section.

118 (d) "Resident" means a person who lives or operates a
 119 small community-based business or organization within the
 120 boundaries of the children's zone.

121 (4) CHILDREN'S ZONE NOMINATING PROCESS.--A county or
 122 municipality, or a county and one or more municipalities
 123 together, may apply to Ounce to designate an area as a
 124 children's zone after the governing body:

125 (a) Adopts a resolution that:

126 1. Finds that an area exists in such county or
 127 municipality, or in the county and one or more municipalities,
 128 that chronically exhibits extreme and unacceptable levels of
 129 poverty, unemployment, physical deterioration, as well as
 130 limited access to quality educational, health care, and social
 131 services.

132 2. Determines that the rehabilitation, conservation, or
 133 redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of the area is
 134 necessary in the interest of improving the health, wellness,
 135 education, living conditions, and livelihoods of the children
 136 and families who live in the county or municipality.

137 3. Determines that the revitalization of the area can
 138 occur only if the state and the private sector invest resources
 139 to improve infrastructure and the provision of services.

140 (b) Establishes a children's zone planning team as

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141 provided in subsection (5).

142 (c) Develops and adopts a strategic community plan as
143 provided in subsection (6).

144 (d) Creates a corporation not for profit as provided in
145 subsection (7).

146 (5) CHILDREN'S ZONE PLANNING TEAM.--

147 (a) After the governing body adopts the resolution
148 described in subsection (4), the county or municipality shall
149 establish a children's zone planning team.

150 (b) The planning team shall include residents and
151 representatives from community-based organizations and other
152 community institutions. At least half of the members of the
153 planning team shall be residents.

154 (c) The planning team shall:

155 1. Develop a planning process that sets the direction for,
156 builds a commitment to, and develops the capacity to realize the
157 children's zone concept.

158 2. Develop a vision of what the children's zone will look
159 like when the challenges, problems, and opportunities in the
160 children's zone are successfully addressed.

161 3. Identify important opportunities, strengths,
162 challenges, and problems in the children's zone.

163 4. Develop a strategic community plan consisting of goals,
164 objectives, tasks, the designation of responsible parties, the
165 identification of resources needed, timelines for implementation
166 of the plan, and procedures for monitoring outcomes.

167 (d) The planning team shall designate working groups to
168 specifically address each of the following focus areas:

- 169 1. Early development and care of children.
- 170 2. Education of children and youth.
- 171 3. Health and wellness.
- 172 4. Youth support.
- 173 5. Parent and guardian support.
- 174 6. Adult education, training, and jobs.
- 175 7. Community safety.
- 176 8. Housing and community development.
- 177 (6) CHILDREN'S ZONE STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN.--After the
 178 governing body adopts the resolution described in subsection
 179 (4), the working groups shall develop objectives and identify
 180 strategies for each focus area. The objectives, specified by
 181 focus area, for a working group may include, but not be limited
 182 to:
- 183 (a) Early development and care of children.
- 184 1. Providing resources to enable every child to be
 185 adequately nurtured during the first 3 years of life.
- 186 2. Ensuring that all schools are ready for children and
 187 all children are ready for school.
- 188 3. Facilitating enrollment in half-day or full-day
 189 prekindergarten for all 3-year old and 4-year old children.
- 190 4. Strengthening parent and guardian relationships with
 191 care providers.
- 192 5. Providing support and education for families and child
 193 care providers.
- 194 (b) Education of children and youth.
- 195 1. Increasing the level and degree of accountability of
 196 persons who are responsible for the development and well-being

197 of all children in the children's zone.

198 2. Changing the structure and function of schools to
 199 increase the quality and amount of time spent on instruction and
 200 increase programmatic options and offerings.

201 3. Creating a safe and respectful environment for student
 202 learning.

203 4. Identifying and supporting points of alignment between
 204 the children's zone community plan and the school district's
 205 strategic plan.

206 (c) Health and wellness.

207 1. Facilitating enrollment of all eligible children in the
 208 Florida Kidcare program and providing full access to high-
 209 quality drug and alcohol treatment services.

210 2. Eliminating health disparities between racial and
 211 cultural groups, including improving outcomes and increasing
 212 interventions.

213 3. Providing fresh, good quality, affordable, and
 214 nutritious food within the children's zone.

215 4. Providing all children in the children's zone with
 216 access to safe structured and unstructured recreation.

217 (d) Youth support.

218 1. Increasing the high school graduation rate.

219 2. Increasing leadership development and employment
 220 opportunities for youth.

221 (e) Parent and guardian support.

222 1. Increasing parent and adult literacy.

223 2. Expanding access for parents to critical resources,
 224 such as jobs, transportation, day care, and after-school care.

225 3. Improving the effectiveness of the ways in which
 226 support systems communicate and collaborate with parents and the
 227 ways in which parents communicate and collaborate with support
 228 systems.

229 4. Making the services of the Healthy Families Florida
 230 program available to provide multiyear support to expectant
 231 parents and persons caring for infants and toddlers.

232 (f) Adult education, training, and jobs.

233 1. Creating job opportunities for adults that lead to
 234 career development.

235 2. Establishing a career and technical school or a
 236 satellite of such a school in the children's zone that includes
 237 a one-stop career center.

238 (g) Community safety.

239 1. Providing a safe environment for all children at home,
 240 in school, and in the community.

241 2. Eliminating the economic, political, and social forces
 242 that lead to a lack of safety within the family, the community,
 243 schools, and institutional structures.

244 3. Assessing policies and practices, including sentencing,
 245 incarceration, detention, and data reporting, in order to reduce
 246 youth violence, crime, and recidivism.

247 (h) Housing and community development.

248 1. Strengthening the residential real estate market.

249 2. Building on existing efforts to promote socioeconomic
 250 diversity when developing a comprehensive land use strategic
 251 plan.

252 3. Promoting neighborhood beautification strategies.

253 (7) CHILDREN'S ZONE CORPORATION.--After the governing body
 254 adopts the resolution described in subsection (4), the county or
 255 municipality shall create a corporation not for profit which
 256 shall be registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in
 257 compliance with chapter 617. The purpose of the corporation is
 258 to facilitate fundraising, to secure broad community ownership
 259 of the children's zone, and, if the area selected by the
 260 governing body is designated as a children's zone, to:

261 (a) Begin to transfer responsibility for planning from the
 262 planning team to the corporation.

263 (b) Begin the implementation and governance of the
 264 children's zone community plan.

265 (8) CREATION OF MAGIC CITY CHILDREN'S ZONE, INC., PILOT
 266 PROJECT.--

267 (a) There is created within the Liberty City neighborhood
 268 in Miami-Dade County a 10-year pilot project zone that, by
 269 November 1, 2008, shall be managed by an entity organized as a
 270 corporation not for profit which shall be registered,
 271 incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with chapter
 272 617. The corporation shall be known as the Magic City Children's
 273 Zone, Inc., and shall be administratively housed within the
 274 Belafonte Tacolcy Center. However, Magic City Children's Zone,
 275 Inc., is not subject to control, supervision, or direction by
 276 the Belafonte Tacolcy Center in any manner. The Legislature
 277 determines, however, that public policy dictates that the
 278 corporation operate in the most open and accessible manner
 279 consistent with its public purpose. Therefore, the Legislature
 280 specifically declares that the corporation is subject to chapter

281 119, relating to public records, chapter 286, relating to public
 282 meetings and records, and chapter 287, relating to procurement
 283 of commodities or contractual services.

284 (b) This pilot project zone is designed to encompass an
 285 area that is large enough to include all of the necessary
 286 components of community life, including, but not limited to,
 287 schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, commercial
 288 areas, and common space, yet small enough to allow programs and
 289 services to reach every willing member of the neighborhood.
 290 Therefore, the geographic boundaries of the pilot project zone
 291 are:

- 292 1. Northwest 79th Street to the north;
- 293 2. Northwest 36th Street to the south;
- 294 3. North Miami Avenue to the east; and
- 295 4. Northwest 27th Avenue to the west.

296 (c)1. The corporation shall be governed by a 15-member
 297 board of directors. The board of directors shall consist of the
 298 following members:

- 299 a. The chief executive officer of the Belafonte Tacolcy
 300 Center.
- 301 b. The executive director of the Carrie P. Meek
 302 Entrepreneurial Education Center, Miami-Dade College.
- 303 c. The director of the Parks and Recreation Department of
 304 the City of Miami.
- 305 d. The director of the Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center.
- 306 e. The chief executive officer of the Urban League of
 307 Greater Miami.
- 308 f. The director of the Liberty City Service Partnership.

309 g. The regional superintendent of the Miami-Dade County
310 Public Schools.

311 h. The president of the Student Government Association of
312 Northwestern High School.

313 i. The president of the Student Government Association of
314 Edison High School.

315 j. The president of the Parent Teacher Student Association
316 of Northwestern High School.

317 k. The president of the Parent Teacher Student Association
318 of Edison High School.

319 l. Four members from the local private business sector, to
320 be appointed by a majority vote of the members designated in
321 sub-subparagraphs a.-k., all of whom must have significant
322 experience in one of the focus areas specified in subsection
323 (6).

324 2. All members of the board of directors shall be
325 appointed no later than 90 days following the incorporation of
326 the Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., and:

327 a. Eleven members initially appointed pursuant to this
328 paragraph shall each serve a 4-year term.

329 b. The remaining initial four appointees shall each serve
330 a 2-year term.

331 c. Each member appointed thereafter shall serve a 4-year
332 term.

333 d. A vacancy shall be filled in the same manner in which
334 the original appointment was made, and a member appointed to
335 fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of that term.

336 e. A member may not serve more than 8 years in consecutive

337 terms.

338 3. The board of directors shall annually elect a
339 chairperson and a vice chairperson from among the board's
340 members. The members may, by a vote of eight members, remove a
341 member from the position of chairperson or vice chairperson
342 before the expiration of his or her term as chairperson or vice
343 chairperson. His or her successor shall be elected to serve for
344 the balance of the term of the chairperson or vice chairperson
345 who was removed.

346 4. The board of directors shall meet at least four times
347 each year upon the call of the chairperson, at the request of
348 the vice chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the
349 membership. A majority of the membership constitutes a quorum.
350 The board of directors may take official action by a majority
351 vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is
352 present. The board may conduct its meetings through
353 teleconferences or other similar means.

354 5. A member of the board of directors may be removed by a
355 majority of the membership. Absence from three consecutive
356 meetings results in automatic removal.

357 6. Each member of the board of directors shall serve
358 without compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for per
359 diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061 while in the
360 performance of his or her duties.

361 7. The corporation shall create a standing advisory board
362 to assist in any part of its delegated duties. The membership of
363 the standing advisory board shall reflect the expertise
364 necessary for the implementation of the children's zone pilot

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365 project.

366 8. The board of directors has the power and duty to:

367 a. Adopt articles of incorporation and bylaws necessary to
368 govern its activities.

369 b. Begin to transfer responsibility for planning from the
370 children's zone planning team to the corporation.

371 c. Begin the implementation and governance of the
372 children's zone community plan.

373 d. Enter into a contract with a management consultant who
374 has experience working with social service and educational
375 entities for the purpose of developing a 10-year comprehensive
376 business plan to carry out the provisions of this section.

377 (d) Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., shall submit an
378 annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of
379 the House of Representatives by January 31, 2009, and by January
380 31 of each year thereafter, which shall include a comprehensive
381 and detailed report of its operations, activities, and
382 accomplishments for the prior year as well as its goals for the
383 current year. The initial report shall also include information
384 concerning the status of the development of a business plan.

385 Section 2. The Department of Children and Family Services
386 shall contract with an existing private nonprofit corporation,
387 incorporated for the purpose of identifying, funding,
388 supporting, and evaluating programs and community initiatives to
389 improve the development and life outcomes of children and to
390 preserve and strengthen families with a primary emphasis on
391 education and community support. The existing private nonprofit

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392 corporation shall implement the Magic City Children's Zone,
393 Inc., pilot project.

394 Section 3. The sum of \$3.6 million in nonrecurring revenue
395 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund and the sum of
396 \$28,362 in nonrecurring revenue is appropriated from the Tobacco
397 Settlement Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Families
398 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year as a grant for a 3-year period for
399 the purposes of implementing this act, which includes
400 contracting with a nonprofit corporation for the development of
401 a business plan and for the evaluation, fiscal management, and
402 oversight of the pilot program.

403 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.