

By the Committee on Health and Human Services Appropriations;
and Senators Bullard, Wilson, Margolis, Lawson, Dawson and
Storms

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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; providing for contingent
26 implementation of the zone; providing an effective date.

27
28 WHEREAS, the State of Florida is often referred to as the
29 Sunshine State, a term that suggests warm weather, a carefree

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30 lifestyle, and unlimited potential for nurturing hope and
31 realizing dreams for a fulfilling and productive life, and

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

37 WHEREAS, a proposed community initiative known as a
38 children's zone, which is modeled after the long-established and
39 successful Harlem Children's Zone, seeks to change that
40 experience, and

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

50 WHEREAS, the initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive,
51 community-based, coordinated, and targeted system of strategies
52 and services to revitalize communities with an increased sense of
53 culture, pride, and togetherness, to support parents, and to
54 provide comprehensive care for all children within the zone, NOW,
55 THEREFORE,

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

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59 Section 1. Section 409.147, Florida Statutes, is created to
60 read:

61 409.147 Children's zones.--

62 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.--

63 (a) The Legislature finds that:

64 1. There are neighborhoods in the state where the
65 infrastructure and opportunities that middle-class communities
66 take for granted are nonexistent or so marginal that they are
67 ineffective.

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

75 3. Children in these neighborhoods often suffer from high
76 rates of asthma, a higher risk of lead poisoning, and inadequate
77 health care, and they are routinely exposed to violence and
78 crime.

79 4. In spite of these obstacles, these neighborhoods are
80 many times home to strong individuals and institutions that are
81 committed to making a difference in the lives of children and
82 their families.

83 (b) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to assist
84 disadvantaged areas within the state in creating a community-
85 based service network that develops, coordinates, and provides
86 quality education, accessible health care, youth development
87 programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and affordable

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88 housing for children and families living within its boundaries.

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

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

106 (a) "Governing body" means the commission or other
107 legislative body charged with governing a county or municipality.

108 (b) "Ounce" means the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida,
109 Inc.

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

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

115 (4) CHILDREN'S ZONE NOMINATING PROCESS.--A county or
116 municipality, or a county and one or more municipalities

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117 together, may apply to Ounce to designate an area as a children's
118 zone after the governing body:

119 (a) Adopts a resolution that:

120 1. Finds that an area exists in such county or
121 municipality, or in the county and one or more municipalities,
122 that chronically exhibits extreme and unacceptable levels of
123 poverty, unemployment, physical deterioration, as well as limited
124 access to quality educational, health care, and social services.

125 2. Determines that the rehabilitation, conservation, or
126 redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of the area is necessary
127 in the interest of improving the health, wellness, education,
128 living conditions, and livelihoods of the children and families
129 who live in the county or municipality.

130 3. Determines that the revitalization of the area can occur
131 only if the state and the private sector invest resources to
132 improve infrastructure and the provision of services.

133 (b) Establishes a children's zone planning team as provided
134 in subsection (5).

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

137 (d) Creates a corporation not for profit as provided in
138 subsection (7).

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

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

143 (b) The planning team shall include residents and
144 representatives from community-based organizations and other
145 community institutions. At least half of the members of the

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146 planning team must be residents.

147 (c) The planning team shall:

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

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

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

156 4. Develop a strategic community plan consisting of goals,
157 objectives, tasks, the designation of responsible parties, the
158 identification of resources needed, timelines for implementation
159 of the plan, and procedures for monitoring outcomes.

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

162 1. Early development and care of children.

163 2. Education of children and youth.

164 3. Health and wellness.

165 4. Youth support.

166 5. Parent and guardian support.

167 6. Adult education, training, and jobs.

168 7. Community safety.

169 8. Housing and community development.

170 (6) CHILDREN'S ZONE STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN.--After the
171 governing body adopts the resolution described in subsection (4),
172 the working groups shall develop objectives and identify
173 strategies for each focus area. The objectives, specified by
174 focus area, for a working group may include, but not be limited

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175 | to:176 | (a) Early development and care of children.177 | 1. Providing resources to enable every child to be
178 | adequately nurtured during the first 3 years of life.179 | 2. Ensuring that all schools are ready for children and all
180 | children are ready for school.181 | 3. Facilitating enrollment in half-day or full-day
182 | prekindergarten for all 3-year-old and 4-year-old children.183 | 4. Strengthening parent and guardian relationships with
184 | care providers.185 | 5. Providing support and education for families and child
186 | care providers.187 | (b) Education of children and youth.188 | 1. Increasing the level and degree of accountability of
189 | persons who are responsible for the development and well-being of
190 | all children in the children's zone.191 | 2. Changing the structure and function of schools to
192 | increase the quality and amount of time spent on instruction and
193 | increase programmatic options and offerings.194 | 3. Creating a safe and respectful environment for student
195 | learning.196 | 4. Identifying and supporting points of alignment between
197 | the children's zone community plan and the school district's
198 | strategic plan.199 | (c) Health and wellness.200 | 1. Facilitating enrollment of all eligible children in the
201 | Florida Kidcare program and providing full access to high-quality
202 | drug and alcohol treatment services.203 | 2. Eliminating health disparities between racial and

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204 cultural groups, including improving outcomes and increasing
205 interventions.

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

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

210 (d) Youth support.

211 1. Increasing the high school graduation rate.

212 2. Increasing leadership development and employment
213 opportunities for youth.

214 (e) Parent and guardian support.

215 1. Increasing parent and adult literacy.

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

218 3. Improving the effectiveness of the ways in which support
219 systems communicate and collaborate with parents and the ways in
220 which parents communicate and collaborate with support systems.

221 4. Making the services of the Healthy Families Florida
222 program available to provide multiyear support to expectant
223 parents and persons caring for infants and toddlers.

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

225 1. Creating job opportunities for adults that lead to
226 career development.

227 2. Establishing a career and technical school, or a
228 satellite of such a school in the children's zone, which includes
229 a one-stop career center.

230 (g) Community safety.

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

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233 2. Eliminating the economic, political, and social forces
234 that lead to a lack of safety within the family, the community,
235 schools, and institutional structures.

236 3. Assessing policies and practices, including sentencing,
237 incarceration, detention, and data reporting, in order to reduce
238 youth violence, crime, and recidivism.

239 (h) Housing and community development.

240 1. Strengthening the residential real estate market.

241 2. Building on existing efforts to promote socioeconomic
242 diversity when developing a comprehensive land use strategic
243 plan.

244 3. Promoting neighborhood beautification strategies.

245 (7) CHILDREN'S ZONE CORPORATION.--After the governing body
246 adopts the resolution described in subsection (4), the county or
247 municipality shall create a corporation not for profit which
248 shall be registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in
249 compliance with chapter 617. The purpose of the corporation is to
250 facilitate fundraising, to secure broad community ownership of
251 the children's zone, and, if the area selected by the governing
252 body is designated as a children's zone, to:

253 (a) Begin to transfer responsibility for planning from the
254 planning team to the corporation.

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

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

259 (a) There is created within the Liberty City neighborhood
260 in Miami-Dade County a 10-year pilot project zone that, by
261 November 1, 2008, shall be managed by an entity organized as a

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262 corporation not for profit which shall be registered,
263 incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with chapter
264 617. The corporation shall be known as the Magic City Children's
265 Zone, Inc., and shall be administratively housed within the
266 Belafonte Tacolcy Center. However, Magic City Children's Zone,
267 Inc., is not subject to control, supervision, or direction by the
268 Belafonte Tacolcy Center in any manner. The Legislature
269 determines, however, that public policy dictates that the
270 corporation operate in the most open and accessible manner
271 consistent with its public purpose. Therefore, the Legislature
272 specifically declares that the corporation is subject to chapter
273 119, relating to public records, chapter 286, relating to public
274 meetings and records, and chapter 287, relating to procurement of
275 commodities or contractual services.

276 (b) This pilot project zone is designed to encompass an
277 area that is large enough to include all of the necessary
278 components of community life, including, but not limited to,
279 schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, commercial
280 areas, and common space, yet small enough to allow programs and
281 services to reach every willing member of the neighborhood.
282 Therefore, the geographic boundaries of the pilot project zone
283 are:

- 284 1. Northwest 79th Street to the north;
- 285 2. Northwest 36th Street to the south;
- 286 3. North Miami Avenue to the east; and
- 287 4. Northwest 27th Avenue to the west.

288 (c)1. The corporation shall be governed by a 15-member
289 board of directors. The board of directors shall consist of the
290 following members:

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- 291 a. The chief executive officer of the Belafonte Tacolcy
292 Center.
- 293 b. The executive director of the Carrie P. Meek
294 Entrepreneurial Education Center, Miami-Dade College.
- 295 c. The director of the Parks and Recreation Department of
296 the City of Miami.
- 297 d. The director of the Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center.
- 298 e. The chief executive officer of the Urban League of
299 Greater Miami.
- 300 f. The director of the Liberty City Service Partnership.
- 301 g. The regional superintendent of the Miami-Dade County
302 Public Schools.
- 303 h. The president of the Student Government Association of
304 Northwestern High School.
- 305 i. The president of the Student Government Association of
306 Edison High School.
- 307 j. The president of the Parent Teacher Student Association
308 of Northwestern High School.
- 309 k. The president of the Parent Teacher Student Association
310 of Edison High School.
- 311 1. Four members from the local private business sector, to
312 be appointed by a majority vote of the members designated in sub-
313 subparagraphs a.-k., all of whom must have significant experience
314 in one of the focus areas specified in subsection (6).
- 315 2. All members of the board of directors shall be appointed
316 no later than 90 days following the incorporation of the Magic
317 City Children's Zone, Inc., and:
- 318 a. Eleven members initially appointed pursuant to this
319 paragraph shall each serve a 4-year term.

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320 b. The remaining initial four appointees shall each serve a
321 2-year term.

322 c. Each member appointed thereafter shall serve a 4-year
323 term.

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

327 e. A member may not serve more than 8 years in consecutive
328 terms.

329 3. The board of directors shall annually elect a
330 chairperson and a vice chairperson from among the board's
331 members. The members may, by a vote of eight members, remove a
332 member from the position of chairperson or vice chairperson
333 before the expiration of his or her term as chairperson or vice
334 chairperson. His or her successor shall be elected to serve for
335 the balance of the term of the chairperson or vice chairperson
336 who was removed.

337 4. The board of directors shall meet at least four times
338 each year upon the call of the chairperson, at the request of the
339 vice chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the
340 membership. A majority of the membership constitutes a quorum.
341 The board of directors may take official action by a majority
342 vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is
343 present. The board may conduct its meetings through
344 teleconferences or other similar means.

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

348 6. Each member of the board of directors shall serve

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349 without compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for per
350 diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061 while in the
351 performance of his or her duties.

352 7. The corporation shall create a standing advisory board
353 to assist in any part of its delegated duties. The membership of
354 the standing advisory board shall reflect the expertise necessary
355 for the implementation of the children's zone pilot project.

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

357 a. Adopt articles of incorporation and bylaws necessary to
358 govern its activities.

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

361 c. Begin the implementation and governance of the
362 children's zone community plan.

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

367 (d) Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., shall submit an
368 annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of
369 the House of Representatives by January 31, 2009, and by January
370 31 of each year thereafter, which shall include a comprehensive
371 and detailed report of its operations, activities, and
372 accomplishments for the prior year as well as its goals for the
373 current year. The initial report shall also include information
374 concerning the status of the development of a business plan.

375 (9) IMPLEMENTATION.--The implementation of this section is
376 contingent upon a specific appropriation to provide a grant for a
377 3-year period for the purpose of implementing this section, which

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378 | includes contracting with a not-for-profit corporation for the
379 | development of a business plan and for the evaluation, fiscal
380 | management, and oversight of the Magic City Children's Zone,
381 | Inc., pilot project.

382 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.