

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 625 Children's Initiative Projects

SPONSOR(S): Health & Human Services Committee and Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee, Bracy Davis and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 1578

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 115 Y's

0 N's

GOVERNOR'S ACTION: Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CS/CS/HB 625 passed the House on April 20, 2023, and subsequently passed the Senate on May 2, 2023.

The Legislature created children's initiatives in 2008 to assist disadvantaged areas create community-based service networks that develop, coordinate, and provide quality education, accessible health care, youth development programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and affordable housing for children and families living within that area. Children's initiatives are designed to encompass an area large enough to include all of the necessary components of community life, yet small enough to allow programs and services to reach every member of the neighborhood who is willing to participate in the project.

Florida law assigns the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc., (the Ounce) the responsibility of reviewing and approving requests from counties, municipalities, or designated areas to obtain a children's initiative designation. Section 409.147, F.S., outlines the process to apply to the Ounce to designate an area as a children's initiative.

Current law requires the Department of Children and Family (DCF) to award any state funding for children's initiatives through performance-based contracts that link payments to achievement of outcomes directly related to the goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks outlined in the strategic community plan. The Ounce oversees these contracts and has a \$4.2 million contract with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to fund new and existing initiatives. Current law requires the Ounce to prioritize counties without a children's initiative for funding.

CS/CS/HB 625:

- Expands the ways in which a county or municipality may involve a not-for-profit corporation in a children's initiative;
- Requires the Ounce to give priority for designation to counties that do not have a children's initiative that are trying to establish an initiative; and
- Expands objectives of working groups forming a children's initiative strategic community plan.

The bill changes the name of the Parramore Kidz Zone to the "Orlando Kidz Zones" and expands the reach of the initiative by stating that the initiative is designed to encompass the Orlando neighborhoods of Parramore, Mercy Drive, and Englewood. The bill applies current statutory requirements and exemptions for children's initiatives to the Orlando Kidz Zones.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state or local governments.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 22, 2023, ch. 2023-280, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2023.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Background

Florida Children's Initiatives

In 2008, the Legislature created s. 409.147, F.S., which authorized children's initiatives. Florida children's initiatives are intended to assist disadvantaged areas within the state in creating community-based service networks that develop, coordinate, and provide quality education, accessible health care, youth development programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and affordable housing for children and families living within that area.¹

Children's initiatives are designed to encompass an area large enough to include all of the necessary components of community life, including, but not limited to, schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, commercial areas, and common space, yet small enough to allow programs and services to reach every member of the neighborhood who is willing to participate in the project.²

Children's Initiatives Requirements

Current Law requires the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc. (Ounce), to designate new children's zones, and distribute to any available state funds. The Ounce is a private nonprofit corporation dedicated to shaping prevention policy and investing in innovative prevention programs that provide measurable benefits to Florida's children, families, and communities.³ The Ounce identifies, funds, supports, and tests programs to improve the life outcomes of children, preserve and strengthen families, and promote healthy behavior and functioning in society.⁴ The Ounce has a \$4.2 million contract with DCF to fund new and existing initiatives.⁵

Section 409.147, F.S., outlines the process for a county or municipality (or designated area) to apply to Ounce to designate an area as a children's initiative. The governing body of the county or municipality must first adopt a resolution finding the area has issues related to poverty, that changes are necessary for the area to improve, and that resources are necessary for revitalization of the area.⁶ The county or municipality (or designated area) must then establish a children's initiative planning team and develop and adopt a strategic community plan.⁷ Once a county or municipality has completed these steps, it must create a not-for-profit corporation to facilitate fundraising and secure broad community ownership of the children's initiative.⁸

Children's initiatives must update strategic community plans every five years to reflect, at a minimum, the current status of the area served by the children's initiative, the goals, objectives, and strategies for each focus area, and the tasks required to implement the strategies the following year. Children's initiatives are currently designated in statute as 10-year projects, but some initiatives have existed longer than 10 years, such as the New Town Success Zone.⁹ To facilitate achievement of the strategic community plans. Ounce must provide technical assistance to the children's initiative corporations.¹⁰

¹ S. 409.147(1)(b), F.S.

² S. 409.147, F.S.

³ The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, <https://www.ounce.org/> (last visited Jan. 28, 2022).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Department of Financial Services, Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System, Grant Disbursement Information, <https://facts.fldfs.com/Search/ContractDetail.aspx?AgencyId=600000&ContractId=LJ210>, (last visited March 23, 2023).

⁶ S. 409.147(4)(a), F.S.

⁷ S. 409.147(5), 409.147(6), F.S.

⁸ S. 409.147(7), F.S.

⁹ New Town Success Zone, *Five Year Report to the Community*, Spring 2012, [ntsz-5yr-report.aspx\(coj.net\)](https://www.coj.net/ntsz-5yr-report.aspx) (last visited March 23, 2023).

¹⁰ S. 409.147(3)(b), F.S.

Florida law states that each children’s initiative shall be managed by an entity that is registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with Chapter 617, F.S, relating to corporations not for profit.¹¹ Non-profit corporations created and designated as children’s initiatives are not subject to the control, supervision, or direction by any department of the state in any manner. However, the corporations are subject to Chapter 119, relating to public records, Chapter 286, relating to public meetings and records, and Chapter 287, relating to procurement of commodities or contractual services. Corporations must comply with these requirements to “operate in the most open and accessible manner,” consistent with their public purpose.¹²

Section 409.147, F.S., sets requirements for children’s initiatives to receive funding. Unless otherwise specified in the general appropriations act, children’s initiatives must be awarded state funding through performance-based contracts that link payments to achievement of outcomes directly related to the goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks outlined in the strategic community plan.¹³ Counties that do not currently have an initiative and are trying to establish one have priority for funding.¹⁴

Current Children’s Initiatives - Impact

There are five children’s initiatives in Florida:¹⁵

- New Town Success Zone in Jacksonville.
- Miami Children’s Initiative.
- Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando.
- Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise in Tampa.
- Overtown Children and Youth Coalition in Miami.

As an example of the impact of the designation and operation of Florida children’s initiatives, between 2006 and 2019, the Parramore Zone served more than 6,000 children. In the neighborhood served by the children’s initiative:

- Juvenile arrests were down 78.3 percent;
- Teen births went down 63.4 percent;
- Infants, toddlers and preschoolers attending early learning programs went up 117 percent; and
- Verified cases of child abuse and neglect went down 62.4 percent.¹⁶

New Children’s Initiative

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ S. 409.147(8), F.S.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, *Children’s Initiative Communities in Florida*, https://www.ounce.org/fci_communities.html, (last visited March 23, 2023).

¹⁶ City of Orlando, Orlando Kidz Zones, <https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/FPR/Orlando-Kidz-Zones>, (last visited March 24, 2023).

In 2020, the success of the Parramore Kidz Zone¹⁷ inspired the city of Orlando to replicate the model in the additional Orlando neighborhoods of Mercy Drive and Engelwood.¹⁸ The Orlando Kidz Zones children's initiative aims to introduce Florida children's initiative funding and programming into these neighborhoods to further reduce juvenile crime, teen pregnancies, child abuse and neglect and high school drop-out rates among Orlando's most vulnerable youth.¹⁹ The geographic area of the Orlando Kidz Zones was carefully selected based on need and consideration of areas where infrastructure and programming were already being built out.²⁰

Effect of the Bill

Current Children's Initiatives

The bill expands the ways in which a county or municipality may recognize a not-for-profit corporation's involvement in a children's initiative. The county shall either identify an existing, qualified not-for-profit corporation, or create a not-for-profit corporation which shall be registered.

The bill states that counties that do not currently have a children's initiative and are trying to establish an initiative have priority for designation by Ounce, rather than priority for funding.

The bill expands the objectives of the working groups involved in the formation of the children's initiative strategic community plan. The bill expands the "youth support" objectives of a working group to include increasing the high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment and graduation rates, among neighborhood youth.

Children's Initiative Requirements

The bill changes the name of the Parramore Kidz Zone to the "Orlando Kidz Zones" and expands the reach of the initiative by stating that the initiative is designed to encompass the Orlando neighborhoods of Parramore, Mercy Drive, and Englewood. The bill states that all three of these neighborhoods are large enough to include all of the necessary components of community life.

The bill applies current requirements and exemptions for children's initiatives to the Orlando Kidz Zones, including public records and meetings requirements and Chapter 287 requirements related to procurement of commodities or contractual services.

The bill also changes the name of the Tampa Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise Success Zone (SSNOP) to the "Tampa Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise." The bill renames children's initiatives as "Florida children's initiatives" and removes the specification that children's initiatives are 10-year projects.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

¹⁷ City of Orlando, *Orlando Kidz Zones*, <https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/FPR/Orlando-Kidz-Zones>, (last visited March 24, 2023).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Fox 35, Orlando, *Orlando expanding Kidz Zone model to 3 neighborhoods to help at-risk youth*, <https://www.fox35orlando.com/news/orlando-expanding-kidz-zone-model-to-3-neighborhoods-to-help-at-risk-youth>, June 15, 2021 (last visited March 24, 2023).

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.