

The Florida Senate
PROFESSIONAL STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Community Affairs Committee

BILL: CS/SB 1942

INTRODUCER: Community Affairs Committee, Senator Joyner and others

SUBJECT: Children's Zones

DATE: March 29, 2007

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Herrin	Yeatman	CA	Fav/CS
2.			CF	
3.			GO	
4.			EA	
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

This committee substitute (CS) authorizes local governments to request designation of a children's zone for the purpose of revitalizing a disadvantaged area through programs and services that support family stability. The local government must adopt a resolution making certain findings, establish a planning team, develop a strategic plan, and create a not-for-profit corporation to implement the children's zone. The planning team is required to specifically address certain focus areas, including the development of objectives and strategies.

The CS creates Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., a 10-year pilot project within Liberty City in Miami-Dade County. It establishes the boundaries of the zone. It provides for a not-for-profit corporation to manage the pilot project. The not-for-profit corporation will be governed by a 15-member board of directors. The board of directors of the not-for-profit shall contract with a management consultant to provide a 10-year business plan. There is an annual reporting requirement.

This CS appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc., as a grant for a 3-year period to implement the provisions of this CS.

This CS creates section 409.147 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Harlem Children's Zone¹

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. The HCZ's 15 centers serve more than 12,500 children and adults, including over 8,600 at-risk children. The work of HCZ focuses not only on education, social service, and recreation, but also on rebuilding the basic fabric of community life.

The mission of the Harlem Children's Zone Project (HCZ Project) 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.

The HCZ Project also acknowledges that intervention with older children is still important, but recognizes that later intervention is more costly and the outcome is not always as successful. Families should need these later efforts to a lesser degree and in declining amounts if earlier intervention is effective.

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

¹ See Harlem Children's Zone at <http://www.hcz.org/project/mission.html>.

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 HCZ 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.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This CS creates s. 409.147, F.S., to provide legislative findings and intent regarding at-risk children in disadvantaged neighborhoods. It provides definitions. The CS authorizes a county or municipality, or a county and one or more municipalities, to request the Office of Adoption and Child Protection within the Executive Office of the Governor to designate an area as a children's zone after the governing body:

- Adopts a resolution finding pervasive poverty and unemployment in the proposed zone, rehabilitation of the area is in the best interest of the children, and revitalization will only occur with state and private sector investment in infrastructure and services.
- Establishes a children's zone planning team.
- Develops a strategic community plan.
- Creates a not-for-profit corporation to be responsible for planning the children's zone based on the planning team's recommendations; implement the governance of the children's zone community plan; and facilitate fundraising and secure broad community ownership of the children's zone.

The CS specifies the membership of the children's zone planning team and requires the team to accomplish certain tasks, including the creation of working groups to specifically address the following focus areas:

- Early development and care of children;
- Education of children and youth;
- Health and wellness;
- Youth support;
- Parent and guardian support;
- Adult education, training, and jobs;
- Community safety; and
- Housing and community development.

The CS requires the working group to develop a list of objectives and strategies for the strategic community plan.

The CS creates Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., (Magic City) as a pilot project within the Liberty City neighborhood in Miami-Dade County. This will be a 10-year pilot project to develop a new social service paradigm for addressing the critical needs of children and rebuilding the basic infrastructure of a community. Magic City will be managed by a not-for-profit corporation organized under ch. 617, F.S., by November 1, 2007, and housed in the Belafonte Tacolcy Center.

The CS provides geographic boundaries for Magic City. It specifies the membership of the 15-member board of directors governing the not-for-profit that will implement the Magic City project. The board is required to enter into a contract with a management consultant to develop a 10-year business plan. The not-for-profit corporation is authorized to create a standing advisory board to assist with any delegated duties. There is an annual reporting requirement.

Finally, the CS appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc.,² as a grant for a 3-year period to implement the provisions of this CS.

The CS takes effect July 1, 2007.

² The CS does not provide a process or criteria for the expenditure of these funds.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The CS appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc., as a grant for a 3-year period to implement the provisions of this CS.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

This CS is the result of idea #69 from the Speaker of the House of Representatives' 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.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate Professional Staff Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
