

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: Governmental Operations Committee

BILL: CS/CS/CS/SB 1942

INTRODUCER: Governmental Operations Committee, Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee, Community Affairs Committee, and Senator Joyner and others

SUBJECT: Children's Zones

DATE: April 18, 2007 REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|---------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| 1. | Herrin | Yeatman | CA | Fav/CS |
| 2. | Ray | Jameson | CF | Fav/CS |
| 3. | McKay | Wilson | GO | Fav/CS |
| 4. | | | HA | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

I. Summary:

The bill 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 that makes certain findings, establishes a planning team, develops a strategic plan, and creates 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 bill creates Magic City Children's Zone, Inc., a ten-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 must contract with a management consultant to provide a ten-year business plan. There is an annual reporting requirement.

The bill requires the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to contract with an existing nonprofit corporation to implement the Magic City Children's Zone Pilot Project.

The bill appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Family Services for a three-year period to implement the provisions of this bill.

The bill creates section 409.147 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Currently, low income and disadvantaged youth in Florida receive assistance through federal, state, and locally funded programs such as:

- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program - The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years old by September 1 and residing in Florida) in a free VPK program. The program is voluntary for children and providers.¹
- Head Start Program - Head Start is both the name of a family of federal programs for low-income children and their families and the name given to the original program for children from three to five years of age. The Head Start family of programs includes: Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start, and American Indian Head Start. Head Start is designed to facilitate child development and promote school readiness by enhancing social and cognitive development through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services to meet the comprehensive needs of families. Eligibility for all Head Start programs is targeted at families at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Ninety percent of the families must meet these financial eligibility criteria. Ten percent of the funded enrollment is set aside for children with disabilities. Funding for all Head Start programs flows directly from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to local agencies. Communities provide a 25 percent local match to federal funds. There are no parent fees for this program. There are Head Start services for preschool age children in every county in Florida.²
- Early Head Start Program - Early Head Start is a federally funded program that provides early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income families. The purpose of the Early Head Start program is to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; to support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and to help parents move toward self-sufficiency. Early Head Start programs serve low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth to the age of three who are at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. There are no parent fees for this program. There are Early Head Start programs in 35 counties in Florida.³
- Migrant Head Start Program - Migrant Head Start programs modify the methods of service delivery to meet the unique needs of migrant and seasonal farmworker families. Migrant Head Start programs have an emphasis on serving infants and toddlers as well as preschool aged children so they will not have to be cared for in the fields or left in the care of very young siblings while parents are working. Migrant Head Start programs provide a comprehensive array of services in 21 counties in Florida.⁴
- American Indian Head Start Program - American Indian Head Start programs support the rich, diverse, and unique Indian language, heritage, and legacy. Programs are encouraged to integrate language and culture into their curriculum and program goals as they provide

¹ s. 1002.53, F.S.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/about/index.htm> (Last visited, April 5, 2007).

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Website: http://www.headstartinfo.org/infocenter/ehs_tkit3.htm (Last visited, April 5, 2007).

⁴ Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning Website: http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/sr_programs.html (Last visited, April 5, 2007).

comprehensive developmental services for preschool children ages three to five and their families. In Florida, there is one American Indian Head Start program with the Miccosukee Tribe.⁵

- County Health Department Services - County Health Departments provide most of the public health services in Florida. Services are provided through a partnership between the state, district offices, and the counties. Most services are available at no charge or a small fee based upon income.⁶
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Services - WIC is a federally funded nutrition program. WIC provides the following at no cost: healthy foods, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support, and referrals for health care.⁷
- Healthy Start - The Healthy Start Program provides universal risk screening for all pregnant women and infants to identify those at risk for poor health and developmental outcomes such as low birth weight. Healthy Start services include care coordination to assure access to needed services as well as the provision of services such as childbirth education and smoking cessation.⁸
- Employ Florida - Employ Florida links all of Florida's workforce services--state and local--to each other. The state partners are Workforce Florida, the state policy and oversight board, and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the state agency which administers workforce funds. At the local level there are twenty-four regional workforce boards that administer close to 100 "one-stop centers." Together these organizations represent the Employ Florida network of workforce services and resources. The state and local boards are composed of educational, governmental, and private business resources to address local workforce needs.⁹
- Other programs offered through Florida agencies and partnerships.

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. 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.¹⁰

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:¹¹

- 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

⁵ Id.

⁶ Florida Department of Health Website: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Planning_eval/phealth/services.htm (Last visited, April 5, 2007).

⁷ Id.

⁸ Id.

⁹ Employ Florida Website: <https://www.employflorida.com/> (Last visited, April 5, 2007).

¹⁰ Harlem Children's Zone Website: <http://www.hcz.org/> (Last Visited, April 5, 2007).

¹¹ Id.

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 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 ten 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 nine week Saturday series of workshops that offers parents and other caregivers of children between the ages of zero and three 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 three 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 HCZ 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 Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida

According to its website,¹² the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc. is a private, nonprofit corporation whose mission is to identify, fund, support and evaluate innovative prevention and early intervention programs that improve the health, education and life outcomes of Florida's at-risk children and families. The Tallahassee-based organization “identifies, funds, supports and evaluates innovative programs that improve the life outcomes of at-risk children and their families.”

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 409.147, F.S., to provide legislative findings and intent regarding at-risk children in disadvantaged neighborhoods. It provides definitions. The bill authorizes a county or municipality, or a county and one or more municipalities, to apply to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Inc. 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; implements the governance of the children’s zone

¹² <http://www.ounce.org/>

community plan; and facilitates fundraising and secure broad community ownership of the children's zone.

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

The bill 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 ten-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 corporation must comply with the public records provisions of ch. 119, the public meeting provisions of ch. 286, and the public procurement provisions of ch. 287, F.S.

The bill provides geographic boundaries for Magic City. It specifies the membership of the 15-member board of directors governing the not-for-profit corporation that will implement the Magic City project. The board is required to enter into a contract with a management consultant to develop a ten-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.

The bill requires the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to contract with an existing private nonprofit corporation to implement the Magic City Children's Zone Pilot project, and appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to DCFS as a grant for a three-year period to implement the provisions of this bill.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The bill subjects the Magic City Children's Zone to laws addressing public records and public meetings, but does not specify whether the children's zone corporations that may be created are also so subject.

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 bill appropriates \$3.6 million in nonrecurring General Revenue Funds and \$28,362 in nonrecurring funds from the Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Family Services as a grant for a three-year period to implement the provisions of this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

The bill subjects the Magic City Children's Zone to public procurement requirements, but not other children's zones that may be created.

Though the bill provides for travel and per diem for the board of the Magic City Children's Zone, it does not address travel and per diem for members of any other entities.

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.
