



Position Statement: Supporting the Proposed Leon County Children's Services Council

Date: June 30, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce has voted to endorse passage of the Children's Services Council referendum that will face Leon County voters on the November general election ballot. This is an idea whose time has surely come – to vault the well-being of every child in our community among our highest daily priorities.

As we join other communities across America in the urgent dialogue about ensuring the promises of our democracy include equality for all, the CSC represents a major opportunity to significantly advance the path to the future for all children.

During nearly two years of careful study, collaborative engagement, and thoughtful consideration, The Chamber has weighed the costs and impacts to business against the significant community-wide benefits of this proven model. The Board's decision to endorse the proposal, and to urge voter approval of it, is also based on impressive experience and significant outcomes with the CSC model in other Florida communities.

In the end, the costs are more than offset by what is saved: improved lives for children in our community, to ensure a better future.

Our members and the larger community have had ample opportunity to learn more about the CSC model and how it can work to meet the extensive needs among children in our community. This model provides a trusted path to fund the health and education of children, particularly those at high risk of having their issues and problems compounded if not addressed now. Children Service Councils across the state have become a primary funding source for local services, including but not limited, to:

Prepare kids and teens for school and careers with:

After school programs

Mentoring programs

Develop school readiness programs for quality pre-kindergarten education

Provide parenting support and home safety programs

Make nutrition programs and mental health support accessible

Invest in programs to create safe communities, youth employment, and teen outreach

The CSC model includes direct accountability with close oversight to protect taxpayers and maximize the positive impact of every dollar. Stakeholders, diverse local leaders, and citizen volunteers would be empowered to make funding decisions, with voters retaining ultimate power in voting again on whether to renew the CSC every 12 years.

The Chamber Board of Directors believes that a Children's Services Council can become an important asset in creating a new foundation for a well-educated, properly trained, and thriving workforce for a brighter future.

The Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce Board urges its members and all citizens to embrace the opportunity to invest in the future's most important natural resource – our children -- by voting "Yes" for passage of the Children's Services Council referendum in November.

Guiding Principles Referenced #5 & #6