

Like

Tweet

in

Dear Friends:

As our community considers whether or not to establish a Children's Service Council, I thought this would be a good time to provide a status update and some background information. This is an important issue and one that would ultimately be decided by voters if the Commission decides to place the issue on the ballot in 2018 or later.

I would also like to take a moment to thank all of you who have signed up to receive our newsletter, whether you've been with us since the beginning or just joined us recently. Your time, interest and feedback are invaluable and help me better serve residents in District 5 and Leon County. Thank you!

If there is ever anything I can help you with, please feel free to call me (850) 606-5375 or just email me at dozierk@leoncountyfl.gov. You can also find me on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Kristin Dozier
Leon County Commissioner, District 5

Children's Services Council

Proposed Leon County CSC - Current Status:

At our May 22nd Commission meeting the Board voted 6-1 to accept the staff report. We will hold a Public Hearing on June 19th to decide whether we place the Children's Services Council (CSC) on the 2018 ballot.

The report confirms what most of us already know, too many kids in our community are struggling and there are ways to help improve their lives and by extension help our whole community. Investing in early childhood development and education can address challenges such as generational poverty, health and school readiness. This investment could also benefit our whole community by addressing community health issues, strengthening our workforce and reducing crime.

I believe the Board's willingness to move the public hearing from April to June has given us the necessary time to hear from the public and discuss this issue before making a final decision. I appreciate everyone who has participated in this conversation in recent months and the time, money and expertise that supporters have dedicated to educating our community and forming the Our Kids First advocacy group.

A CSC could be the best way to invest in prevention programs and prepare our kids to be strong, independent adults. The CSC model provides dedicated resources managed by a public entity that would be accountable to voters. Although questions remain and some have suggested we look at other ways to address these issues, I am confident that we could create a CSC that is transparent, accountable and effective.

However, I do have concerns about whether or not 2018 is the right time to place this on the ballot. Any time we ask voters to consider a new investment in our community we need to have enough time to fully understand the issue, to build a community coalition and to inform voters before the election. Our community is certainly willing to invest in ourselves, but the CSC is different than the sales tax referendums that support Blueprint and our schools because many critical decisions must be made after the election per Florida Statute.

Building a coalition and fully vetting this issue is critical, but I believe we also need to look at other factors that may affect the 2018 election. The November ballot will include 13 constitutional amendments, including a proposed increase in the Homestead Exemption, which could reduce the County budget by an estimated \$7 million. This means that we will have a long ballot and potentially conflicting messages. Some have suggested adding the CSC to the August Primary Election ballot to avoid these issues. As I stated at our last Commission meeting, I cannot support this approach. I believe initiatives like the CSC should be on the General Election ballot.

For the next few weeks, I will continue to read the Editorials and your emails, I will listen to all opinions and I hope all of you will do the same. An investment like this could change the lives of many in our community and help us address chronic issues such as the crime rate and workforce development. Taking the time to share our opinions and answer question will help us find the right approach to help kids in Leon County survive and thrive.

CSC General Information:

A countywide special district created by an ordinance of the County Commission and approved by County voters. The CSC could fund research-based programs and provide services and community resources designed to improve the lives of children and families throughout Leon County. The priorities that are ultimately funded would be defined by a needs assessment.

If Leon County voters approved the creation of an Independent CSC, Florida Statutes require the CSC to conduct a needs assessment and set a millage rate up to .5 in the first year. Based on current property values in Leon County, a millage rate of .5 would generate approximately \$8 million or \$50 per \$100,000 of property value although the CSC could set the rate below .5.

In most cases, the CSC will appear on the ballot after 12 years giving voters an opportunity to either affirm their support for the CSC or vote to end it. Similarly, either the County Commission or a citizen-led initiative can place the CSC on the ballot at any time to either affirm or vote to end a CSC.

Generally a 10-member board made up of the Superintendent of Schools, a school board member appointed by the school board, the DCF District Administrator (or designee), a local judge assigned to juvenile cases, a County Commissioner appointed by the County Commission and five (5) members appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates nominated by the County Commission.

Currently, there are eight (8) CSC's operating in counties across the state ([Broward](#), [Duval](#), [Manatee](#), [Martin](#), [Miami-Dade](#), [Pinellas](#), [Palm Beach](#) and [St. Lucie](#)). Alachua County voters will have an ordinance on their November ballot.



©2019 Leon County Commission, District 5 | 301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by [Mad Mimi](#)®

A GoDaddy® company