MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(7)

TO: Honorable Chairman Dennis C. Moss
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: June 30, 2009

FROM: R. A. Cuevas, Jr.
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging Congress, President Obama's Administration and related agencies to convene a White House Conference on Children and Youth, urging Congress to enact legislation targeted at improving the Child Welfare System and Foster Care

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The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Chairman Dennis C. Moss.

R. A. Cuevas, Jr.
County Attorney

RAC/jls

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(Revised)

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Please note any items checked.

_____ **"4-Day Rule" ("3-Day Rule" for committees) applicable if raised**

_____ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**

_____ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**

_____ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**

_____ **Budget required**

_____ **Statement of fiscal impact required**

_____ **Bid waiver requiring County Mayor's written recommendation**

_____ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing**

✓ **Housekeeping item (no policy decision required)**

✓ **No committee review**

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(7)
6-30-09

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS, PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES TO CONVENE A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH; URGING CONGRESS TO ENACT LEGISLATION TARGETED AT IMPROVING THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM AND FOSTER CARE, TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM AND FOSTER CARE AND TO REFORM THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN A COMPREHENSIVE WAY

WHEREAS, many children and youth in the U.S. face serious challenges, including over 3 million reports of child abuse and neglect, more than 500,000 children currently in foster care and millions more in need of health care, housing and quality education; and

WHEREAS, nearly 800,000 children spend at least some time in foster care throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, while 50,000 children are adopted from the public child welfare system each year, and nearly 140,000 children are waiting to be adopted; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, more than 26,000 youth left the foster care system not because they have found a permanent family but because they reached the age at which foster care assistance ended; and

WHEREAS, nearly 25 percent of children in out-of-home care in 2006 were living with relatives, and the federal government only recently provided states the option to use Title IV-funds for children raised by relative caregivers; and

WHEREAS, many children and youth that come to the attention of the child welfare system and a large proportion of those in foster care experience physical health issues and it is estimated that as many as 50 percent experience a moderate to severe mental health disorder; and

WHEREAS, the White House Conference on Children and Youth is the oldest White House Conference starting in 1909 and continuing every ten years until the last Conference in 1970; and

WHEREAS, the White House Conference on Children and Youth is similar to the White House Conference on Aging, and would include topics such as preventing child abuse and neglect; improving access to health care; securing housing; combating poverty; receiving a quality education and intensifying teen pregnancy prevention; and

WHEREAS, until it was discontinued, the White House Conference on Children and Youth focused attention on critical needs of America's children and resulted in significant policy changes including creation of a Children's Bureau and standards of care for children; and

WHEREAS, bills have been filed for consideration during the 111th Congress authorizing a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010, including S. 938 by Senator Mary Landrieu, D – Louisiana, and H.R. 618 by Representative Chaka Fattah, D – Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, kinship care is one of the most promising areas of foster care; and

WHEREAS, kinship care is the full time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child; and

WHEREAS, one of the most significant recent changes in the child welfare system has been the major growth in the number of children in state custody who are living with their relatives; and

WHEREAS, approximately 200,000 children, about one-third of all children in foster care, are living with relatives according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, more than 2 million grandparents are raising 4.5 million children and other relatives are raising an additional 1.5 million children according to the U.S. Census Bureau; and

WHEREAS, kinship care offers greater stability for children in a stable family setting than other forms of foster care, but kinship families nonetheless are in need of support services such as day care, respite care, support groups, physical and mental health services, educational services and legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, Title IV-E, Federal Foster Care is a federal program administered by state and local public child welfare agencies that assists poor children and is a combination of federal and state/local matching funds that is authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act; and

WHEREAS, Title IV-E is a federal reimbursement for some of the federally eligible foster care and adoption expenses that a state has already paid with reimbursement consisting of board and room payment made to licensed foster parents, group homes and residential child care facilities, administration and training; and

WHEREAS, Congress and President Obama's Administration should encourage kinship care through both additional funding and policy changes, including expand the use of Title IV-E funding to encourage kinship care; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of young people leave foster care each year simply because they became too old, which is referred to as aging-out of foster care; and

WHEREAS, many young people transitioning out of the foster care system face great instability when they find themselves on their own, with few, if any, financial resources, no place to live, and little or no support from family, friends, and community; and

WHEREAS, the experiences of these youth place them at higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance, increased rates of incarceration, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, legislation was filed during the 110th Congress that would have addressed these problems by extending Title IV-E foster care funding to age 21, but this legislation did not pass; and

WHEREAS, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides funding to address issues related to child abuse and preventing child abuse, and includes three main programs: state grants, discretionary grants, and the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grants; and

WHEREAS, CAPTA is currently authorized at $280 million, but has not been funded at the full authorized level; and

WHEREAS, CAPTA is scheduled to be reauthorized this year; and

WHEREAS, Congress and President Obama's Administration should address reforms to the child welfare system in a comprehensive way,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. Urges Congress to authorize a White House Conference on Children and Youth in 2010 and President Obama to convene such a conference to include federal, state, not-for-profit and private-sector agencies and other related entities.

Section 2. Urges Congress to pass H.R. 618, S. 938 or similar legislation, which would authorize President Obama to call a White House Conference on Children and Youth.

Section 3. Urges Congress to support states' ability to convert their current kinship programs to Title IV-E kinship programs allowing more families to access this program.

Section 4. Urges Congress to fund the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) at the authorized level of $280 million and reauthorize CAPTA this year at a higher level.

Section 5. Urges Congress to increase access to health care for children in poverty and also for youths exiting foster care by extending by extending Title IV-E foster care funding to age 21.

Section 6. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama, Senators Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez, the members of the Miami-Dade County Congressional Delegation and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Section 7. Directs the County's federal lobbyists to advocate for the passage of the legislation set forth in Sections 1 through 5 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to include this item in the 2009 and 2010 Federal Legislative Packages.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Chairman Dennis C. Moss. It was offered by Commissioner , who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Dennis C. Moss, Chairman
Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Vice-Chairman

Bruno A. Barreiro	Audrey M. Edmonson
Carlos A. Gimenez	Sally A. Heyman
Barbara J. Jordan	Joe A. Martinez
Dorrin D. Rolle	Natacha Seijas
Katy Sorenson	Rebeca Sosa
Sen. Javier D. Souto	

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 30th day of June, 2009. This resolution shall become effective ten (10) days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By:_____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency. JMM

Jess M. McCarty