

**Miami-Dade County**  
**The Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council (SEDC)**

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Dr. Raul Moncarz, Chairman  
Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW First Street, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Friday, July 18, 2014 at 1:00 pm

**AGENDA**

<u>Call to Order</u>	Dr. Moncarz, Chairperson
<u>Welcome and Introductions</u>	Dr. Moncarz
<u>Approval of Minutes</u>	
<u>Chairperson's Report</u>	Dr. Moncarz

General Discussion Items

➤ The Children's Trust	David Lawrence
➤ Miami Dade County Budget	Hugo Salazar
➤ New Business	
➤ Public Comments	

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting Date **August 15, 2014**

**The Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council Mission**

*To improve the quality of life of all residents of Miami Dade County by providing the County Commission and Mayor with timely, objective, transparent, and thoughtful advice on significant social and economic issues. The Council aims to pursue a balanced perspective among economic development, social justice, and environmental sustainability, both in the short and long term.*



**The Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council (SEDC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, June 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm**

**Members Present** - Dr. Thomas Breslin, Mr. Rosendo Castillo, Dr. Maria Espino, Mr. Marcos Kerbel, Dr. Kenneth Lipner, Mr. Jose Lopez-Calleja, Dr. Raul Moncarz, Prof Elisa Moncarz, Dr. Pedro Pellet, Mr. Jesus Permy, Dr. Brian Peterson, Mr. Reinaldo Valdes

**Staff Present** – Dr. Robert Cruz, Mr. Robert Hesler

**Guests Present** – Maria Abreu, Office of Commission Audit

**Excused Absence-** Dr. Wilbert Bascom, Dr. Alexandra Cornelius, Mr. Santiago Leon, Dr. Rolando Ochoa, Dr. Eunju Suh, Dr. Bernadette West

**Absent** - Dr. Jorge Salazar-Carrillo, Mr. Robert Saco

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions** - The June 20, 2014 meeting of the SEDC was called to order by Chairman Dr. Raul Moncarz at 2:10 pm. followed by self-introductions.

**Approval of Minutes** - Mr. Jose Lopez-Calleja offered the motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2014 SEDC meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Thomas Breslin and passed unanimously.

**Chairperson's Report-** Dr. Moncarz thanked the staff for the support. Dr. Robert Cruz stated that Miami-Dade Transit thanks the SEDC for their letter of support to the United States Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx in the competitive funding cycle. A brief discussion ensued regarding bonds (downgrading of bonds), Marlin Stadium, and international trade. Dr. Cruz informed the SEDC members that a request was made to the Budget Office to make presentation at today's meeting regarding the County's Budget, however they were not ready. Dr. Cruz stated the Budget office should be prepared to present at the July 18, 2014 meeting. SEDC members expressed concerns regarding the budget not showing revenue. A discussion ensued regarding the County's Budget. Mr. Lopez-Calleja suggested the July 18, 2014 SEDC meeting should start an hour earlier, at 1:00 pm, because the budget is an extremely important discussion and may be a lengthy discussion. Mr. Marcos Kerbel offered the motion for the July 18, 2013 SEDC meeting to start at 1:00. Mr. Lopez-Calleja seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Council made a request for David Lawrence of the Children's Trust to make a presentation before the SEDC. Dr. Cruz informed SEDC members that Florida Statutes prevent municipalities (the County) from having a higher minimum wage than the State. A brief discussion ensued regarding minimum wage/wages.

**General Discussion Items- Subcommittees-** Dr. Maria Espino shared with the Council the suggestions of the Steering Committee regarding SEDC Committees. Dr. Espino stated the suggestion was made to have two standing committees. One standing committee would be the Forum Conference Planning Committee, which would meet regularly and discuss topics/issues for the SEDC, speakers, and plan one conference per year. The second committee would be the Intergovernmental Committee, which would enhance the relationship of the SEDC with the Commissioners. Dr. Espino added the Steering Committee also mentioned Ad Hoc committees, primarily Education (Educating Workforce), Role of Universities in Socioeconomic Development, and the County Budget. Dr. Cruz reminded the SEDC Members the Dr. Antonio Jorge Foundation (Foundation) is officially registered with the State of Florida SEDC/Foundation can now begin collecting funds and sponsor events. Dr. Cruz reminded members the Dr. Antonio Jorge Forum is scheduled for September 28, 2014, and preparation for the forum must begin. Dr. Cruz briefed Council members on a report regarding wages, the impact of employees with college degrees, the significance of degrees and wages on the economy as it relates to high school, college, and professional degrees. In a competitive labor market, the higher the degree a person has, the higher their wage will be. A discussion transpired regarding wages and degrees.

Mr. Lopez-Calleja offered the motion to accept the Ad Hoc and Standing Committees recommended by the Steering Committee. Dr. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Cruz updated Council members on the State incentive programs administered by the Economic Development Division explaining the criteria and benefits of the Brownfield program, the Enterprise Zone, and the Qualified Targeted Industry program, (County pays 20% of incentive). Dr. Cruz mentioned the pending Enterprise Zone reauthorization. Dr. Cruz informed the SEDC that there are 3000 online subscribers to the online reports generated by the Economic Development Division. Dr. Cruz reviewed the latest economic report. Dr. Cruz stated the unemployment rate is steadily decreasing, the number of jobs is increasing, and especially commercial and residential construction jobs.

The meeting adjourned. **The next SEDC meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2014.**



## **DAVID LAWRENCE JR.**

David Lawrence Jr. retired in 1999 as publisher of The Miami Herald to work in the area of early childhood development and readiness. He is president of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and “Education and Community Leadership Scholar” at the University of Miami’s School of Education and Human Development. He leads The Children’s Movement of Florida, aimed at making children the state’s top priority for investment and decision-making. He is a member of the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet and twice chaired the Florida Partnership for School Readiness. In 2002 and 2008 he led successful campaigns for The Children’s Trust, a dedicated source of early intervention and prevention funding for children in Miami-Dade. He is the “founding chair.” He is chair of the Foundation for Child Development in New York. In 2002-3 he chaired the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Protection, and in 2011 he chaired a similar panel for the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. In 2002, he was a key figure in passing a statewide constitutional amendment to provide pre-K for all 4 year olds. He is a board member and former chair of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe. The David Lawrence Jr. K-8 Public School opened in 2006. An endowed chair in early childhood studies is established in his name at the University of Florida College of Education.



Before coming to Miami in 1989, he was publisher and executive editor of the Detroit Free Press. Previously he was editor of the Charlotte Observer, and earlier in reporting and editing positions at four newspapers. (During his tenure as Miami Herald publisher, the paper won five Pulitzer Prizes.)

He is a graduate of the University of Florida and named "Outstanding Journalism Graduate" and subsequently from the Advanced Management program at the Harvard Business School. In 1988, he was honored with Knight-Ridder's top award, the John S. Knight Gold Medal. His 12 honorary doctorates include one from his alma mater, the University of Florida. His national honors include the Ida B. Wells Award "for exemplary leadership in providing minorities employment opportunities" and the National Association of Minority Media Executives award for "lifetime achievement in diversity." His writing awards include the First Amendment Award from the Scripps Howard Foundation and the Inter American Press Association Commentary Award. He chaired the national Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business, was the 1991-92 president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the 1995-96 president of the Inter American Press Association. He was inducted into the Florida Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2010.

He has served the Miami Art Museum, United Way and the New World School of the Arts – each of them as chair -- and is a life member of the University of Florida Foundation. He serves on the national boards of the Everglades Foundation and Americans for Immigrant Justice. He was the local convening co-chair of the 1994 Summit of the Americas. And he co-founded a non-profit vocational-technical school in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

He and Roberta, a master’s graduate in social work from Barry, live in Coral Gables and have 3 daughters, 2 sons and 5 grandchildren. His honors include: “Family of the Year” from Family Counseling Services and “Father of the Year” twice (1999 and 2012) by the South Florida Father’s Day Council. In the past year he has been honored as a Miami Today Living Legend as well as with the Governor’s Shine Award for Inspirational Teachers, the Toni Jennings Early Learning Champion Award and the Community Champion Award from Leave a Legacy. Nationally, he has been honored with the American Public Health Association Award of Excellence, the Lewis Hine Award for Children and Youth, the “Children’s Champion” award from the National Black Child Development Institute, the Fred Rogers Leadership Award from the Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families, the Terri Lynne Lokoff Child Care Advocate Award, the CNC (Cuban American National Council) Lifetime Achievement Award, The National Center for Victims of Crime for “extraordinary leadership and service on behalf of abused children,” and a Spirit of Fatherhood Hall of Fame inductee by the National Partnership for Community Leadership.





## The Children's Movement of Florida Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is The Children's Movement of Florida?**

A: The Children's Movement of Florida is a citizen-led, non-partisan movement to educate political, business and civic leaders -- and all parents of the state -- about the urgent need to substantially improve the way we care for our children.

Our goal is to encourage the people and leaders of Florida to make the well-being and education of our children the state's highest priority, especially when it comes to the investment of public resources in programs that make a real difference in the lives and futures of children.

### **Q: Why is this necessary?**

A: By almost every objective standard, Florida ranks poorly in measure after measure in how we invest in children.

### **Q: Can you cite examples of that?**

A: Here are just a few:

- Perhaps 500,000 children in Florida are not covered by health insurance. Florida ranks 49<sup>th</sup> – only behind Texas – in the percentage of uninsured infants.
- The state's prekindergarten program – a program that serves more than 170,000 4 year olds -- does not meet most national standards. The State of Florida spends less than \$2,383 per year on a pre-K slot and less than \$7,000 for a public school slot, but will spend more than \$51,000 to incarcerate a juvenile.
- Early screening and treatment programs for children with special needs are poorly coordinated, difficult to access and of inconsistent quality.
- A fifth of our public high school students do not graduate, and half of 10<sup>th</sup> grade public school students in Florida cannot read at grade level.
- Florida's businesses and community organizations do not have a full enough commitment to strengthening child mentoring and parent skill-building programs.
- Only 3% of Florida's budget is spent on programs that benefit children in the early childhood years.

Some key numbers:

#### **44%**

The percentage of third grade public school students in Florida who cannot read at even minimally proficient levels (90% of Florida's children go to public school).

#### **50%**

The percentage of 10<sup>th</sup> grade public school students in Florida who cannot read at grade level.

#### **1 in 6**

Children who are born with a special need such as autism or cerebral palsy.

#### **\$2,383**

The amount Florida spends annually for a slot in its voluntary pre-kindergarten program.

**\$51,000+**

The amount Florida will spend annually to incarcerate a single juvenile (not including medical costs).

**75%**

The percentage of young Americans, ages 17 to 24, who are unable to enter the American military because they have an academic problem, a physical problem, a criminal problem or a substance abuse problem.

**Q: What is at stake here?**

A: Nothing less than the economic future of our state and the stability, safety and security of the communities in which we live.

If these multiple failures remain uncorrected, the associated economic and social burdens can become crushing. For instance, studies show that \$1 invested in high-quality early childhood programs can save society at least \$4 in costs associated with more prisons, more police and prosecution, more remedial programs, higher health-care obligations.

Furthermore, we know from significant research that 90 percent of human brain development occurs by age 5. If children are our future, then shouldn't Florida invest more in them when it matters the most -- during their earliest years?

**Q: What sort of programs do you have in mind?**

A: We have identified five areas for a first focus of special interest and action: Access to quality health care. Screening and treatment for special needs. Quality pre-kindergarten opportunities. High-quality mentoring programs. Support and information for parents.

**Q: What about elementary and secondary education?**

A: The state should fully fund a high-quality education for all children. Our children – and our economy and our future – require that. Many foundations, school boards, teacher organizations, parent associations and other entities already work toward those goals. The Children's Movement of Florida seeks to fill the void in advocating for support of programs that are crucial to children at earlier ages when early and wise investment would have such a splendid return.

**Q: Who is leading this movement?**

A: The leaders:

- Chair David Lawrence Jr., president of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, founding chair of The Children's Trust, University Scholar for early childhood development and readiness at the University of Florida, and retired publisher of The Miami Herald.
- Vice Chair Carol Jenkins Barnett, of Lakeland and the president of Publix Super Markets Charities. She's a nationally known early childhood leader, most especially with United Way Success By Six.

Chair Dave Lawrence and Vice Chair Carol Jenkins Barnett lead a 28-member steering committee that began planning and overseeing this initiative in 2009.

**Q: How will you accomplish your goals?**

A: After more than 20 months of research and planning, a major effort already is underway to muster, enhance and solidify statewide support for The Children's Movement of Florida and its objectives.

That began in September 2010 when The Children's Movement of Florida led 17 major "Milk Party" rallies and events from one corner of the state to the other -- from Pensacola all the way to Key West.

More than 15,000 people attended these rallies, sharing their sense of commitment and enthusiasm for our goals. Today, more than 325,000 are reached every week by The Children's Movement.

Media coverage was superb – and universally supportive. Scores of newspapers printed front page stories; all 10 of Florida's largest newspapers published editorials endorsing the movement, and dozens of radio and television reports were aired, including a piece broadcast nationally on CNN.

This outpouring of support reinforced our efforts to convince political, business and civic leaders to elevate – significantly -- the priorities assigned to children's issues.

**Q: How can you know this approach on changing priorities will work?**

A: The group conducted a pilot project in Palm Beach County in the Spring of 2010. Surveys conducted before and after that pilot project found that a series of community events – backed by an extensive informational media campaign – dramatically increased awareness of the inadequacy of children's programs in Florida and substantially enhanced support for a statewide children's movement.

**Q: What comes next?**

A: Based on our successful "Milk Party" tour, the magnitude of the grassroots support that has been generated and the commitment of local leaders now positioned in every major region and city of Florida, The Children's Movement of Florida has clearly demonstrated the ability to impact Florida's governmental and legislative process when it comes to issues that affect children and their families.

**Q: Are any tax dollars being used to fund The Children's Movement of Florida?**

A: No tax dollars are being used during any phase of this project.

**Q: Then how are you paying for it?**

A: The statewide Children's Movement of Florida is being funded by contributions.

**Q: Are you advocating tax increases to pay for these improvements in children's programs and these larger investments in the development of Florida's children?**

A: We are not advocating statewide tax increases. But we are insisting that children's issues receive the highest priority, and a much larger share of resources.

**Q: So, what priorities would see reduced support in order to divert more funds into children's programs?**

A: It is up to our legislators and other elected officials to listen to the citizens of Florida and then act accordingly when it comes to prioritizing how public resources are allotted.

**Q: Are you endorsing political candidates?**

A: No. This is an educational and informational campaign. We hope that Floridians will hear our message, enlist in this movement and work to ensure that the necessary public and private resources are dedicated to ensuring the full and proper nurturing of our most important resource – our children.

**Q: How can I support The Children's Movement of Florida?**

The strength of The Children's Movement is in the number of Floridians standing together to demand that children be our state's highest priority. By submitting your name and e mail address on our website -- accessible via [www.childrensmovementflorida.org](http://www.childrensmovementflorida.org) -- you will be updated weekly on what's happening in The Movement and how you can get involved. You can also become a member of The Children's Movement of Florida by making a contribution of any size -- fully tax-deductible -- by simply clicking on the Donate button on The Children's Movement of Florida homepage.





## **The 2014 Children's Movement of Florida agenda**

### **School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)**

Florida's School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-K programs allow for hundreds of thousands of children across our state to have access to an early learning experience – allowing for both a foundation for future educational success and for parents to maintain employment. Even while Florida has a solid foundation, tens of thousands of children currently find themselves on a waiting list, unable to access School Readiness services, along with a very real need to promote and ensure higher quality statewide.

- **Support** adequate funding for School Readiness and for voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) to ensure children's access to educational, enrichment programs that support working families and the academic and social skills needed for kindergarten and beyond. School Readiness: \$50 million/VPK: \$3,000 per slot.
- **Require** the use of evidence-based curricula in all VPK classrooms and provide materials and support for implementation.
- **Amend** the School Readiness statute to establish benchmarks and education-based performance standards for early learning and school-age care to prepare children for success, enhance the private business model of early learning, and to ensure accountability of public funds.

### **Parent Skill-Building**

Parents must play the most central and formative role in children's lives. Caring, knowledgeable adults are central to children's healthy development. All parents have questions and concerns about their children, but not everyone has trusted sources for the answers they need – and all parents can benefit from information and support.

- **Provide** and publicize a statewide platform (phone, web, and mobile) in multiple languages focused on providing parents with the most-up-to-date information about their children's development: \$12 million.

### **Health Care**

With a rate that is nearly double the national average, Florida ranks at the top of states nationally in its number of uninsured children. Nearly 500,000 of Florida's youngest, most vulnerable citizens do not have health insurance. Children without health insurance do not receive adequate care, often don't get prompt treatment when they are ill, and when they enter a hospital in Florida, they are 1.5 times as likely to die there as are insured children.

- **Extend** KidCare coverage to include children of "lawfully residing" immigrants as allowed by federal law and funded with federal matching dollars under provisions of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA): \$21 million.
- **Allow** qualified agencies to grant short-term eligibility so that children get immediate access to medical services while a formal determination is made as to their eligibility: \$1 million.

### **Developmental Screening, Assessment and Treatment for Children Who May Have Special Needs**

One of every six children has a special need – autism, cerebral palsy, ADHD and many more. Information and support can help parents guide children through these challenges and find peace of mind. Knowledge at parents' fingertips gives them the best chance to help their children fulfill their potential.

- **Provide** online screening and referral tools for families. Through the "Parent Portal" (above), provide screening tools for parents and referral resources via online and telephone portals.
- **Support** adequate funding for Early Steps intervention system, offering services to children (birth to 36 months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a development delay.

### **Mentoring**

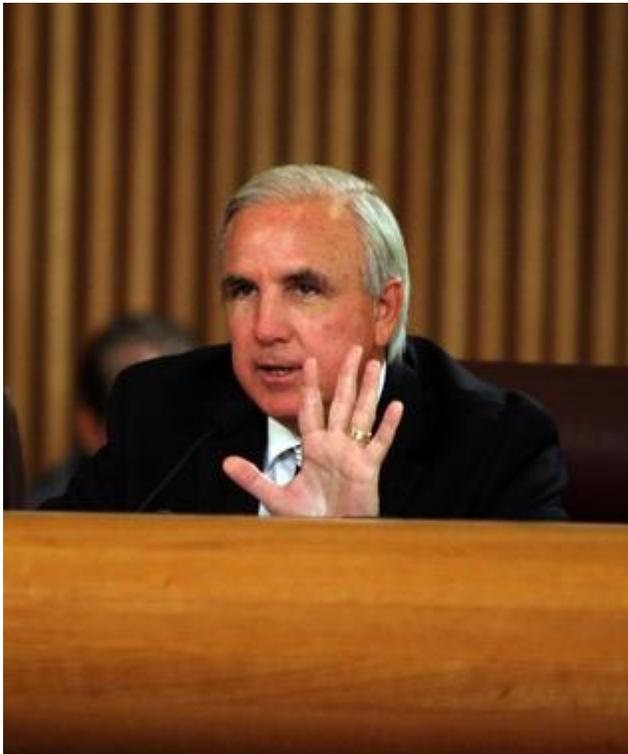
The Movement, working with United Way and others from around the state and through the support of Carol and Barney Barnett, is continuing with Year Two of ReadingPals -- an early literacy initiative focused on reading by grade 3. The goal: Provide a mentor to at-risk children in 10 Florida regions – from VPK through the third grade.



# Miami Herald

Posted on Tue, Jul. 01, 2014

## Miami-Dade Mayor Gimenez drops demand for 10-percent paycut



WALTER MICHOT / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez dropped his demand for union workers to take a 10 percent pay cut next year, and instead will seek savings by reducing benefits in employees' healthcare plans.

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez dropped his demand for union workers to take a 10 percent pay cut next year, and instead will seek savings by reducing benefits in employees' healthcare plans.

In letters to labor leaders Tuesday night, Gimenez said the "benefits redesign" will be needed close a \$64 million revenue [gap](#) for the budget year that begins Oct. 1. Gimenez plans to recommend closing that gap with about 700 job cuts on the county payroll if unions don't agree to concessions, including extending the three-year suspension of various bonuses, perks and pay enhancements set to return Oct. 1.

"I am now seeking a commitment from you to collectively work together to achieve a 15 percent overall savings in healthcare costs through benefits redesign," Gimenez wrote. The change, aides said, would reduce plans' benefits but not require county workers to cover premium costs.

Emilio Azoy, president of the AFSCME chapter representing county water-and-sewer workers, said he saw Gimenez's letter as another example of the mayor asking workers to solve the county's financial problems.

"What he's offering is, to me, insulting," Azoy said. "These benefits were negotiated. Now he's saying he wants everything back. And I'm not going to give you anything."

Miami-Dade's budget office said the healthcare reductions would narrow the budget gap by about \$18 million. The actual healthcare savings would total \$50 million, but the budget gap only touches payrolls in those departments reliant on the county's general fund — a roughly \$1.5 billion pool of money made up mostly of countywide property taxes.

The Gimenez letter continues the trend of Miami-Dade's improving budget projections. When his administration first began budget presentations in the spring, they projected a shortfall of \$208 million. Thanks to preliminary cuts, deferred expenses, catching paperwork errors and stronger forecasts for revenues, the projected gap had narrowed to \$75 million last week.

If unions agreed to the reduced healthcare benefits and extended [concessions](#), Gimenez said he could close the gap without job cuts. The concessions include enhanced overtime pay, an extra \$50 in each paycheck, and added compensation for working holidays. Called "snap-back" benefits because they're slated to snap back on Oct. 1, Gimenez won the [cuts](#) shortly after taking office in 2011.

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# Miami Herald

Posted on Tue, Jun. 24, 2014

## Miami-Dade Mayor Gimenez would shift tax money to libraries under plan

By DOUGLAS HANKS  
[dhanks@MiamiHerald.com](mailto:dhanks@MiamiHerald.com)



Douglas Hanks

Mayor Carlos Gimenez talks with reporters after his State of the County speech on February 26, 2014.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said Tuesday he plans to shift tax money from the county's core services in order to ease — but not eliminate — a looming budget [shortfall](#) for the library system.

Under the plan, Gimenez would propose a slight cut to the property taxes that fund roads, public-safety functions and other general services, accompanied by an increase in the special property tax for libraries. The shift of about \$12 million in an operating [budget](#) of \$5 billion would be designed as a revenue wash, with most homeowners paying the same overall tax rate despite the change in how the dollars are spent.

The Gimenez strategy seeks to satisfy his pledge of no tax increases while preventing a 40 percent drop in the money available for libraries in the budget year that begins Oct. 1. But the strategy seems unlikely to mollify his critics in the increasingly heated budget debate.

"We're trying to strike a balance," Gimenez said Tuesday. He confirmed the possibility of a shift in tax rates to avoid reductions in library hours, but said layoffs would still be part of the plan.

"We're trying to make sure all the libraries stay open with the same number of hours," he said. "That doesn't mean there won't be some very hefty cuts in the number of employees who work at libraries."

Sources close to the mayor say library administrators are prepping a budget of about \$45 million, less than the current \$50 million budget and significantly below the \$64 million library advocates say is needed to reverse several years of spending cuts and layoffs. By diverting revenue to the library system, Gimenez also risks exacerbating a budget gap that has his administration considering eliminating more than 400 [police](#) positions.

"It seems like a game," said Commissioner Sally Heyman, whose district includes Aventura and other coastal areas. "If we're going to roll around money, I have a concern about that."

Even with the higher tax contemplated by Gimenez, libraries would still face cuts. The latest draft plan calls for eliminating about 90 full-time library positions and adding 60 part-time workers, according to a county

source familiar with internal budget deliberations. The department has more than 50 full-time vacancies at the moment, but not enough to avoid lay-offs, the source said.

With Gimenez's proposed library tax rate, administrators would not recommend the reduction in branch hours originally floated under draft 2015 budgets that included no increase in the library tax, several sources said.

The proposed tax-rate shuffle marks the latest approach by Gimenez to mitigate service cuts at Miami-Dade's 49 library branches.

Thanks in part to a 2011 tax cut Gimenez [championed](#) during his first year in office, Miami-Dade's library tax generates about \$30 million a year — well below the library system's current \$50 million budget. Cash reserves have closed the gap in recent years, but the surplus dollars are forecast to be gone by this fall.

Last year, Gimenez briefly proposed a higher library tax before [dropping](#) the idea, citing unexpected opposition. To address the funding shortfall, the mayor then unveiled plans to close branches and [cut hours](#), but commissioners [voted](#) to tap reserves in order to maintain services and staffing. Earlier this year, Gimenez proposed asking voters to endorse higher taxes for libraries and other recreational [services](#) in a nonbinding referendum this summer, but then abandoned that idea after finding little support from commissioners.

A recent Miami Herald [poll](#) showed voters opposing higher property taxes to help libraries, with respondents rejecting a hypothetical rate hike by 56-41 percent.

Library advocates want a library tax high enough to support a \$64 million budget, and they're hoping commissioners will adopt one even after Gimenez proposes a lower rate.

"This commission needs to take the reins on the budget and show some leadership. God knows he isn't," said Pinecrest Mayor Cindy Lerner, a leader in a coalition seeking more library dollars. "He's been keeping everybody hostage to an ideological constraint that makes no sense whatsoever."

As he contemplates a tax shift, Gimenez has several options that could determine what county services would be vulnerable.

A reduction to the countywide property tax would cut into dollars available for police and other core services, while tweaking the county's special fire tax would only impact the rescue services Miami-Dade provides to areas without municipal fire and ambulance squads. Based on preliminary cuts and forecasts for property values, Gimenez's financial team says Miami-Dade currently faces a \$90 million revenue gap for next year's budget.

The proposed taxing shift also could benefit residents in Hialeah, Miami Shores and other municipalities not covered by the county's library taxing district. They could see their countywide property tax decrease but not face the corresponding increase to the library tax, since they don't pay it.

The current library tax amounts to \$17 for every \$100,000 of a property's assessed value. A \$64 million budget would bring that tax up to about \$33 per \$100,000 of value, according to the latest estimates from the county property appraiser. The Gimenez plan would amount to about \$23 in library tax for every \$100,000 of value.

Xavier Suarez, the first county commissioner to [endorse](#) a \$64 million library budget this year, said he's against both the smaller library-tax hike that Gimenez wants and the proposed taxing shift the mayor would use to offset the increase.

“I worry about the cuts that will be involved countywide,” said Suarez, whose district includes Coconut Grove and South Miami. As for a library budget below \$64 million, “that’s not acceptable to me. I want the full monty.”

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# The Politics And Economics Of Inequality

09/07/2014 by [Robert Reich \(http://www.social-europe.eu/author/robert-reich/\)](http://www.social-europe.eu/author/robert-reich/)



**Robert Reich**

Robert Reich has recently given an inspiring lecture at the Aspen Ideas Festival. This is the [Aspen Institute's description](#) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJbiBWMR5Ko>) of the lecture:

“ Some inequality of income and wealth is inevitable, if not necessary. If an economy is to function well, people need incentives to work hard and innovate. The pertinent question is not whether income and wealth inequality is good or bad. It is at what point do these inequalities become so great as to pose a serious threat to our economy, our ideal of equal opportunity and our democracy. Professor Robert Reich examines what's happened to income and wealth in this country, why it's a problem, and what we can expect in future years.

Watch the full lecture below.



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Social Democracy - What for?

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served in three national administrations, most recently as Secretary of Labor under President Bill Clinton.