

JUSTICE

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Blue Cross & Blue Shield, a tax accountant, a surgeon, the Gadsden County manager, and the city manager of Deltona.

“We don’t have the community based services that other areas have,” she said. “So a lot of kids will end up in commitment programs.”

— said Carol Helton, a member of the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

State officials defended McNeil’s “Commission” choices.

“Obviously, there are a number of people around the state who have expertise in juvenile justice,” said Donna O’Neal, Chief of State for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. “With 25 seats it was difficult to address all the areas. We tried to get folks from different areas of the state.”

Even though the Lee County area was left off the commission, the panel will meet in Fort Myers on Oct. 17 and 18 to listen to advocates and the public.

“We will be inviting local people with expertise to provide presentations to the committee,” O’Neal said.

But that did little to ease the angst over not having a local representative on commission.

Helton added that Southwest Florida has other unique problems in the juvenile justice arena.

“We don’t have the community based services that other areas have,” she said. “So a lot of kids will end up in commitment programs.”

Busbee agreed. He said that our area lacks significant early intervention programs and the money to implement other programs.

“We could make a big impact in crime if we had the resources available,” Busbee said.

The Commission was developed in response to several key concerns. Juvenile recidivism, the overrepresentation of minority youths, and alarming trends involving girls — who comprise the fastest-growing segment of the juvenile justice population — are some of the issues Florida’s juvenile justice system currently faces.

“Together with the Blueprint Commission, the Department of Juvenile Justice is taking an important step forward in reforming our juvenile justice system,” said McNeil. “We recognize that the success of our efforts depends upon public input and the participation of stakeholders from the

Blueprint Commission members (as of Florida Weekly’s press time):

- >> **Frank T. Brogan (Chair)** – President, Florida Atlantic University
- LaWanda Ravoira (Vice-Chair)** – Former president and chief executive officer of PACE Center for Girls, Inc.
- Alex Arnold** – DHL employee, youth representative
- Marlon Brown** – Gadsden County Manager
- Donna Callaway** – Retired principal and member of the state Board of Education
- Carol H. Carlan** – President of Wachovia Bank in Pensacola
- Barbara Cheives** – President of Converge and Associates Consulting
- Sheriff Robert L. “Bob” Crowder** – Martin County Sheriff
- Richard D. Danford Jr.** – President of the Jacksonville Urban League
- Julio Fuentes** – Founder, President and CEO of the Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Chief G. Matthew Immler** – Chief of Police for the City of Boynton Beach
- Barry E. Krischer** – State Attorney for Florida’s 15th Judicial Circuit
- Dale Landry** – Chair, Criminal and Juvenile Committee of the Florida Conference of the NAACP
- Judge Lester Langer** – Associate Administrative Judge, Juvenile Division, 11th Judicial Circuit
- Carlos J. Martinez** – Chief Assistant Public Defender, 11th Judicial Circuit
- Sidney W. Morgan** – West Florida Region Market President, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida
- Danielle Morron** – Tax Accountant, Wealth and Tax Advisory Services of West Palm Beach; youth representative
- Mary Sue Neves** – Superintendent of the Calhoun County School District
- Leon Russell** – Director of the Office of Human Rights for Pinellas County
- Bill Sublette** – Orlando attorney, former member of the Florida House of Representatives and key architect of the creation of the DJJ in 1994
- Judge Irene Sullivan** – Unified Family Court Judge, 6th Judicial Circuit
- Dr. Rajiv Tandon** – Chief of Psychiatry in the Program of Mental Health, Florida Department of Children and Families
- Dr. David L. Thomas** – Chair of the Department of Surgery, Nova Southeastern University
- Steven Thompson** – City Manager for the City of Deltona
- Rev. John F. White** – Senior Pastor, Mount Hermon African Methodist Episcopal Church in Ft. Lauderdale

local community who can best identify areas for change.”

In January, Gov. Charlie Crist appointed McNeil, a former Tallahassee police chief, to head the agency after it was rocked by the death of Martin Lee Anderson, 14. He died in a Pensacola hospital after he had been roughed up by guards at the Panama City juvenile boot camp operated by the Bay County Sheriff’s Office as part of a state program.

The Legislature abolished the militaristic boot camp program. ■

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