



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EXPERTS, VICTIM ADVOCATES, SURVIVORS AGREE:
CHICAGO NEEDS INVESTMENT, NOT THE NATIONAL GUARD**

Chicagoans are calling for meaningful investments in public education, youth employment, mental health services, and community violence intervention (CVI) programs.

CHICAGO – As President Trump ramps up his threats on our city, Chicagoans are making themselves clear: our city needs investment from the federal government, not a military occupation. Local leaders, community members, survivors of violence, victim advocates, and public safety experts alike are speaking out against the federal administration's aggressive rhetoric and threats to deploy the National Guard in Chicago.

Rather than treating our neighborhoods like war zones, Chicagoans are calling for meaningful investments in education, youth employment, mental health services, and community violence intervention (CVI) programs.

"Our nation has already tried over-policing and incarcerating our way to safety, and that is how we ended up with the largest prison population in the world without solving our challenges with crime and violence," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "I urge our federal government to listen to the advocates, experts, and Chicagoans who are calling for resources that stop the endless flow of guns in our city as well as transformational investments in housing, education, mental health, and community safety. These are the same investments that are leading to historic reductions in crime and violence throughout Chicago in recent years, and if President Trump truly cares about building safe cities he will lean into the proven strategies that work."

As the City continues to [drive down violence at historic rates](#), Chicagoans of all stripes raised concerns that the presence of soldiers in their neighborhoods would only undermine the progress we're making while sparking fear in communities across the city:



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Key Excerpts from [The Washington Post](#): **Chicagoans say Trump's plan to send troops to their city is 'last thing' they want** [Aug. 27, 2025]

By Kim Bellware, Praveena Somasundaram, and Ben Brasch.

- While Chicagoans acknowledge problems in their city that need attention, some said the idea of armed uniformed personnel patrolling the streets is an outsize response that they worry is not only politically motivated, but antidemocratic.
- “This is how it starts,” said **Alexis Figueroa, 48, an art gallery owner and North Side resident**. “You do it in one city, they don’t complain enough, you do it in another, they don’t complain enough, you do it in the whole country — and then you do whatever the hell you want.”
- **Residents in Humboldt Park** said the presence of National Guard members, armed or not, would do little to solve crime. Instead, they said they feared it would intimidate immigrant families, stymie business and snarl commutes.
- If the federal government wanted to help Chicago address crime, it could start by sending funding, not soldiers, said **Jess, a community school safety program**: “When you cut all the programs, all the support, what are they going to do?” said Jess, who described himself as politically independent. “Chicago, overall, is hands down way better than before,” the lifelong resident said. “Like every city, we have pockets of crime. Everybody’s going to talk smack, but I love Chicago.”

Key Excerpts from the [Associated Press](#): **Trump's threat to deploy troops to Chicago sparks fear and defiance in a city on edge** [Aug. 27, 2025]

By Christine Fernando, Sophia Tareen and Obed Lamy.

- “It’s a direct affront to the progress our communities have made,” said **Bradly Johnson, who leads BUILD Chicago**. The anti-violence organization focuses its efforts on neighborhoods on the city’s West Side that have seen persistent crime, even as rates overall have fallen. “It’s not a war zone. They’re vibrant resilient communities where young people deserve opportunities and not intimidation.”
- “The empirical data is very clear that the Chicago trend is extremely positive,” said **John Roman, who directs the Center on Public Safety and Justice at the**



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University of Chicago. “Chicago is doing better than the rest of the country on a lot of really important measures.”

- **Rene Cardona, a maintenance worker born and raised in Chicago,** acknowledged these inequities in exposure to violent crime while maintaining that he feels safe in Chicago generally. “It depends where you’re at and what time it is,” he said. “Overall, Chicago’s a pretty good place to live. There’s more good people than bad people here.”
- **Art Jarrett, a business owner just south of downtown,** also pointed to Trump’s business presence in the city, saying: “He can’t think it’s that big a killing field; he wouldn’t have built a building here. He’s full of crap,” said Jarrett, who has felt safe in the 57 years he has lived in Chicago.
- **Pastor Donovan Price, a local advocate for gun crime victims,** said Trump “unequivocally does not know what they’re talking about” when it comes to crime in Chicago. He said federal troops threaten to undo progress toward reducing crime. When things are finally starting to turn around, you have someone come up with something totally unnecessary that could perhaps change the tide,” he said. “He’s trying to strike the hope out of the hearts of good people in our city.”
- **Sydney Aldrich, 26,** said deploying federal troops isn’t the answer and hoped to challenge the harsh narrative of violence that so often defines her city in the news. “We have a lot of community members around town that are supportive of one another, and we watch out for each other,” she said.

Key Excerpts from the [Chicago Sun-Times: Chicago residents reject Trump plan to send in National Guard as 'terrible idea'](#) [Aug. 25, 2025]

By Emmanuel Camarillo and Kaitlin Washburn.

- For **Portage Park resident John Trotti,** the answer is clear. “I think it’s a terrible idea,” the 41-year-old said. “I think it’s a misuse of the resources that the military has and the authority that they have over what a state can and can’t do.”
- **Henry Thompson, who’s lived in Chicago’s Portage Park neighborhood for two years,** said he feared the plan could cause more harm than good. “I don’t want to feel like I’m in a militarized city,” Thompson said. “They’re not trained to do police



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work, so I don't think it will make the city safer. If anything, with protests that it's going to provoke, with the distress that it can provoke, someone could get hurt that didn't need to."

- **Caroline, a Portage Park resident of more than 20 years**, also said she'd feel less safe with military in the city. She asked to only be identified by her first name, fearing retaliation for speaking out. "It enrages me. There's no reason for the military to be here," she said. If they do show, she said she hopes "these guys know what's right and wrong and what they're supposed to be defending, which is our Constitution."

Key Excerpts from the [Chicago Sun-Times](#): **Experts say there's 'no actual good reason to send the Guard into Illinois' as Trump mulls troop deployment** [Aug. 27, 2025]

By Jon Siedel.

- "It's very important to understand that this is not how we do things in the United States," **Joseph Nunn, counsel at the non-partisan Brennan Center for Justice, said**. "Americans have been — since the founding — extraordinarily suspicious, and rightly so, of domestic [use] of the military."
- **Dan Maurer, an associate professor of law at Ohio Northern University and a retired Army JAG officer**, said Trump risks sending soldiers on a mission that they're "not well trained to handle" if he follows through on deployment in Chicago. "That's just not morally right, not fair, and certainly not justifiable," Maurer said.
- **Justin Levitt, the Loyola Marymount University law professor** who applied the "break-glass-in-case-of-emergency" label to the situation, said what happens next might just depend on "how much the courts allow themselves to see what's really going on."

Key Excerpts from the [Chicago Sun-Times](#): **Gun violence survivors say federal troops will not make Chicago safer, but resources will** [Aug. 26, 2025]

By Sophie Sherry, Somer Van Benton, and Tina Sfondeles.

- Since he was shot decades ago on the South Side, **Eric Wilkins has committed his life to violence prevention**. While President Donald Trump has called the city a "killing field" and threatened to deploy the National Guard, Wilkins argues it's those most affected by violence who know how to keep Chicago safe. "Trump is using all



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his tactics to tear the city apart when we're working from the grassroots to put it together," Wilkins said Tuesday. "No, we're not going to stand for it."

- "Once again, our communities are being threatened by policies rooted in fear," **Yolanda Androzzo, executive director of One Aim Illinois**, said Tuesday. "The Trump administration's threat to send National Guard troops to Chicago is not about safety, it's about control through intimidation and fear."
- **Samuel "Mook" Mormon, a shooting survivor and founder of Impact Social Solutions**, said if Trump were really interested in bringing down crime, he would invest in social services and community violence intervention work. "This is not a war zone," Mormon said Tuesday. "We need the social programs. We need all the CVI work that we're doing right now. We need the cognitive behavior therapy. We need the wraparound services."
- **Former U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan** said Trump has done "zero" when it comes to fixing the gun violence problem in American cities, and he said the president was not actually serious about the problem. **Duncan, who runs the violence prevention organization Chicago CRED**, said sending troops into the city would only undermine efforts that have succeeded in reducing the city's gun violence. And he doubted the National Guard would even be deployed to areas that suffer from the most shootings. "They're not gonna be in the neighborhoods. They're gonna be Downtown," Duncan said. "That's what they've done in D.C."
- Chicagoans interviewed Downtown Tuesday mostly shared the mayor's opposition to troops being deployed to the city.
- "Chicago is not a killing field," said **Alexandria Cummings, who said she was born and raised on the South Side**. "I've been in Chicago my whole entire life. I've never been shot or shot at."
- One person said Trump's suggestion was "offensive," another speculated it was an effort to "punish" cities and states that did not vote for him.
- **Survivors of gun violence** said they were proud of the strong stance Illinois leaders have taken in standing against Trump. "The organizations that we work with, who are fighting this fight, violence prevention for years, these survivors, they've lost



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way too much to be scared at a moment like this,” **Androzzo** said. “We have to continue to be unafraid ... because in history, people who were afraid kept the status quo.”

WHAT INVESTING IN PEOPLE LOOKS LIKE:

Mayor Johnson believes that communities are made healthy, whole, and safe when they are invested in. In the City of Chicago, the administration is driving down violent crime by ensuring our residents receive the support they need.

To address the root causes of violence, Mayor Johnson has [doubled the number of mental health professionals](#) responding to mental health crisis calls, [expanded youth summer employment](#) by 47%, and, through the Mayor’s [\\$1.25B Housing and Economic Development Bond](#), the City is on track to build 10,000 units of affordable housing by the end of his first term. While the Trump administration has attempted to [cut funding for public education](#), the Johnson administration has invested [more than a billion dollars](#) into Chicago Public Schools.

As the Johnson administration continues to invest in people and implement a holistic approach to community safety, Chicago has recorded historic declines in the rate of violent crime. The most [up-to-date data](#) shows that over the past year there has been a **21%** decline in overall violent crime, a **32%** decrease in homicides, and a **49%** drop in vehicular hijackings. Mayor Johnson’s Police Superintendent Larry Snelling leadership of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) has resulted in the highest homicide clearance rate in more than a decade while making significant progress on consent decree reforms.

Examples of recent critical investments Mayor Johnson has delivered for the people of Chicago include:

- **[Aug. 27, 2025](#)**: Mayor Johnson awarded certificates to the second cohort of graduates of the Victim Advocate training program, a pioneering program to professionalize victim advocacy to provide community members with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively advocate for the survivors of crime.
- **[Aug 21, 2025](#)**: Mayor Johnson and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) extended the groundbreaking Chicago Connected program for the 2025–2026 school year, ensuring that more than 40,000 CPS students continue to have access to free, high-speed internet at home.



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- **Aug. 4, 2025**: Mayor Johnson, Chicago Public Schools, and the Chicago Teachers Union announced the expansion of the Sustainable Community Schools (SCS) model, growing from 20 to 36 participating schools across the city. This strategic investment transforms public schools into vibrant community hubs that offer wraparound support, build authentic partnerships, and meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students and families.
- **July 23, 2025**: Mayor Brandon Johnson and Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) announced a \$40 million investment to modernize homeless shelter facilities throughout the city, the largest local shelter capital investment in Chicago's history.
- **July 9, 2025**: Mayor Johnson's summer youth employment program One Summer Chicago hired over 31,000 young people to summer jobs, marking a more than 47% increase in the number of young people participating in the program since Mayor Johnson took office.
- **June 16, 2025**: Mayor Johnson announced a \$4.11M investment into community wealth-building to offer communities the opportunity to build financial wealth and prevent displacement.
- **May 7, 2025**: Mayor Johnson oversaw the passage of the Green Social Housing (GSH) Ordinance, a bold initiative to expand affordable housing in Chicago. The ordinance lays the groundwork for the creation of an independent nonprofit with the authority to serve as a GSH developer, making Chicago the first major city in the country to implement the social housing model at this scale for developing permanent affordable housing.

See additional information on the Johnson administration's progress building the safest, most affordable big city in America [here](#).

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