



Written by [James Murphy](#) on September 23, 2022

## McDonald's CEO Has Harsh Words About Chicago Crime

The Golden Arches is at odds with the Windy City.

Last Wednesday, in an [address](#) at the Economic Club of Chicago, McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski let it be known that the surging crime problem that the city has been facing for years now is becoming problematic for the fast-food giant, which is headquartered in the city. On Tuesday, Lightfoot retorted that Kempczinski should "educate himself" on the issue prior to speaking about it.

"Everywhere I go, I'm confronted by the same question these days — what's going on in Chicago? While it may wound our civic pride to hear it, there is a general sense out there that our city is in crisis," Kempczinski said.

Kempczinski added that it was time to "face facts" about businesses leaving the city due to increasing crime.

"The truth is, it's more difficult for me today to convince a promising McDonald's executive to relocate to Chicago from one of our other offices than it was just a few years ago."

And Ronald McDonald is not the only unhappy businessman in the Windy City.

"The fact is that there are fewer large companies headquartered in Chicago this year than last year," Kempczinski said. "There are fewer this month than last month."

Just this year, airplane manufacturer Boeing announced it was moving its headquarters to Virginia, hedge fund Citadel announced a move to Miami, and construction manufacturing giant Caterpillar announced a move to the Dallas/Fort Worth area. All of them have cited crime and violence for their departures, at least in part.

"The firms are having difficulty recruiting top talent from across the world to Chicago given the rising and senseless violence in the city," said Citadel spokesperson Zia Ahmed. "Talent wants to live in cities where they feel safe."

In announcing Citadel's move to Miami, hedge-fund manager Ken Griffin — the richest person in Illinois — cited violent crime in Chicago as the main reason for the company's move.

"I've had multiple colleagues mugged at gunpoint. I've had a colleague stabbed on the way to work. Countless issues of burglary. I mean, that's a really difficult backdrop with which to draw talent to your city from," Griffin said.

Richard Irvin, a GOP gubernatorial hopeful whom Griffin had supported, also had harsh words for Democrat governor J.B. Pritzker, saying he "is either in complete denial or simply refuses to



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acknowledge what everyone sees, which is that his high-tax, pro-criminal administration is literally driving jobs and businesses out of state. In the last month alone, Illinois lost Boeing, Caterpillar, and now Citadel.”

In addition, food retailers Aldi and Whole Foods have also reduced their presence in the city, citing crime concerns. Aldi abruptly closed one store in June, and Whole Foods will close at least two stores in the city.

“Our decision was based on several factors, including repeated burglaries and declining sales,” a statement from Aldi said. “Out of concern for our employees and customers ... keeping this store open was no longer a sustainable option.”

Lightfoot, on the other hand, claims that Kempczinski and the others are simply mistaken.

“I think what would have been helpful is for the McDonald’s CEO to educate himself before he spoke,” the mayor said on Tuesday.

But it’s not just street crime that is bothering Kempczinski. The McDonald’s CEO claims that the restaurants themselves have become unsafe.

“We have violent crime that’s happening in our restaurants.... We’re seeing homelessness issues in our restaurants. We’re having drug overdoses that are happening in our restaurants,” the CEO said. “So we see in our restaurants, every single day, what’s happening in society at large.”

[Statistics](#) for 2021 show that murders in Chicago were up 60 percent, shooting incidents were up 66 percent, and motor-vehicle theft up 19 percent since 2019. Thus far this year, 500 [homicides](#) have been committed in Chicago (as of this writing), compared to 596 for all of 2021.

Despite these statistics, Mayor Lightfoot believes that the city is on the right track when it comes to dealing with violent crime. It’s all about getting rid of guns in Chicago, according to Lightfoot.

“The biggest challenge I think that we face is we’ve got to make sure that these young people put down the guns, and we’ve got to make more progress on carjackings,” she said in August.

The mayor has bragged that police have taken thousands of guns off the street this year but, still, crime continues to increase.



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