



McDonald's CEO Says Chicago 'In Crisis,' Urges City Leaders to Address Surge in Crime

Description

USA: McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski has called on government and business leaders in Chicago to do more to address safety concerns in the city amid a wave of crime and violence.

Kempczinski made the comments during a speech at the Economic Club of Chicago luncheon on Wednesday but stated that the company will not be deterred by the surge in violence, homelessness, and drug abuse throughout the city, and still plans to stay put.

The CEO said the company will move its innovation center from Romeoville to its West Loop headquarters.

However, Kempczinski said the burger chain had been battling chronic crime issues which have in turn made it harder for the chain to recruit new workers, Chicago Business reported.

"There's a general sense out there that our city is in crisis," he said. "The truth is, it's more difficult today for me to convince [a McDonald's executive] to relocate to Chicago from one of our other offices than it was just a few years ago. It's more difficult for me to recruit a new employee to McDonald's to join us in Chicago than it was in the past."

While noting his love for the city, the CEO said that city leaders have failed to come up with a clear plan to address the ongoing issues regarding rising crime.

No Clear Plan From City Leaders

"How many people—with a show of hands here—would say they knew what the plan is? Exactly what are we doing? What are the metrics? How are we going to track progress? I mean, this is what you do in business, day in and day out. You have a plan, you have a set of vectors, you have milestones, and you track progress. How are we doing on that?" Kempczinski asked, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

McDonald's operates roughly 400 restaurants in Chicago, covering almost every neighborhood,

according to Chicago Business. The company said it has contributed approximately \$2 billion in the 12 months ending June 30, 2022 to the economy of Cook County, Illinois.

Kempczinski's comments come as data from the Chicago Police Department from the start of 2022 through Sept. 11 ([pdf](#)) shows murders were down 15 percent year over year. However, thefts are up 65 percent, robberies are up 18 percent, and burglaries are up 28 percent.

In total, the number of criminal complaints is up 38 percent year-on-year and up 19 percent compared with the same period in 2019.

"We see every single day in our restaurants what's happening at society at large," said Kempczinski, adding that the situation was not something that McDonald's can solve on its own. "We need to be able to do it with the public sector as well," he said.

So far this year, a number of big companies including Boeing and construction firm Caterpillar have announced that they are moving their headquarters out of Chicago.

In June the richest person in Illinois, billionaire Ken Griffin, the CEO of Citadel, announced he was moving his hedge fund firm's headquarters from Chicago to Miami, Florida, citing rising crime.

by Katabella Roberts

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