



Illinois Playbook

Shia Kapos' must-read rundown of political news in the Land of Lincoln

By **SHIA KAPOs** | 07/30/2025 08:15 AM EDT

THE BUZZ

FIRST IN PLAYBOOK: Bill Quinlan, a high-profile attorney who recently represented former Chicago Public Schools CEO **Pedro Martinez** in a standoff with the Chicago Teachers Union, **is launching a civic group** to tackle big-city issues such as “shaky finances, public safety, education, housing and transit,” according to a spokesperson.

Leading a Better Chicago, as the 501(c)(4) group is called, says it will take a “structured, data-driven approach to policy development.”

Quinlan’s plan: Analyze an issue, develop best practical solutions and present those to Chicago neighborhoods. The group will also publish a report and push for City Hall to adopt it.

Sounds like a political playbook, so we asked if Quinlan might be considering a run for office. “Bill is focused on launching this group and producing data-driven solutions to these big problems confronting the city,” the spokesperson said.

About Quinlan: He’s represented big companies and corporate bigwigs, including the Maloof family that owned the Sacramento Kings and **Jussie Smollett** in his battle with Chicago. He worked in Gov. **Rod Blagojevich’s** administration and briefly in the Illinois House. And he’s engaged on the civic scene, too — he was board chair for Lawrence Hall, a social service agency that supports victims of childhood trauma.

Interesting side note: The project is partly funded by Tusk Philanthropies, which is looking at how other cities also face challenges. That group was founded by **Bradley Tusk**, who was campaign manager for **Mike Bloomberg's** 2009 New York mayoral race — and deputy governor during Blagojevich's administration.

