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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR COMMENTARY

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Not giving up on Chicago

Recently, Mayor Brandon Johnson made an alarming statement about Chicago's search for new revenue: **"We have reached the point of no return."**

While it's true the city faces grave challenges — including the mayor's own decision to borrow **\$830 million for city operations** and the mounting **\$37 billion in unfunded pension liabilities** — I reject the notion Chicago is beyond saving.

Chicago has always been a city of resilience. We don't give up when things get hard. We organize. We innovate. And we fight for a stronger future.

That's exactly why I launched Leading A Better Chicago, a civic engagement initiative dedicated to bringing transparency, accountability and bold action to the city's most pressing challenges. Our goal is to reimagine how we tackle longstanding issues, starting with the city's structural fiscal crisis.

Our first step has been to partner with Tusk Philanthropies to commission an in-depth analysis of Chicago's current fiscal state, laying out a road map of realistic, impactful reforms by examining proven approaches from cities like New York City, Detroit and Philadelphia and adapting them to fit Chicago's unique landscape. It's not just a critique — it's a call to action, rooted in data and informed by what has worked elsewhere.

We don't just want to study the problem, we want to solve it. Leading A Better Chicago will pair this research with real-world input from people all across the city. We'll gather feedback from residents, engage with community and business leaders, and tap national policy experts to generate bold, actionable ideas for change.

The mayor may believe there are no feasible solutions to Chicago's issues, that its leaders have tried everything and failed. I believe we haven't tried enough.

What we need now isn't despair — it's determination. Chicago needs fresh thinking, a willingness to challenge the status quo and most importantly, serious leadership.

Because despite what anyone says, Chicago hasn't reached the point of no return. Chicago is always worth fighting for.

*Bill Quinlan, attorney and founder, **Leading A Better Chicago***