

# Report: Chicago most corrupt city in U.S.

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A report released Tuesday ranks Chicago as the most corrupt city in the country and Illinois as the third-most corrupt state. (WLS)

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By [Craig Wall](#)

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"What we find is a very dreary picture. In nearly every sector, whether you talk about aldermen, you talk about Chicago schools, you talk about contracts, in every area corruption is still rife in the city of Chicago," said Dick Simpson, lead author of the "Continuing Corruption in Illinois" study and a University of Illinois Chicago political science professor.

The study was released by UIC's Political Science Department. [READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

Simpson called former Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd Bennett the corruption poster child for taking \$2 million in bribes. He also cites the convictions of former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert in a sex abuse scandal, Congressman Aaron Schock's indictment on fraud and theft charges, and the pending case against Chicago Ald. Willie Cochran for bribery and extortion.

In addition, Chicago's red light camera scandal sent an assistant transportation department commission to prison for bribery and extortion.

"What that means is that it's harder to get businesses to come here because of its corrupt state, we're losing population and corruption is one of the reasons we're losing population. We have undermined faith in government," Simpson said.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, during a school visit, cited a series of reforms he's enacted over the last seven years to deal with corruption.

"I would question the judgment about where we rank, but I'm gonna leave that aside, 'cause that's not important. What's important is, do you have the political will to make fundamental changes in the system? And while we're not resting on our laurels, I think when you look where I was on day one and where we are today, we made those series of changes," Mayor Emanuel said.

Gov. Bruce Rauner has repeatedly railed against corruption since before he was elected. On Tuesday, his office cited several ethics reforms he has put in place through executive order including a ban on legislators doing work before property tax appeals boards.

"Clearly, there is still work to be done and we call on our partners in the legislature to join us, and take a stand against public corruption to restore public trust," Rauner said in a statement.

The UIC study points to things like the need for public financing of political campaigns and fair remapping of legislative districts as ways to reduce corruption.

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