“Chicago is SO f*cking broke. If you keep saying it isn’t, I’ll rip your heart out.”
— Mayor Rahm Emanuel

“You really said... Chicago IS NOT BROKE | FUNDING THE CITY WE DESERVE
They might’ve said...

“Chicago was NOT broke when I left office.”
— Former Mayor Richard M. Daley

“They didn’t really say those things. They might’ve said something like that though. If you would like to see your words here when we go the next printing, send your blurb (with name and title) to info@wearenotbroke.org.”

— Alderman Scott Waguespack, 32nd Ward
The “Chicago Is Not Broke” Book Project (www.wearenotbroke.org) is an outgrowth of the civic research and community organizing done through the TIF Illumination Project (www.tifreports.com). The TIF Illumination Project has been combining data mining, investigatory reporting, map making, graphic design and community meetings to explore and expose the impacts of Tax Increment Financing districts on a community-by-community basis. Since its launch in early 2013 we have been invited to present at 47 public meetings throughout Chicagoland in front of over 4,700 people. The TIF work was created and housed for two years at the CivicLab (www.civiclab.us), which was America’s only co-working space dedicated to collaboration, education and innovation for civic engagement and social justice. The CivicLab, co-founded by Benjamin Sugar and Tom Tresser, was located in Chicago’s West Loop. It closed on June 30, 2015.

Dedication: This book, and every good thing I do, is because of Merle Green Tresser. And thanks to Sandy Ross for bringing us together.

Book design: Tiny Bold Creative – www.tinybold.com

The CivicLab logo was designed by Designed by Virginia Duran and Benj. N. Sugar.
The TIF Illumination Project logo was designed by Virginia Duran.


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Now that President Trump has taken office, we can say that Chicago is truly on its own.

As we prepare “Chicago Is Not Broke” for its second printing, it’s clear that Chicago will get no help from Washington to deal with our issues here. On the contrary, President Trump has already announced punitive measures around Sanctuary Cities and is threatening to withdraw billions in federal dollars from cities, including Chicago, that defy his immigration policies.¹ According to Open The Books, an investigatory and transparency news website, Chicago receives over $3 billion in federal funds annually.²

In addition to threats of federal dollar cut-offs, we may see new efforts to privatize public assets and other restrictive and repressive measures.

And as Illinois enters its second year without a budget, we see the ripple effects across the state. Social service agencies shutter, lay off staff and slash services. Our public universities totter on the brink of collapse and students and faculty leave the state for more stable and welcoming pastures.

And in Chicago, the 2017 budget was passed 48-0 with virtually no debate on November 16, 2016. The Chicago Tribune reported, “The average family will pay nearly $1,700 more a year to the city and Chicago Public Schools than they did before the mayor took office in 2011 once all of Emanuel’s tax and fee increases take full effect. There’s been a series of property tax hikes. There was a water and sewer rate increase, plus a new tax on top of that. Not to mention a new garbage hauling fee, 911 phone tax hike, vehicle sticker fee increase and a tax on cable television.”³

Our leaders continue to raise money to operate Chicago through regressive, unfair and mean-spirited measures that hurt the least of us the most.
48 to zero. No dissent. No debate. No ward-by-ward public meetings on the budget. In fact, virtually NO public meetings on the budget.

Well, not exactly. Since “Chicago Is Not Broke” was published in July of 2016 we’ve had 32 public meetings in front of 1,400 people. We’ve got ten more scheduled through May. Our schedule is online at the home page for the “Chicago Is Not Broke” Book Project web site at www.wearenot-broke.org.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois and Chicago did a press event at City Hall on September 14 and delivered the book to the Aldermen and the Mayor. Our elected officials ignored the good ideas in the book. The League continues the fight for a progressive income tax for Illinois.

The Chicago Tribune, The Chicago Sun-Times, WBEZ Public Radio, WTTW Public Television and Crain’s Chicago Business have refused to cover the book or review the book or attend and cover any of the public meetings held by neighborhood groups around the city.

All I can say, as the editor and organizer of the project, is how proud I am of this work and the authors – who, on their own, continue to work to improve and enrich our city - and the dozens of volunteers we meet all over the city who host and organize public meetings so that their neighbors can get illuminated about the city REALLY works. More than that, I’m inspired by the hundreds of people who attend these meetings seeking civic knowledge, who are eager and ready to expand their own civic imaginations and who now demand the same from Chicago’s leaders.

Help us get the word out on the book and the ideas in it. Clearly, the mainstream media is not interested. Bring us to YOUR community. Contact us at info@civiclab.us or call 773-770-5714.

Finally, the CivicLab is excited to announce that we are preparing our second book. It’s a direct response to the over 150 public meetings we have participated in since 2008. “More Public! A Love Letter and A Call To Action” will be out this Spring. We will publish this book in conjunction with a new membership program we are calling the Public Defender Project. You can see a beta version of the project at http://public-defender.us. Please consider making an investment to make the book and the project a reality.

Let’s get busy!

Tom Tresser
Civic educator. public defender.

2 See http://www.openthebooks.com/map/?Map=59000&MapType=Pin
WHY THIS BOOK?

The mayor says Chicago is broke.
The newspapers say we are broke.
Think tanks and policy shops say we are broke.
Can we believe them?

What would be the difference to the lives of Chicagoans and the future of the city if we are not broke?

If Chicago is NOT broke then we move from a narrative of scarcity and “can’t have” to one of self-sufficiency and possibility.
The difference for Chicago would be profound. The city could again stand for fairness, justice, opportunity and possibility.

I want to live in that city.

Would it be tipping my hand to say that I DON’T believe the narrative—regardless of who is pushing it—that Chicago is broke?

I don’t trust the experts on this. The experts have lied to us over and over again and have, time and time again, found money for programs that proved to be corrupt, wrong-headed and ineffective.

Why would so many powerful people and entities portray Chicago as broke and bereft of possibility?

I believe it’s because when a city is broke and has no ideas to advance economic prosperity it is ripe for fleecing. By that I mean privatization. By that I mean strip mining the assets of the many to benefit the few.

The Chicago Sun-Times quoted Mayor Richard M. Daley in an article titled
“Daley: Stop Throwing Darts” from July 8, 2009. You can read the full article and the editorial response here: http://tinyurl.com/Stop-Throwing-Darts.

“An impassioned Mayor Daley today portrayed the 2016 Summer Olympic Games as the economic salvation for Chicago, but warned that the city just might lose the Olympic sweepstakes ‘if people keep throwing darts…This is the only economic engine. We’re talking about jobs. We’re talking about contracts…coming into Chicago.’ He swore he would never bankrupt the city and that taxpayers would not pay a dime for the 2016 Olympics.”

The article concluded with him confessing a startling admission, “People can discuss this, but this is the best economic engine we have going. I have nothing [else] up my sleeve.”

It was a shameful admission of a lack of civic imagination and a reliance on a bankrupt and demonstrably proven disastrous scheme for advancing civic prosperity.

And all the major media outlets, civic institutions and policy shops backed the bid.

Chicago lost the 2016 Olympics in the first round of voting by the International Olympic Committee on October 2, 2009. There was a lot of handwringing here about all the lost jobs and economic benefits but absolutely no honest soul-searching or evaluation of what just happened to Chicago.

Instead, Mayor Daley decided to retire and Rahm Emanuel was elected Mayor.

There have been three Olympics since then – each worse than the preceding one in terms of overruns, corruption and economic turmoil for the hosting government.

Now, seven years later, both daily Chicago newspapers (who backed the bid) editorialized about how lucky Chicago was to have ESCAPED hosting the 2016 Olympics.

What the Olympics for sure WOULD HAVE done would be to privatize the city for seven years and shower billions of dollars on the same set of consultants, financial services firms, banks, marketers and construction companies that have grown fat by being close to power in Chicago. It would have done NOTHING for 99% of the people of Chicago.

So perhaps we can’t believe the experts, the media, the policy think tanks and the powerful when they tell us that something is so or isn’t so.

The narrative of civic poverty and lack of ideas has continued from Mayor Daley’s time to the present. We still seek to privatize public assets and pursue deals that benefit billionaires to the detriment of the public good. As I write, for example, Mayor Emanuel seems fixated on giving priceless lakefront land to Star Wars creator George Lucas and has proposed knocking down part of the convention center, then re-building another part of the convention center for over $1 billion.

We’ve seen 49 public schools closed, six public mental health clinics shuttered, CTA service curtailed, Park District programs ratcheted up in cost and new rounds of cuts threatening our public education infrastructure. We’ve seen Tax Increment Finance districts shower billions of dollars on private developers. We’ve seen aldermen go to prison, a Chicago Public Schools CEO plead guilty to corruption charges and unarmed African-Americans shot down in the streets and in their homes. A report on Chicago’s police department issued by the Police Accountability Task Force calls into question in the starkest possible terms some of the most basic conditions of fairness, truth-telling and accountability in Chicago.

There always seems to be money for some parts of the city and treasured projects favored by the mayor and his allies. But most of the city, beyond the Super Loop of five wards, still looks like it did ten or even twenty years ago.

There are many reasons to distrust the mayor when he says Chicago is broke.

There are many examples of civic problem solving throughout the city that deal effectively with perplexing and long-standing social and economic problems. They are run by civic champions who have passion, skill and experience. They just lack power.

And money.

So this book is an attempt to correct the record. To gin up a serious city-wide conversation about what is possible in Chicago.

The book is divided into three sections.

Section One is about money that has been stolen from us. This is money we should not have spent and should not continue to spend. Corruption experts Professor Dick Simpson and investigative journalist Thomas J. Gradel start
us off with “The Cost of Corruption in Chicago.” Then we have “The Cost of Toxic Bank Deals for Chicago” by Jackson Potter of the Chicago Teachers Union and conclude with “The Cost of Police Abuse” by Junie Kalven of the Invisible Institute (and recent Polk Award winner for his reporting on the killing of Laquan McDonald.)

Section Two is about money that is hidden from us. This is a one-chapter section featuring my piece, “TIFs – Billions Off the Books,” and concerns property taxes collected by Chicago’s Tax Increment Financing districts.

Section Three is about money we are not collecting but should be. Here Hilary Denk of the League of Women Voters of Illinois writes about “A Progressive Income Tax for Illinois.” Professors Ron Baiman and Bill Barclay of the Chicago Political Economy Group speak to “A Financial Transaction Tax for Chicago.” Amara Enyia, a candidate for mayor in Chicago’s 2015 election, addresses “A Public Bank for Chicago.”

To get us started, civic finance expert Ralph Martire introduces us to the Chicago budget. Wrapping up the book is Jonathan Peck of Alternatives, Inc. He reflects on all the ideas in the book and offers some next steps.

This book is the start of what I hope will be a city-wide grassroots research, education and planning project. More on this in the “Let’s Get to Work” section at the end of the book.

I hope you will help me prove that Chicago is not broke and that we have a LOT of great civic solutions up our sleeves.

Tom Tresser
Civic educator. public defender.
June 2016
PART THREE

MONEY WE ARE NOT COLLECTING (BUT SHOULD BE)
A PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX FOR ILLINOIS

Hilary Denk

Illinois needs a fair, progressive state income tax.

The best way to get a real, permanent fair state income tax is via an amendment to the state constitution. There was one under discussion in the 2015-2016 legislative session—The Fair Tax Amendment—that coupled with a rate bill introduced with the amendment, would have lowered the income tax for 99% of state taxpayers. It was not called for a vote because Governor Rauner and Republican legislators and a few Democrats as well did not support the Amendment or putting a referendum on the ballot in November to allow the voters to decide. This decision was not based on sound fiscal policy or the will of the people.

But the fight will continue because a progressive state income tax will benefit the state, as a whole, and Chicago in particular. As suffragette and League of Women Voters pioneer Alice Paul said, “When you put your hand to the plow, you can’t put it down until you get to end of the row.”

Why should people living in Chicago support the Fair Tax Amendment?

A graduated rate state income tax is needed because current Illinois tax policy is neither fair to taxpayers nor designed to sustain funding for current service levels into the future. Illinois’ core services of education, public safety, human services and healthcare have seen significant cuts over the past decade and these cuts have gotten worse with the failure to pass a budget in Springfield in 2015 and 2016.

Illinois is 49th in state funding for education and hasn’t provided any higher education funding since July of 2015.

The current state flat tax fails to impose taxes according to ability to pay.
A recent Tulchin Research survey of 700 likely November 2016 voters in Illinois found that if the election were held today, the "Fair Tax" amendment would receive the support of seven in ten (71%) Illinois voters. After being read a straightforward description of the proposed amendment to the state Constitution, Illinois voters back the measure by a margin of 44 points, with 71% of voters saying they would vote “Yes” on the measure to just 27% who would vote “No.” Nearly half of voters (48%) indicate they would definitely vote “Yes” on such a measure, far outpacing the intense opposition (18%) and only 2% of voters are undecided, leaving little room for the opposition to maneuver.

Support for the amendment extends across all corners of the state, across the political spectrum and across gender, ethnic, and generational lines.

- The amendment is supported by 79% of voters in Cook County, 70% of voters in the collar counties (DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties) and by 64% of voters in downstate Illinois.
- The amendment attracts support from 93% of liberals, 74% of moderates and even 54% of conservatives.
- Strong majorities of women (74%) and men (68%) back the amendment.
- The amendment is supported by 68% of white voters, 86% of black voters and 86% of Latino voters.
- The amendment attracts comparable support among voters age 18-54 (74%) and those ages 55 and over (69%).

Illinois voters strongly support the concept of a progressive income tax. The Fair Tax amendment was very popular with voters across the board and the amendment was well-positioned to win voter approval if it were to appear on the November 2016 general election ballot.

Representative Lou Lang has proposed legislation creating a tax schedule that cuts the state income tax for 99.3% of Illinois tax payers and raises nearly $2 billion of new revenue for the state budget. If the November referendum had been placed on the ballot and passed, these tax rates would automatically go into effect for 2017.

This measure would have gone a long way to making Illinois’ state income more stable, predictable, flexible and fair. The Governor’s opposition ended the possibility of a tax cut for 99% of Illinois taxpayers and significant revenue needed to fund education and social services. The text of HB0689 may be accessed via this simple URL: http://tinyurl.com/HB0689.
has ultimately caused more expense in the long run. The recession of 2008 exacerbated the current faulty fiscal practices, requiring a flat tax increase to meet basic budgetary needs.

In 2011 a temporary income tax increase was passed during a lame duck session without bipartisan support. Was the temporary tax increase necessary and worth it? It was absolutely worth it since it prevented the deficit from growing exponentially. Although the state budget still operated in a deficit and required borrowing, had the temporary tax not been passed, the deficit would have been over $30 billion as opposed to $6 billion at the end of 2014.

The expiration of the income tax rate in 2015 resulted in a decrease in the personal income tax from 5% to 3.75% and the corporate tax from 7% to 5.25%. In a time of absolute necessity for revenue, the sunset of this temporary tax created further chaos in the state budget. Going into 2015, the state budget already had a $5.9 billion deficit. With the sunset of the temporary income tax, $4.6 billion less revenue was collected making the deficit hole even bigger.

There are two ways to fix a deficit: cutting spending and raising revenue to pay off the debt and provide basic human services. Many budget hawks contend continuing cuts are the only way without raising any revenue; however, we’ve been cutting since 2000 and the cuts have been devastating.

Here are a few state programs that have been cut due the state’s revenue issues, adjusted for inflation and population growth (percent change since 2000)²:

- PreK-Grade 12 Public Education – cut 10.7%
- Higher Education – cut 40.2%
- Healthcare (excluding Group health) – cut 19.5%
- Human Services (excluding all Healthcare) – cut 29.8%
- Public Safety – cut 21.1%
- Net Public Services (excluding Pensions & Group Health) – cut 28%  

In terms of trauma and degraded public health, it is difficult to “cost out” the devastating impacts of these cuts on the citizens of Illinois.

Without a budget, most of these areas experienced additional cuts or no funding at all, with the exception of special appropriation bills, like the one for pre-K through 12, or the services were required by court order or federal mandate.

The revenue expected through the passage of a progressive state income tax amendment with the current rate bill would have positioned Illinois to dig itself out of serious deficit, while providing flexibility and reliability for future budget needs.

LWVIL supported the Fair Tax Amendment and Representative Lang’s sponsored rate bill, but other revenue sources are also required because continuing cuts to core human services are irresponsible and inhumane. Those measures include broadening the sales tax base, like our neighboring states, to include services; re-amortizing the pension debt payouts to even them out over a longer period of time; taxing retirement income for higher income earners and passing a “LaSalle Street” tax on derivative transactions. (See the next article.)

Currently, Illinois taxes are unfair and inflexible and inadequate.

The bottom fifth of Illinois wage earners pay 13.7% of their income in combined taxes compared to 5.3% for the top 1% of taxpayers, according to “The Case for Creating a Graduated Income Tax in Illinois” by the CTBA in 2012. This regressive tax policy only serves to increase income inequality and stifle our economy.

Illinois ranked 42nd in total state and local tax burden as a percentage of income in 2010, according the Federation of Tax Administrators.
Factoring in the Illinois tax increase in 2011, Illinois will then rank 32nd in total state and local tax burden as a percentage of income at 15.6%, again proportionally falling even more on middle and low income earners. Surrounding states such as Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio all ranked above Illinois with a higher overall tax burden.

Despite being a low tax state, Illinois had the second lowest real GDP growth in the entire Midwest in 2010 with just 1.9% growth. Iowa had the highest Midwest growth with 3.1%. Clearly, raising taxes does not slow GDP growth. The two states with the lowest taxes in the Midwest, Illinois and Missouri, also have the lowest GDP growth. Minnesota, where the income tax rate for high earners was raised significantly, has experienced economic growth and an increase in revenues in their state budget allowing for significant investment in infrastructure and education.4

Some argue that by raising income taxes, Illinois will lose all its high income earners to other states. However, according to a Young and Werner study done in 2011, people primarily leave their state because of job relocation and to live closer to family or friends. The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability addresses this topic in this paper showing the inflow and outflow of a population in Illinois, and in any state, is not tied to tax policy.5

Raising revenue does not lead to loss of jobs either, as has been evidenced by Iowa and Minnesota. Businesses want a local, educated and skilled workforce, modern and efficient infrastructure and reasonable property taxes. Illinois can’t provide property tax relief if it does not find other stable and progressive revenue sources.

John Bouman, from the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, stated in a recent Huffington Post article in favor of the Fair Tax Amendment, “The problem is not and never was on the spending side. Illinois has the fifth highest overall state gross to domestic product, but is 33rd in state spending as a percentage of gross state product. All of the major drivers of general funds spending—education, healthcare, human services and public safety have long enjoyed consensus support. Everyone agrees that, even in the best of times, this spending should be made efficiently, honestly and transparently. But elimination of every penny of waste, fraud and abuse would not scratch the surface of the structural deficit created by Illinois dysfunctional revenue system.”6

The point of this publication is to show that there is revenue available to support the city of Chicago. The Fair Tax is a statewide policy with the potential to bring in almost $2 billion in revenue to the State of Illinois. The reform of the Illinois income tax system will benefit the citizens of the city of Chicago, the city government and, potentially, the city school system. If the state revenue system in Illinois is modernized and adequately taxes the modern economy, then all citizens of the state of Illinois benefit, particularly those who are in the greatest need.

Quantifying this benefit is not easy because so much is riding on the General Assembly and the people of this state to enact a Fair Tax Amendment, now at the earliest in 2018. In reviewing the City of Chicago 2016 Budget Overview, ostensibly due to the lowering of the state income tax, the city projected a $10 million reduction in intergovernmental revenue through the Local Government Distributed Fund. With an increase in the state income tax revenue, about half of that reduction could have been restored in 2017, based on the statutory formula and the revenue projections from the rate bill.

The State recently stated there would be a $74.4 million reduction in General State Aid to Chicago Public Schools for 2017. The new revenue generated by the Fair Tax could have been used to restore that funding cut and to support education throughout the state, especially in low income school districts. In addition, social service agencies that received little or no funding from the State in 2016 would have benefited from $2 billion in revenue to restore state funding over time, benefiting all who work for those agencies and their clients.

Bottom line: A Fair Tax for Illinois could have resulted in approximately $85 million in new revenues for Chicago in 2017. Now that the measure has been

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### TOTAL STATE AND LOCAL TAX BURDEN AS A PERCENTAGE OF INCOME IN 2010

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<th>MIDWEST STATES</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NATIONAL RANK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>10th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>12th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>17th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>26th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>42nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>47th</td>
</tr>
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Source: Federation of Tax Administrators. Includes all state and local taxes and fees.
defeated for the 2016 ballot, these benefits are delayed until at least 2019. Education and advocacy must continue until the constitutional amendment passes. Ask candidates about their position on the Fair Tax and educate them about the benefits of a progressive state income tax in Illinois. Citizens clearly support a progressive state income tax. It’s time for all of our leaders to support it as well.

Acknowledgment: Much of the information provided in this article came from the presentation and supporting documents developed by the LWVIL with assistance from the CTBA. The primary authors were Jean Pierce, Claire McIntyre and Kathy Tate-Bradish.

NEW REVENUE TO CHICAGO FROM AN ILLINOIS PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX:

$85,000,000,000

NOTES

1 From January 14-19, 2016, Tulchin Research conducted a telephone survey in Illinois among 700 likely November 2016 voters. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.7 percentage points.
3 Figures from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, 2013.
4 http://mic.com/articles/111424/3-years-after-raising-taxes-on-the-rich-heres-what-happened-to-minnesota-s-economy#.6mqgPUo7w
5 http://www.ctbaonline.org/sites/default/files/reports/ctbaonline.org/node/add/repository-report/1396450540/IB_2014.03.25_Millionaire%20Migration_CTBA_FINAL.pdf
6 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-bouman/the-fair-tax-illinois-can_b_9696538.html

A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION TAX FOR CHICAGO

Ron Baiman and Bill Barclay

As governments around the USA seek to raise revenue via taxes, they turn to the riverboat and land casinos in their jurisdictions, reggressively taxing the mostly working class patrons of “poor person” casinos. This includes all forms of legalized gambling, including local casinos and video slot machines. Chicago has one of the biggest “rich person” casinos in the world. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) owned by the CME and the Chicago Board of Options Exchange (CBOE) together constitute one of the largest financial trading markets in the world. But these casinos are hardly taxed at all. Wealthy financial gamblers currently pay almost no tax whereas working class gamblers pay a roughly 3.2% sales tax.1

A LaSalle Street Tax (LST) such as the one proposed recently in Illinois would apply a $1/contact fee on all agricultural futures and futures options and a $2/contact fee on all other futures and futures options and stock index options traded at the CME, CBOT and the CBOE.2

As shown in Figure 1 below, assuming there is no diminishment of trading and using numbers from 2013, such a tax would have generated $12.6 billion that year for the state of Illinois (or for Chicago if the state’s 1980 stripping of “home rule” power for a Chicago LST tax were rescinded.3)

If a significant amount of trade by “high frequency traders” (HFT) were suppressed (see discussion below), this amount could be reduced by several billion but would still represent a very large source of public revenue for Illinois and/or Chicago. An LST would be a local version of a “financial transactions tax” (FTT) on financial speculation that could be, and should
The legendary community organizer Saul Alinksy used to say that there are two kinds of power: organized money and organized people.

In order for the people of Chicago to control the civic dollars discussed in this book, we are going to have to get organized. We’ve got some work to do.

We’d like to offer a few avenues for immediate action.

(1) **Help promote this book.** Bring us to your school, place of worship, civic organization, business association or block club. Buy bulk orders (discounts on orders of 5 copies or more automatically kick in) and sell them to your neighbors, colleagues and allies. Start a discussion group to review and debate the ideas in this book. Each one, teach one.

(2) **Sign our petition** demanding a complete audit of all of Chicago’s finances at http://tinyurl.com/Demand-A-Forensic-Audit.


At our web site, at www.wearenotbroke.com/action, you can order books, sign up for our newsletter and access all our resources for taking action.

The future awaits.
CHICAGO IS NOT BROKE

Conclusion

OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS. IN 2013, HILARY PARTICIPATED IN A LEAGUE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATION, AND IS A DIRECTOR FOR THE LEAGUE. CURRENTLY VICE PRESIDENT ON THE BOARD FOR SCARCE, A DUPage COUNTY ILLINOIS COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS, THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION AND CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET. HILARY IS CURRENTLY VICE PRESIDENT ON THE BOARD FOR SCARCE, A DuPage COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATION, AND IS A DIRECTOR FOR THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS. IN 2013, HILARY PARTICIPATED IN A LEAGUE

ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Ron Baiman is currently an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Business Administration department at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois. He has previously taught introductory, as well as international and regional economics, at the University of Chicago, DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Roosevelt University where he was an Assistant Professor of Economics. He has worked in public policy as Director of Budget and Policy Analysis at the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability in Chicago; in government as a Research Economist for the Illinois Department of Employment Security; in academic research institutes at Loyola University’s Center for Urban Research and Learning, the Institute of Government and Public Affairs of the University of Illinois, and the Center for Urban Economic Development at University of Illinois at Chicago. Ron has published numerous papers on regional, public, and international political economics in academic journals and as well as research and consulting reports on local, state and national economic policy. Ron is the author of a forthcoming book: The Morality of Radical Economics: Ghost Curve Ideology and the Value Neutral Aspect of Neoclassical Economics, Palgrave Macmillan publishers, 2016. Ron’s most recent blog posts and reports can be found at: www.cpegonline.org and www.dollarsandsense.org.

Dr. William Barclay is a founding member of the Chicago Political Economy Group. He is also a member of the Greater Oak Park Branch and the Chicago chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, the Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice, and the Oak Park/Austin Health Alliance. He is an Adjunct Professor in the Liautaud College of Business Administration at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He has served on the boards of the Illinois Finance Authority, the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, and the Crossroads Fund. Prior to retiring In 2004, he worked for 22 years in financial services. His areas of expertise were financial product creation, including development of derivative products, and business strategy planning. http://www.cpegonline.org

Hilary Denk is an attorney, mediator and community leader furthering social justice and civic issues. She has held past Board positions with the Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness, the Chicago Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Joliet. Hilary is currently Vice President on the Board for SCARCE, a DuPage County environmental education organization, and is a Director for the League of Women Voters of Illinois. In 2013, Hilary participated in a League

CONCLUSION

Sponsored training with the Center For Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA) to become a specialist and advocate for the graduated rate or progressive income tax in Illinois. In 2013 and 2014, she presented to numerous groups about this issue and lobbied legislators locally and in Springfield with her LWVIL colleagues. LWVIL took the lead in advocating for the Fair Tax in 2016. This work will continue until Illinois voters have the opportunity to vote for and implement a progressive rate income tax in Illinois. http://www.lwvil.org

Amara C. Enyia JD, PhD (ACE) is a public policy consultant and writes extensively on issues of community and economic development, public policy and systems thinking. Dr. Enyia is a regular radio contributor for “The Commentators” segment on WVON 1690 AM. Dr. Enyia leverages years in municipal government experience in several policy areas including: economic development, education, public safety, housing, food security and food access, community development, business development and workforce development. In addition to her role as a policy consultant, she also serves as Executive Director of the Austin Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Enyia leverages her knowledge locally working with community groups and organizations in some of Chicago’s most challenged communities. http://tinyurl.com/FB-Amara-Enyia

Thomas J. Gradel is a freelance writer, researcher and a former communications consultant for political campaigns, non-profit organizations and labor unions. Since 2009, Gradel has researched and co-written nine corruption reports with former Alderman Dick Simpson, a political science professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Gradel and Simpson co-authored Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality, which was published in 2015 by the University of Illinois Press. After earning a B.S. degree in economics in 1965 from St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pa., Gradel was a reporter and writer for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and Fairchild Business Newspapers. He has also worked for RCA, the American Bar Association, the State of Illinois, the MacArthur Justice Center and the late Rod MacArthur’s foundation and business enterprises. http://tinyurl.com/LinkedIn-Gradel

Jamie Kalven is a writer and executive director of the Invisible Institute. His work has appeared in a variety of publications; among them, Slate, the Nation, the Columbia Journalism Review, and the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, and Chicago Reader. In recent years, he has reported extensively on patterns of police abuse and impunity in Chicago. Since the early 1990s, Kalven has had a parallel career working in inner city Chicago neighborhoods. He has served as consultant to the resident council of the Stateway Gardens public housing development and currently serves as consultant to the residents of the Henry Horner Homes. At Stateway Gardens, he created a
program of “grassroots public works” aimed at creating alternatives for ex-offenders and gang members. Kalven’s reporting on patterns of police abuse at Stateway Gardens in 2005-2006 gave rise to a federal civil rights suit – Bond v. Uteras – that figured centrally in public debate over police reform in Chicago. His articles became the focus of a protracted legal controversy, when he refused to comply with a subpoena from the City of Chicago demanding his notes. He was the plaintiff in Kalven v. Chicago, in which the Illinois appellate court ruled that documents bearing on allegations of police misconduct are public information. His article “Sixteen Shots” in Slate first brought the police shooting of Laquan McDonald to public attention, for which he received the 2015 George Polk Award for Local Reporting. He is the recipient of the 2016 Ridenhour Courage Prize. http://invisible.ink

Ralph Martire is executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA), a bipartisan nonprofit think tank committed to ensuring that workforce, education, fiscal, economic and budget policies are fair and just and promote opportunity for all. During his time at CTBA, Ralph has helped obtain numerous legislative successes. In 2011, Ralph was appointed as a full voting commissioner to the Congressionally-established Equity and Excellence in Education Commission. The Commission completed its work with the issuance of the “For Each and Every Child” report in February of 2013. Ralph co-authored the first section of the report, which made recommendations regarding the fiscal and education funding policies required at the state and federal levels to provide an excellent education to every child. He also serves on the West Cook Division Governing Board of the Illinois Association of School Boards. Ralph has also designed and taught Master’s programs on education finance for the University of Illinois, and a Doctoral program on the politics of public education for Illinois State University. http://ctbaonline.org

Jonathan Peck is the South & West Side Coordinator for Restorative Justice at Alternatives, Inc. He is the former President and Chief Executive Officer of the Tucson Urban League, has over 25 years’ experience working within the community development field, facilitating projects, coalitions and alliances at the neighborhood, citywide, regional, national and international levels. Jonathan has extensive experience in the international arena, most notably working on the ground in Southern Africa and Nicaragua. Jonathan has worked and visited over 15 countries across North and Latin America, Europe and Southern Africa. He has extensive experience as an advisor and consultant, providing strategic advice in the areas of organizational development, strategic planning and nonprofit executive leadership and business management. He is a master facilitator, organizer, trainer, coach and mentor and has provided these services to over 5,000 individuals. Jonathan recently served on the Community Relations Working Group of the Police Accountability Task Force of the City of Chicago. www.linkedin.com/in/jonathantpeck

Jackson Potter is a Chicago Public Schools graduate. He was a high school activist who led a walk-out at Whitney Young in 1995 to push for equitable funding for schools in Illinois. He became a teacher at Englewood High School and was the union delegate there when former CEO Arne Duncan called the school a “culture of failure” and started a phase-out in 2005. He and Al Ramirez formed the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE) in May of 2008 and the Grassroots Education Movement, with community organizations, shortly thereafter. In June of 2010, CORE won the general election for the leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union, the third largest teachers local in the country. Jackson currently serves the CTU as the staff coordinator. http://www.ctunet.com  Photo: Powell Photography, Inc.

Dick Simpson is a professor of political science at the University of Illinois and former Chicago alderman. In his first campaign in 1971, Simpson surprised political observers and won election as Alderman for Chicago’s 44th Ward. He served for two terms before voluntarily retiring in 1979. As Alderman, Simpson established one of the first ward service offices in the city. He created a Community Zoning Board and the 44th Ward Assembly to guide his vote. He also founded the Independent Precinct Organization, which later merged into IVI-IPO. In City Council he introduced and voted for reform legislation and occasionally persuaded old-line aldermen to support his proposals. He has published numerous books and articles including Corrupt Illinois with Tom Gradel and Winning Elections in the 21st Century with Betty O'Shaughnessy. http://tinyurl.com/ChicagoPolitics

Tom Tresser is a civic educator and public defender. His first voter registration campaign was in 1972. In 2008 he was a co-founder of Protect Our Parks, a neighborhood effort to stop the privatization of public space in Chicago. He was a lead organizer for No Games Chicago, an all-volunteer grassroots effort that opposed Chicago’s 2016 Olympic bid. With Benjamin Sugar, Tom co-founded The CivicLab, a co-working space where activists, educators, coders and designers came to work, collaborate, teach and build tools for civic engagement. Located in Chicago’s West Loop, the space operated for two eventful years closing on June 30, 2015. He is the lead organizer for the TIF Illumination Project that is investigating and explaining the impacts of Tax Increment Financing districts on a community-by-community basis. http://www.tresser.com
“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE. TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.”

- Helen Keller

Thanks are due to so many people who made this book possible. Thanks to Merle Green Tresser for proofing the copy and for her strategic thinking. Thanks to Kathlene Reyes for her insightful edits that have improved the second printing.

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“Chicago Is Not Broke is an incredibly good read...certain parts are shocking. It’s understandable to anybody. There are remarkable voices in this book. You will feel so smart having read this book. It’s marvellously readable, enriching and entertaining. It’s a truly remarkable document. We deserve to be enlightened.”
– RICK KOGAN, AUTHOR AND COLUMNIST, SENIOR WRITER FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

“Chicago Is Not Broke! It’s more than just a saying, it’s the title of this very important book done by a core of civic experts to illuminate the facts behind Chicago’s finances. One of the most important sections explains the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Program. Led by Tom Tresser, this book seeks to open the city’s books and argues for transparency around taxpayers’ dollars and for expanding our civic options through new sources of revenue. It is a real eye opener.”
– ALDERMAN SCOTT WAGUESPACK, 32ND WARD

They really said...

“Tom Tresser’s latest book, Chicago Is Not Broke is essential reading for all who have an interest and investment in the future of our city, from City Hall to the residents of each of Chicago’s 77 neighborhoods. This book offers solutions, not only for the city to dig itself out from where it is, but for taxpayers, legislators and concerned Chicagoans to learn about the financial state of the city, and provides a progressive and responsible path forward.”
– COOK COUNTY CLERK DAVID ORR

“There are only a few people courageous enough to sift through the lies and tangled webs that proves Chicago isn’t broke, but the politics are. Most people won’t take the time to do the research, but Tom Tresser and his team have and this book should be on your list.”
– KAREN LEWIS, PRESIDENT, CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

They might’ve said...

“Chicago is SO f*cking broke. If you keep saying it isn’t, I’ll rip your heart out.”
– MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL *

“Chicago was NOT broke when I left office.”
– FORMER MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY *

*They didn’t really say those things. They might’ve said something like that though. If you would like to see your words here when we go the next printing, send your blurb (with name and title) to info@wearenotbroke.org.