

# Chicago Tribune



QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

## Bears to hire Johnson as coach

Lions coordinator also pursued by Raiders, Jaguars

By Brad Biggs  
Chicago Tribune

Chicago Bears President/CEO Kevin Warren boldly proclaimed seven weeks ago the organization would have the most attractive situation of any NFL team searching for a new head coach — and it appears that proved true.

The Bears are finalizing a deal, sources told the Tribune on Monday, to hire Detroit Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson, who was hotly pursued by the Las Vegas Raiders and Jacksonville Jaguars. Johnson is expected to arrive at Halas Hall on Tuesday morning, at which point he will sign his contract.

The move stunned people across the league as there was a growing belief Johnson was headed to Las Vegas, where he could have had input on the hiring of a general manager and worked with Raiders minority owner Tom Brady. The Jaguars loomed as a legitimate option as well.

The Raiders, however, have been even more dysfunctional than the Bears in the last couple of decades, and their roster is in significantly worse shape. Johnson's decision signals he is comfortable working with Bears GM Ryan Poles, who is believed to be under contract through the 2026 season, while Caleb Williams gives Johnson a quarterback to build around.

"There's no question that this guy is talented," Johnson said last month when asked about Williams before the Lions-Bears game at Soldier Field. "I remember standing on the sideline last game and you

Turn to Bears, Page 4



Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson works at Soldier Field on Dec. 22. CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

### INSIDE

#### Events across nation honor MLK Day

A massive 70-member choir belted out "Hallelujah" to open a Martin Luther King Jr. Day service Monday at his former congregation in Atlanta. **Nation & World**

#### Palestinians return to leveled homes

Palestinians began to absorb the scale of damage to their neighborhoods as a day-old ceasefire between Israel and Hamas held. **Nation & World**

## THE 2ND INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



President Donald Trump points to Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts after taking the oath of office Monday. KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

# BACK IN CHARGE

TRUMP PROMISES TO REVERSE ACTIONS OF BIDEN PRESIDENCY

'FROM THIS MOMENT ON, AMERICA'S DECLINE IS OVER,' HE SAYS



Glenn Schroeder and Clara Campbell celebrate Donald Trump's inauguration at a watch party Monday at Danny's Pizza Place in Chicago. ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

By Zeke Miller, Chris Megerian and Michelle L. Price  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th president Monday, returning to power with a promise to end America's decline and to "completely and totally reverse" the actions of the man who drove him from office four years ago.

Trump, who overcame impeachments, criminal indictments and a pair of assassination attempts to win another term in the White House, promised to act swiftly after the ceremony. Dozens of executive orders were already prepared for his signature to clamp down on border crossings, increase fossil fuel development, and end diversity and inclusion programs across the federal government.

Declaring that government faces a "crisis of trust," Trump said in his inaugural address that under his

administration "our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced."

Trump claimed "a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal," promising to "give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy and indeed their freedom."

"From this moment on," he added, "America's decline is over."

The executive orders are the first step in what Trump is calling "the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense."

A desk was set up on stage at the Capitol One Arena so Trump could start signing the paperwork before a crowd of cheering supporters and official fanfare including military bands.

Other goals will prove more difficult, testing the patience of supporters who were promised quick

Turn to Trump, Page 6

## Johnson, Pritzker vow to push back

By Alice Yin, Nell Salzman, Jeremy Gorner and Rick Pearson  
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson and Gov. JB Pritzker delivered their opening salvos Monday against Republican President Donald Trump and his second term in the White House, setting a defiant tone in their defense of immigrant rights and other liberal causes over the next four years.

Pritzker and Johnson did not address Trump by name Monday ahead of Trump's swearing-in as the 47th president. But during a Rainbow PUSH Coalition breakfast to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the two Democrats vigorously condemned the Republican leader's agenda and character. Their public remarks, inside a Soldier Field suite, came amid a swirl of uncertainty and fear over rumored immigration raids in Chicago

and evolving updates on executive orders the president vowed to sign.

The mayor sought to strike an energetic tone as he employed religious imagery in describing the challenge ahead for Chicago leaders.

"This transition that we are experiencing, you all, is only but a moment in time," Johnson said. "The Bible says that before that great day, the lawless man has

Turn to Defiance, Page 2

### INSIDE

- At the annual MLK breakfast in Chicago, a commitment to immigrants' rights was reaffirmed. **Chicagoland, Page 3**
- Hundreds of people braved bitter cold in Chicago to protest President Donald Trump. **Chicagoland, Page 3**
- Joe Biden pardoned Dr. Anthony Fauci, members of the House Jan. 6 committee and others. **Nation & World**
- Trump began issuing what was expected to be a barrage of executive orders Monday. **Nation & World**

## Man banned from parks jobs now works for alderman

Was forced out over handling of sex abuse charges

By Jake Sheridan  
Chicago Tribune

Despite a ban from Park District work after he was asked to resign from a top post there for his involve-

ment in the agency's sexual abuse lifeguard scandal, a longtime government employee has again found a job with a Chicago alderman.

A November 2021 investigation cited Alonzo Williams, then the Park District's chief programs officer, and other district executives for mishan-

dling allegations of abuse and sexual harassment in the lifeguard program. Williams resigned when the report came out and was designated "do not rehire" by the agency.

But Williams quickly found contracting work in the City Council. And now, despite the still-in-place label from the sister

city agency, South Side Ald. Greg Mitchell has hired Williams, city payroll records show.

Williams is a legislative aide in Mitchell's 7th Ward office. He earns \$106,104 a year — almost half of what he made as a top Park District executive — but his salary shot up in December in an apparent

back-door effort to award him a five-figure year-end "bonus," city records show.

Mitchell declined to comment on his decision to hire Williams and on the late-year pay bump Williams received.

Williams' full-time job serving Mitchell is not his

Turn to Hired, Page 4