

February 10, 2026

Senator Jama and members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

Please don't spend our state's funds on a home for a billionaire's basketball team.

Senator Wagner, in speaking of this bill, said it requires no new taxes. That's true. Instead it means the General Fund will help pay for a basketball facility with money that might otherwise educate kids, feed families, or provide mental health services.

Portland made a mistake in taking ownership of the Moda Center, making the team's sale that of a team without ownership of its facility. But this is not a mistake that the state should duplicate.

The state does own buildings. They are state office buildings, DMV test stations, prisons, a fairground. Not facilities designed for the use of private investors.

The bill takes the taxes of players and others using the facility and diverts that money away from the General Fund, where it has long gone, and to the basketball facility.

The Trailblazers are indeed a cultural institution many of us have grown used to. They have been a part of Oregon for a long time. But so are the Portland Art Museum, the High Desert Museum, the Historical Society, the Zoo, the Shakespeare Theater and other cultural institutions. And indeed the legislature does give a few million to many of these organizations from time to time. But these are non-profits, and the state has not taken ownership or partial ownership of any of their facilities.

Let Portland take responsibility for the decision they made about ownership of this facility and let the team owner take responsibility for the facility they want. It's their decision and responsibility.

The investor is paying over \$4 billion for the team and cannot afford another half billion for the building? That's ridiculous. The Allen estate has made billions and it has a requirement to disburse that money. Maybe Jody Allen could be convinced to help upgrade the facility. But it's not the state's job.

The Legislature will likely struggle to not eliminate essential services when it writes its next budget. If it has extra funds for the High Desert Museum, and Shakespeare Theater and others, it could consider an equivalent grant to the Trailblazer's facility. But it is pure extortion by these national sports owners to expect better treatment than we give to our state's non-profits, none of which get the taxes of their employees diverted to the boss.

