

The Bucks: "Cheaper to Keep Them, Indeed"

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MILWAUKEE - Boy, the Milwaukee Bucks must really be feeling the love.

Bucks owners Marc Lasry and Wesley Edens think of their club and their dream of a gleaming new palace for the franchise as a “transformative economic and cultural asset” for Milwaukee and all of Wisconsin. But when Governor Scott Walker and top legislative leaders announced yesterday that they intend to put taxpayers on the hook for half of the cost of a new arena, they stood behind a sign reading “Cheaper To Keep Them.”

Now there’s a marketing slogan. *The Milwaukee Bucks: Less of a burden if they stay.*

Walker and his allies insist that taxpayers will be better off footing the bill for \$250 million of the cost of building a new arena because they claim the Bucks pulling up stakes and moving to another city would cost Wisconsin even more in lost tax revenue. They pluck a number – \$419 million over 20 years – out of thin air to justify their claim.

Of course, the very same kind of argument could be made *against* other budget decisions the governor and legislative Republicans are making. Applying the logic used to defend a taxpayer subsidy for billionaire owners and millionaire basketball players, it would undeniably be cheaper over the long haul to keep the University of Wisconsin System fully funded. The UW System is a [proven economic engine](#) that not only employs large numbers of taxpaying faculty and support staff but also spawns countless start-up companies that end up being big revenue producers as well. But the UW is in line for a \$250 million budget cut, exactly the same amount the Bucks are in line to receive.

It also would be cheaper in the end to keep state parks as they are instead of eliminating all state funding for them as the governor and legislative budget writers aim to do. The parks are

fuel for the tourism industry, [another proven economic engine](#) .

There is a virtually endless list of things in the state budget that are being cut sharply or eliminated altogether but would be cheaper to keep. Funny how this calculus is only used to justify feeding billionaires.

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