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# Speak Out Now

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## NBA Finals: More Than a Game

It's the NBA finals. The Golden State Warriors are facing the Toronto Raptors, Canada's only NBA basketball team, a team that has never made it this far. But if the Warriors win, it will be three championships in a row, their fourth in the last five years.

For five years in a row, the months of April, May and June have been a time to share the excitement of the Warriors post-season with our friends and families and co-workers. All around the Bay Area Warriors flags fly on cars, co-workers sport Warriors gear, and AC Transit buses flash "Go Warriors." Walking through Oakland means moving through a sea of blue and gold shirts and hats. And Wednesday, the Warriors return home to Oakland for game 3, with the series tied at 1-1.

The Warriors showcase athleticism and skill and talent. It is sheer pleasure to watch them play. It is not about one or two superstars or even the starting players. It's a team! Their pride in collective play is felt by all who watch. And they carry their same attitude off the court standing up to Trump, giving back to the community. In a time when we can feel discouraged and down, the Warriors can seem like one of the few things that we can feel good about.

Despite the excitement of watching our team possibly win another NBA title, a cloud hangs over this series. When it's over, the Warriors will be leaving Oakland, their home since 1971. This will be their last games in the famous Oracle arena, the oldest and loudest arena in the NBA, nicknamed the "Roaracle".

Billionaire owner Joe Lacob decided to ditch Oakland for San Francisco, home to the largest number of billionaires per capita of any city in the world. Lacob has said his plan was always to move the Warriors to San Francisco. He and others insist nothing will change since they are only moving across the Bay, but this move reflects a bigger story.

Naming rights to the stadium, the Chase Center, were purchased for \$300 million by the largest bank in

the U.S., JP Morgan Chase. In 2013, Chase was fined \$13 billion for the major role it played in the 2008 financial and housing crisis. The fine was chump change for the bank, which actually increased its assets after the 2008 crisis, which led to millions of people losing their jobs, homes, and savings.

In the Bay Area, the housing crisis has never really ended. Many working class residents can no longer afford to live in the Bay Area, especially in San Francisco and Oakland. Working families have had to move away, often adding hours to their commute. And for many others the only place to go is one of the many tent cities sprouting up all over the Bay Area.

Amidst this ongoing crisis, the new Chase stadium has risen up like a middle finger to all the long-time fans of the Bay Area, who've been watching this team long before they were winning championships.

The Warriors are leaving Oakland for a San Francisco stadium named after the largest Wall Street bank. The new stadium has cost over \$1.3 billion dollars even though it is smaller than the Oracle with more than 1,500 fewer seats, and many more private suites that cost \$2 million dollars per year.

The new arena has been paid for by private investors. They plan to make all that money back on the skyrocketing ticket prices. Revenue from Warriors ticket sales has already increased over 300% since 2013, and this will get worse in the new arena, where mid-level season ticket costs are around \$26,000 per year, on top of a one-time \$35,000 membership fee.

The Warriors move is just one more reminder that we live in a system that has no real regard for us, except as a way to generate more wealth. For the super rich, it makes no difference if fans are priced out of games, or families are priced out of cities.

But this can't go on forever. Not only are working people the majority, we do the work to make society run. And like the Warriors, we can win too if we work together and use our strength in numbers.