

Summary of the Chelsea Manning Defense Fund (2010-2013)

This summary covers the time period of July 2010 through December 2013—from the establishment of the Chelsea Manning Defense Fund and Support Network, through the completion of the US Army court martial trial *US v. Manning*.



By Jeff Paterson, on behalf of the Chelsea Manning Support Network Steering Committee

July 13, 2015

Background

A few weeks after the arrest of Chelsea (then Bradley) Manning, back in May 2010, for providing the WikiLeaks website classified information about the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Courage to Resist—in collaboration with the Chelsea Manning Support Network—began soliciting funds for Chelsea’s defense.



The Support Network had just formed from an ad-hoc collection of activists spread across the world, organizing around a website created by a Slovakia-based activist, social media and a series of unwieldy conference calls with up to 50 participants. Based on Courage to Resist’s then 5-year history of supporting three dozen active duty US military war objectors at court martial—raising funds, hiring civilian attorneys, rallying supporters to attend trials, and the like—there was general consensus within the newly formed Support Network for Courage to Resist to take on responsibility for many administrative functions of the work.

The Chelsea Manning Support Network was solely responsible for the legal fees of Chelsea’s civilian defense team led by trial counsel David Coombs of Rhode Island.

We published a monthly Chelsea Manning Defense Fund fiscal report online since the fall of 2010. These reports detailed how much money we received, how much we spent (broken down by a dozen categories), how many people had donated that month, and a number of other things. Few organizations of any kind provide this much “real time” financial information for the world to peruse. We did so voluntarily to underscore our commitment to transparency. Publishing the data monthly provided an ongoing fiscal narrative of our challenges and successes.

Manning Defense Fund June 2010 thru December 2013

Donations

Total defense fund donations (25,244 donors)	\$1,530,009
Est. net after fiscal & CC fees (88.5% of gross)	\$1,354,058

Expenses

Legal fees (David Coombs)	\$325,000
Campaign-specific employees/contractors	\$340,662
Courage to Resist staff campaign reimbursement	\$206,310
Advertising	\$82,859
Communications	\$23,631
Conferences/Trainings	\$1,506
Office/Shipping Supplies	\$22,509
Postage	\$97,971
Printing	\$73,233
Promotional/Educational (merchandise)	\$62,586
Travel/Food	\$97,377
Public events	\$16,360
Total	\$1,350,004

Available funds (as of Jan. 1, 2014)	\$4,054
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"Total IOLTA" plus "Legal fees" equal total legal related expenses

Total IOLTA donations (834 donors)	\$66,626
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For our up-to-date fiscal accounting, visit:
<http://couragetoresist.org/manning-fiscal>

Commentary on the Fiscal Report

Over 25,000 individuals donated \$1.5 million leading up to and during Chelsea's initial trial. During this time we paid her legal bills in full, organized over 600,000 people to sign petitions in support of Chelsea, staged hundreds of events, rented billboards, purchased a New York Times ad, and rallied thousands to take to the street—at Fort Meade, Fort Leavenworth, Quantico Marine Base, and around the world. We are extremely proud of these efforts, including the fundraising component of them.



Our priority was always supporting Chelsea's chosen legal defense team. However, the primary contradiction was often that if folks didn't know about Chelsea, or better understand why she needed their support, there would be few people willing to donate to her defense. So we raised funds, and spent funds for both legal fees and public education at the same time, spending more on one aspect or the other given the situation at the time.



After reviewing our summary of expenses from the 2010-2013 period, some have been critical that "only" 21.25% of money raised was spent on the legal effort led by Chelsea's selected civilian attorney David Coombs. Mr. Coombs was provided with every resource that he requested of us, and he was well aware that if there were any additional needs by his team, we would endeavor to meet those. We signed a third party agreement with Mr. Coombs

taking responsibility for Chelsea's legal fees, and we're proud to say that we fulfilled that agreement in full.

The goal of the Chelsea Manning Support Network during this time was to do everything we could to affect the outcome of the court martial by worldwide public education, including inside and outside of the courtroom at Fort Meade, Maryland. We were not interested in looking back after the verdict was read and having to admit that we could have done something more but wanted to save money for later. Chelsea faced about 140 years in prison and we reduced that sentence by 105 years. It was a “tactical victory” from which we work forward from today.

In nearly every fund appeal to supporters, we invite individuals to contribute directly to Chelsea’s “Interest on Lawyer Trust Account” (IOLTA). When folks do this we pass 100% of their contribution directly to her attorneys to offset the overall legal bill. As this reduces the amount the Support Network is responsible for, we’ve always been delighted to give friends this option.



Courage to Resist, however, is a non-profit organization (under the fiscal umbrella of the Alliance for Global Justice) whose mission is to support military war objectors through both direct aid and public education efforts. We are able to provide donors with a tax-deduction for their donations under IRS codes because legal fees are only one aspect of our overall work. In fact, most non-profit organizations have a policy of not paying any legal fees (beyond the organization’s) believing that it increases IRS scrutiny. Contributions directly to legal fees, by way of the IOLTA account, do not provide individuals a tax deduction.

The Steering Committee of the Chelsea Manning Support Network

Jeff Paterson (Project Director, Courage to Resist)

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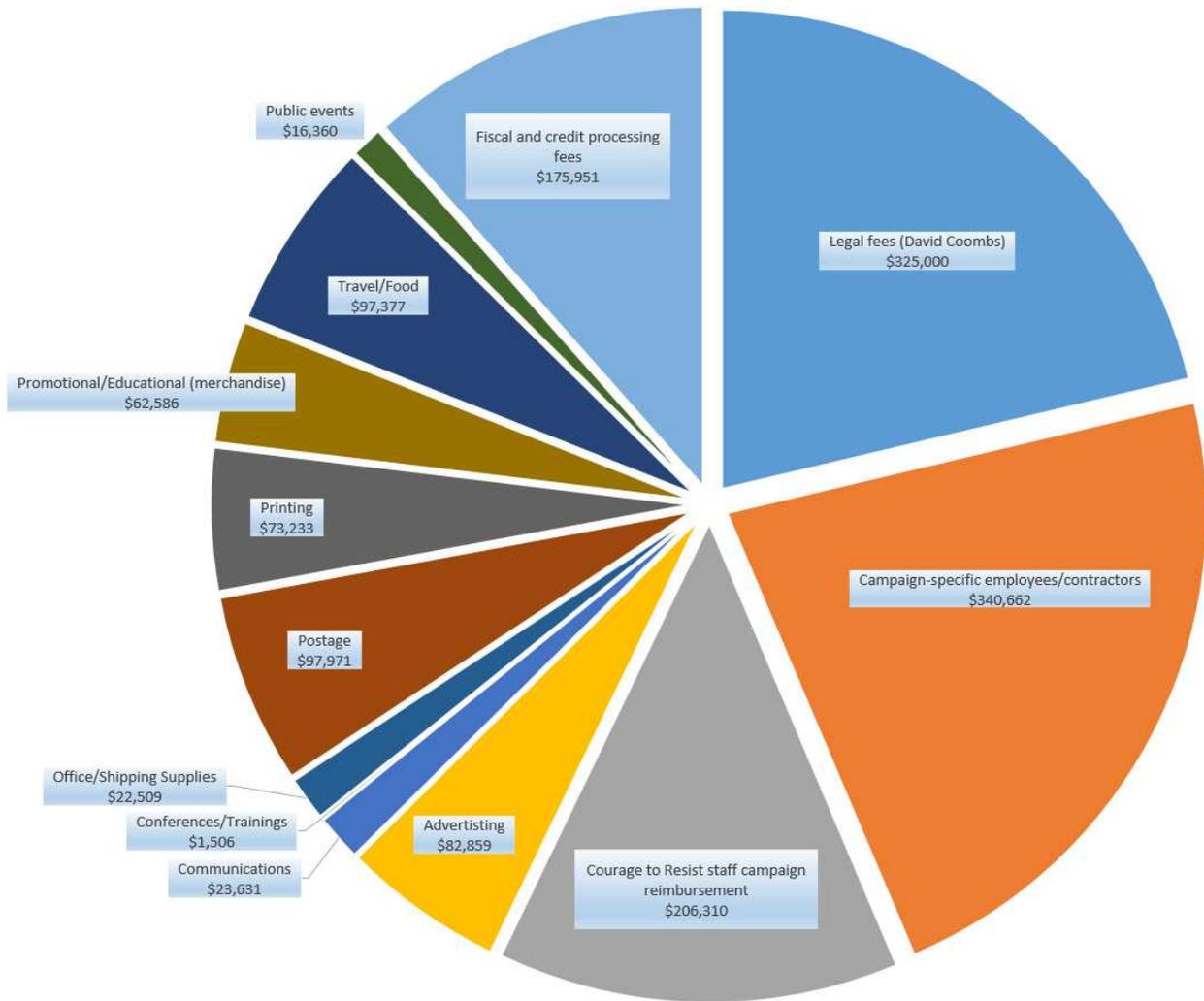
Kevin Zeese

Gerry Condon

Bob Meola



Chelsea Manning Defense Fund Expenditures 2010-2013



A guide to our 2010-2013 fiscal report

It's important to note that this is not an annual report, but a fiscal accounting of three and half years of efforts.

Legal fees were paid to Chelsea Manning's chosen civilian legal defense counsel David Coombs.

Campaign-specific employees and contractors were hired exclusively to carry out the work of the Chelsea Manning Support Network. These individuals were our dedicated organizers working to support unpaid grassroots activists worldwide, built and ran our website, managed social media, and worked tirelessly relating to media in order to offset the military's substantial public relations machine.

Courage to Resist staff campaign reimbursement covered the expense of dedicating existing staff positions to the Chelsea Manning campaign. Specifically, this helped pay for our Office Manager and

Project Director positions. Courage to Resist required these funds to remain financially solvent and able to manage the overall campaign financials and staff in carrying out the decisions of the Chelsea Manning Support Network Steering Committee.

“Estimated net after fiscal & credit card fees” is an 11.5% line item that represents the estimated external fees that we incur on every dollar donated. It’s an average of credit card transaction fees (~3.5%) on online donations, and the processing fee charged by our non-profit sponsor, the Alliance for Global Justice (AfGJ).

Advertising, billboards and newspaper ads came out to nearly \$83,000. Nearly all of that was from a single New York Times ad (7/25/2013), a few billboards, and a couple of short promotional videos. Nearly all of these funds were raised online as project-specific campaigns. In other words, the ads and the billboards happened because individuals gave money specifically for those efforts.

Communications were expenses primarily related to the website, bulk email distribution, and conference calls.

Conferences and training were expenses to better train staff members in their campaign roles.

Office and shipping supplies were used to print and mail approximately 150,000 individual letters to government officials in support of Chelsea, including paper, toner, and envelopes, as well as supplies for shipping campaign materials.

Postage came out to nearly \$100k. Direct mail fundraising is still a critical aspect raising funds, despite the ever increasing role that online donations play. You still need to spend money to raise money, and postage was largest single aspect of that. One of our objectives was to produce quality and timely campaign tools (such as organizer manuals, stickers, posters, banners, etc.) and get them into the hands of activists everywhere. In many cases, postage/shipping costs were often just as much as production costs—even more so for international distribution.

Printing covers campaign materials that we distributed without charge, or expectation of donation, such as info cards, leaflets, and pamphlets.

Promotional materials were items that we generally asked a donation for, such as t-shirts, bumper stickers, and buttons. We used US-made products, under “sweatshop-free” conditions, by union labor whenever possible.

Travel, along with a few modest food reimbursements, covered the travel of campaign employees and contractors to and from Fort Meade, Fort Leavenworth and Quantico Marine Base. These individuals travelled from both coasts, as well as Canada. In order to minimize air travel expenses, staff members often volunteered to live for weeks at a time away from their homes and families with local hosts and in collective housing.

The small amount spent on **events**, \$16,000, is a testament to the resourcefulness of our activists and organizers worldwide. While many organizations will spend this much on a single event, the Chelsea Manning Support Network staged over 200 events globally during this time period.