

Attorney General Ken Paxton Utilizes Campaign Funds for Impeachment Legal Fees



In a recent campaign finance report, Attorney General Ken Paxton disclosed that he tapped into his campaign funds, allocating \$2.3 million to cover legal fees associated with his impeachment trial in the last six months. This revelation, outlined in the report published on Thursday, marks the first time Paxton has revealed his campaign spending since July. The House impeached Paxton on abuse-of-office charges in May, and the Senate acquitted him after a trial in September.

Campaign Spending Breakdown

Paxton had previously asserted that his impeachment defense cost him over \$4 million. The recent report confirms the use of campaign funds to at least partially cover his defense costs. The disclosure sheds light on the financially charged backdrop surrounding the impeachment costs. In Texas, elected officials are generally permitted to utilize campaign funds for legal defense from their status as public officials.

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During the period from July to December, Paxton made payments to four law firms or lawyers involved in the trial:

- \$1.8 million to Stone Hilton, PLLC
- \$203,000 to Scheef & Stone LLP
- \$250,000 to Cogdell Law Firm PLLC
- \$100,000 to Anthony Buzbee, Paxton's lead lawyer

Buzbee clarified that the \$100,000 allocated to him was solely for expenses, stating that his firm recently billed Paxton for hours worked on the case.

Impeachment Trial Details

The impeachment trial focused on allegations from former top deputies that Paxton abused his office to assist a wealthy friend and donor, Nate Paul. These former deputies had filed a whistleblower lawsuit against Paxton in 2020.

Despite Paxton and his allies pressing for more transparency regarding the total impeachment costs, the House has disclosed over \$4 million in expenses related to the proceedings. State Rep. Andrew Murr, R-Junction, who chaired the House board of impeachment managers, defended the expenditure, emphasizing its significance for the future of Texas' governance rooted in trust and transparency.

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Continuing Legal Battles

Paxton's legal challenges are far from over. He and three top aides have been ordered to sit for depositions in the whistleblower lawsuit in Travis County, which resumed after the impeachment trial. Additionally, Paxton is scheduled to go to trial in April on securities fraud charges dating back to 2015, from his time before assuming the position of attorney general.

Correction: Jan. 18, 2024, at 10:43 a.m.: A previous version of this story inaccurately included the total money for a political law firm not involved in the impeachment case in Paxton's impeachment legal costs.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.