



contact@couragefound.org

www.couragefound.org | www.edwardsnowden.com

Sen. Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC, 20510

Friday August 1, 2014

Dear Senator Wyden,

Thank you for agreeing to accept this letter. As one of the most prominent proponents of reigning in and making transparent the NSA's broad powers, we felt it appropriate to bring our letter supporting Edward Snowden's protection and acknowledging the benefits of his disclosures to you. We trust this message will reach those it needs to, and appreciate your assistance in its distribution.

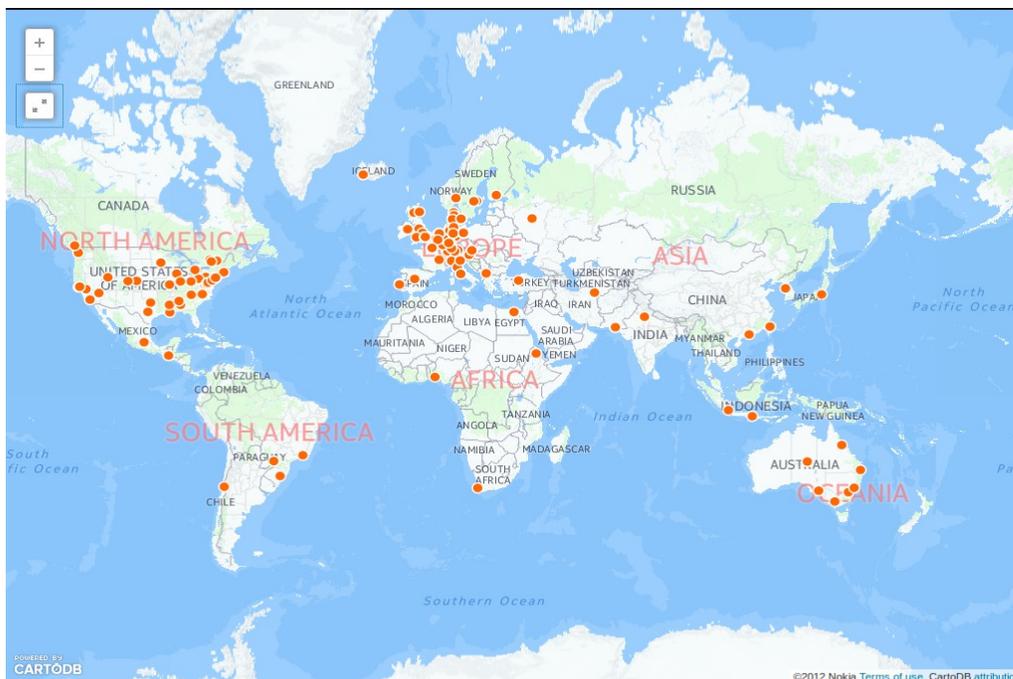
We are writing on behalf of Edward Snowden's supporters in the United States, to call on the government to provide a safe haven for Mr Snowden.

Courage runs Edward Snowden's official defence fund. Today marks a year since Edward Snowden was offered temporary asylum by the government of the Russian Federation, after a month stranded in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport.

Edward Snowden faces harsh prosecution and persecution in the United States for revealing the government's illegal spying to his fellow citizens. He faces three charges, including two under the 1917 Espionage Act. Under that law, written not with whistleblowers but with World War I spies in mind, Edward Snowden would not be able to present a public interest defence. He would face decades in prison and the possibility of unlawful treatment like that experienced by Chelsea Manning while awaiting trial under the Espionage Act.

In June this year, Courage launched a campaign to show that concern for Edward Snowden's safety resonates worldwide. We asked supporters to submit photos showing that they Stand With Snowden and that they want their governments to offer him protection. We promised to send a letter to the governments of the three countries where the response was greatest to ask them to respond to this call.

As of today, citizens from 39 countries have taken part in Courage's Stand With Snowden campaign - and the United States is one of the top three responding countries.



The American people, unlike their ostensibly representative politicians, want to see Mr Snowden protected from the prosecution their government threatens. If the US refuses to drop its charges against Mr Snowden, we ask the Obama Administration to not prevent Russia from protecting him or threaten them with retaliation for doing so.

Edward Snowden's revelations impact every country in the world but primarily document the US National Security Agency's mass, unchecked, and unconstitutional surveillance around the globe.

Thanks to Edward Snowden, Americans learned that the NSA taps into and works with major private tech companies, including Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, AOL and Apple, to collect and store massive amounts of information documenting Americans' digital communications.

Thanks to Edward Snowden, we know that the NSA cooperates with the rest of the Five Eyes (Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand) to collect and share enormous amounts of signals intelligence on nearly every other country in the world, without their citizens' knowledge or consent.

Edward Snowden's courageous whistleblowing has enabled American politicians to respond to the revelations. Congress members have initiated nearly 30 legislative proposals to curb the NSA's funding, authority and collection, and at least six Constitutional challenges have been launched. The House of Representatives voted to defund two major NSA surveillance programs: searches of Americans' communications without warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and mandates for technological companies to facilitate electronic surveillance. Senator Mark Udall, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and scores of privacy and tech companies have called for investigations into the NSA's authorities and spying.

Three investigations into surveillance programs and capabilities have been announced in the US since June 2013. The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) issued a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper requesting updated procedures and guidelines on privacy and civil liberties protections. While top officials attempt to distract the public with claims of potential harm without any evidence, the impact and importance of Mr Snowden's revelations are continuing and undeniable.

American citizens have demonstrated their gratitude for Edward Snowden's contribution to a more informed democracy and their desire to see him protected. Opinion polls (Quinnipiac University, 2014) show that a majority of Americans increasingly believe that Mr Snowden is a whistleblower rather than someone who has harmed the United States. Even former NSA and CIA director Michael Hayden recently commented that Mr Snowden "blew the whistle" on the NSA's bulk collection of phone records. The Obama Administration does a disservice to the majority of Americans by ignoring their will, by prosecuting Mr Snowden rather than acknowledging the unaccountability and abuse that he exposed.

Mr Snowden's courageous public service has been recognised by several international awards and Nobel Peace Prize nominations in two consecutive years.

Americans have tangibly benefited from Mr Snowden's exposure of the NSA's spying. They now know which companies have complied with the NSA's demands for bulk data, and in response, many of those companies have begun to be more transparent about their practices. More Americans are using encryption to communicate online.

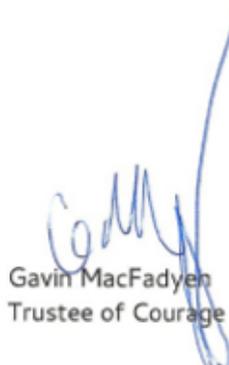
Edward Snowden would like to return home to the United States, but the abusive Espionage Act and embarrassed American politicians stoking fears of damage prevent him from being able to receive a fair trial if he did. To drop the Espionage Act charges against him and to formally acknowledge his invaluable contributions to Americans' understanding of their government would both save Edward Snowden from persecution but also show future Snowdens that exposing wrongdoing is conscientious and appreciated.

Thank you for passing on this message.

Yours sincerely,



Julian Assange
Trustee of Courage



Gavin MacFadyen
Trustee of Courage



Sarah Harrison
Acting Director of Courage

Notes: Quinnipiac University, 2014
<http://www.pollingreport.com/terror.htm>