

# Media Outlets Across Texas Highlight Haynes Boone First Amendment Victory

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October 28, 2025 Laura Prather, Catherine Robb, Michael Lambert, Reid Pillifant

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**PRACTICES** Anti-SLAPP and First Amendment Rights, Government and Public Policy, Litigation, Media and Entertainment Litigation

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A team of First Amendment Rights attorneys in Austin [secured a major victory](#) on behalf of a coalition of booksellers, authors and publishers in *Book People, Inc. v. Wong*, after the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas held that Texas House Bill 900 (the READER Act) is unconstitutional.

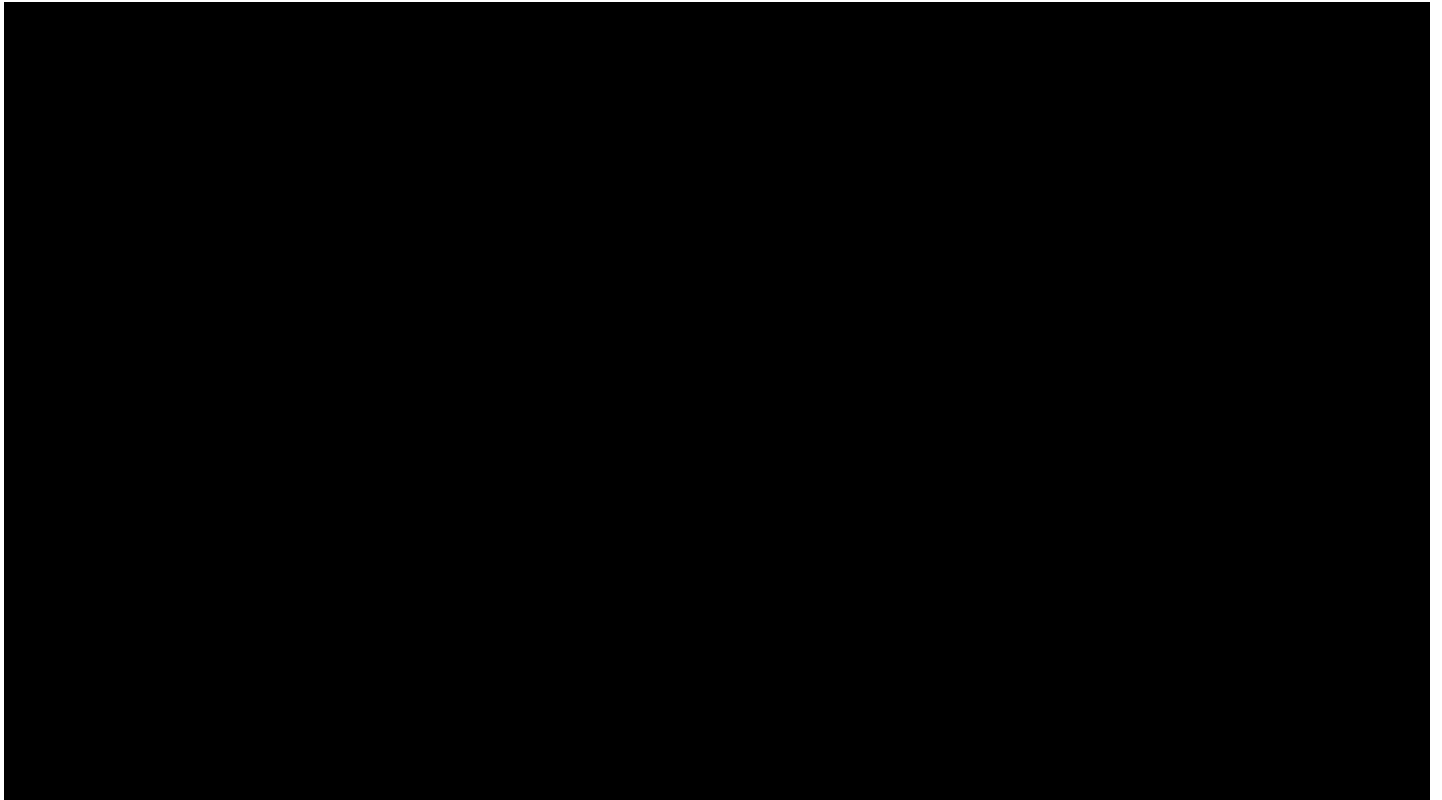
The team, consisting of Media Law Practice Group Chair [Laura Lee Prather](#), Counsel [Catherine Robb](#) and Associates [Michael Lambert](#) and [Reid Pillifant](#), received widespread media coverage throughout the state of Texas following the decision. View the highlights of the victory below.

## [The Texas Lawyer](#) | Court Strikes Down Parts of Texas Law That Limited 'Explicit' Book Sales to Schools

*Prather told The Texas Lawyer that during the discovery process, they deposed representatives of the Texas Education Agency and asked them to use their own 16-step system to rate a book but they were unable to do so—a point Judge Albright cited in his ruling.*

*“The importance of this ruling is that it signifies that even when there are lofty goals that the Legislature is trying to pursue, they cannot trample people’s constitutional rights in doing so,” she said.*

## [ABC Austin](#) | Federal Judge Rules Texas Law Mandating Book Stores Rate Titles for Sexual Content Unconstitutional



*“One of the biggest problems with these ratings is they didn’t factor in the literary, artistic or political or scientific value of these works, and so they would reach into constitutionally protected works, classics that are part of our educational system could be removed from the bookshelves without any right of review,” Prather said.*

*Booksellers would have had to apply a 16-step analysis to rate books for school libraries. In his ruling, Albright said the guidelines are not clear and concluded they are “void for vagueness in combination and in their applications.”*

*“The court said that was an unconstitutional prior restraint, that they shouldn’t have to adopt again somebody else’s views of what a book is rated just to continue to sell books,” Prather said.*

**[The Texas Lawbook](#) | Texas Book Review Law ‘Unconstitutionally Compels Speech, is Void for Vagueness, and is an Unconstitutional Prior Restraint’**

*Haynes Boone partner Laura Lee Prather, who represented the group of book vendors challenging the law, praised the ruling in a statement issued to The Lawbook.*

*“This victory protects the freedom to read and the right of private citizens to decide what ideas and stories they want to explore,” she said. “The court’s ruling not only protects the First Amendment rights of booksellers in Texas but also sets an important precedent for other states considering similar laws. It’s a strong reminder that the First Amendment prohibits government-imposed ratings and continues to protect open access to books and ideas.”*

**[San Antonio Express-News](#) | Texas Law Requiring Bookstores To Rate Titles for Sexual Content Ruled Unconstitutional**

*Laura Lee Prather, an attorney for the plaintiffs, celebrated the ruling.*

*"Today's decision is a victory for protecting the First Amendment rights of booksellers," said Prather, chair of the Media Law Practice Group at Haynes Boone. "The READER Act would have imposed impossible obligations on booksellers and limited access to literature, including classic works, for students across Texas."*

[Texas Public Radio](#) | **Federal Judge Says Texas Law Requiring Book Ratings Is Unconstitutional**  
Prather was featured in an interview with Bill Zeeble across radio stations in Texas.

[Law360](#) | **Texas Book Rating Law Struck Down As Unconstitutional**

*"The READER Act would have imposed impossible obligations on booksellers and limited access to literature, including classic works, for students across Texas," Prather said. "We are proud to stand up for free expression and the First Amendment rights of all Texans."*

The news of the victory was also featured in [Bloomberg](#) and [KDFW](#).