

## Prather in Texas Lawbook: Prather's Free Speech Advocacy Spans Capitol to Courtroom

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January 11, 2024 Laura Prather

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**PRACTICES** Intellectual Property Litigation, Media and Entertainment Litigation, Intellectual Property, Litigation

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Haynes Boone Partner [Laura Prather](#), the chair of the [Media Law Practice Group](#), was profiled in a *Texas Lawbook* feature. Read excerpts from the feature below:

First Amendment lawyer Laura Lee Prather's work to shape public policy on free speech and open government issues is unparalleled in Texas. She has helped pass laws protecting reporters from being subpoenaed in court cases, boosted publishers' defamation defenses and become an international expert on anti-SLAPP laws designed to protect journalists from lawsuits aimed at stifling their voices.

Prather heads the media law practice group at Haynes Boone and has a base of longtime clients who praise her legal knowledge and ability to dissect a case early on and offer cost-saving options.

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Even for the perpetually productive Prather, 2023 stood out. In January, she finished a four-month project in Paris as a Fulbright Scholar, where she researched how meritless lawsuits have affected human rights in the European Union, studied global freedom of expression issues and helped with ongoing efforts to get an anti-SLAPP law passed in the EU and United Kingdom.

Upon returning to Austin, she jumped into the 88th legislative session on behalf of FOIFT and her paid lobbying clients, the Texas Association of Broadcasters and Texas Press Association.

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Outside of the Capitol, Prather worked on high-profile cases representing news organizations seeking public information about the Uvalde school shooting and mounted a challenge by a group of booksellers to a new law requiring them to rate books sold to public schools for sexual content.

She put together a coalition of 26 news organizations, publishers and free speech think tanks from across the political spectrum to file an amicus brief in a case that tested the Tyler district attorney's criminal prosecution of Netflix on child pornography charges over its distribution of a French film. On Dec. 18, a panel of the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in *Netflix v. Babin* upheld the trial court's preliminary injunction against the state prosecution.

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Prather is the mother of four: two older daughters in college and fraternal twins who are still in elementary school. She met her husband, Fred Hartman, a publisher of small-town newspapers, at the Capitol when both were working on the reporter's privilege bill in 2005. They married five years later.

This December, as usual, Prather's kitchen is filled with the smell of chocolate and toffee as she makes candy gifts for 250 clients and friends. "It's a massive undertaking but I love it and the whole family gets involved," said Prather.

Asked about balancing work and family life, Prather says being a lawyer "is oddly a really good mommy job" because it offers flexibility to manage her schedule so she can attend school functions. The twins went with her to Paris and attended school there for a semester.

To read the full feature in *Texas Lawbook*, click [here](#).