

Laura Prather talks with Austin TV News Station About Legal Risks with Negative Online Reviews

By Laura Lee Prather | April 18, 2019

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Haynes Boone Partner [Laura Prather](#) talked with an ABC TV News affiliate in Austin about important precautions to consider before posting negative online reviews of businesses.

Prather, head of the firm's Media Law Practice Group, weighed in on the backlash an Austin restaurant suffered after implementing an optional 3% surcharge to help pay for employees' health insurance. The restaurant has received thousands of negative reviews on websites like Yelp and Open Table.

Below are excerpts:

"Reviewers need to absolutely be careful when posting reviews of businesses," said Laura Prather, a first amendment attorney.

Prather specializes in defamation cases. She said if you're going to post reviews of businesses, especially negative ones, you need to follow these rules:

"What they say needs to be based on their own personal experience, it needs to be truthful, they shouldn't embellish and if they have an opinion, they should explain what the basis of that opinion is," Prather said.

Prather also said reviewers need to be careful about what they click on as well. Sometimes, websites have terms and conditions that have the reviewer signing a non-disparagement agreement without them knowing it.

To read an article about this report, click [here](#).