

Prather in The Monitor: Legal Fee Award Boosts Anti-SLAPP Law

By Laura Lee Prather | October 16, 2017

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The Monitor newspaper in McAllen quoted Haynes Boone Partner [Laura Lee Prather](#) on a case in which a defamation defendant was awarded legal fees under the Texas anti-SLAPP law.

A former lawyer had sued AIM Media Texas, owner of *The Monitor*, over a story about a Texas Supreme Court ruling. But state District Judge Luis Singleterry in Hidalgo County ruled that the media defendants were entitled to \$120,842 in legal fees under the Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation law, which aims to deter frivolous lawsuits that threaten First Amendment rights.

The Monitor reported that Prather, who was instrumental in getting the 2011 law passed, said the order was especially noteworthy considering how uncommon such decisions are in the Valley.

“The perception generally is that courts in the Valley are less inclined to award attorney’s fees to defendants in lawsuits, and this is possibly the first case in which a Hidalgo County court has done so,” said Prather, who was not involved in the case. “People shouldn’t be filing meritless lawsuits against the media or others for exercising their constitutional right to free speech, and if they do, they could be subjected to making the recipient of their lawsuit whole by reimbursing them their legal fees.” ...

Awarding court and attorney fees to defendants in anti-SLAPP cases also helps raise awareness about the law, Prather said.

“They will likely think twice before doing this when they become aware of these decisions,” she added.

Excerpted from *The Monitor*. To read the full article, click [here](#).