Haynes Boone Secures New Win for Open Records Access in Uvalde School Shooting Case

By Laura Lee Prather, Reid Pillifant | July 15, 2024

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In a victory for government transparency, a Texas judge sided with a coalition of media organizations represented by Haynes Boone and is compelling the release of crucial records related to the tragic 2022 Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

The 38th Judicial District Court of Uvalde County granted Haynes Boone's motion for summary judgment. The ruling requires the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District (UCISD) and Uvalde County Sheriff's Office to release all responsive documents within 20 days of the order, subject only to mandatory statutory redactions.

This latest decision marks a significant moment in the ongoing effort to uncover details about the law enforcement response to the tragedy that claimed 21 lives. The media coalition, which includes more than a dozen prominent news organizations such as the Texas Tribune, ABC News and The Associated Press, filed suit in 2022 after their open-records requests were repeatedly denied.

"This ruling is a pivotal step towards ensuring transparency and accountability," said Haynes Boone Media Litigation Chair Laura Prather. "The public deserves to know the full details of the response to this tragic event, and the information could be critical in preventing future tragedies."

Prather leads the legal effort for the media coalition with support from Associate Reid Pillifant.

The records sought include police body camera footage, 911 calls, emails, text messages, and other communications related to the shooting and subsequent investigation. These documents could provide crucial insights into the timeline of events and decision-making processes during the incident.

This is the second major win for the coalition. In June 2023, a similar victory in Austin state court required the Texas Department of Public Safety to release pertinent records. Texas DPS is currently appealing that ruling and delaying the release of more than two terabytes of data related to the investigation.

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