

## Laura Prather Featured as Free Speech Champion in Austin Business Journal's 2020 Profiles in Power

---

August 28, 2020 Laura Prather

---

**PRACTICES** Media and Entertainment Litigation, Litigation

---

Haynes Boone Partner [Laura Prather](#) is featured in the *Austin Business Journal's* "2020 Profiles in Power." In the special section, Prather discusses opportunities she has had in her legal career, advice to other women, and ways she has strengthened Haynes Boone's Media and Entertainment and First Amendment Litigation departments.

Here is an excerpt:

When it comes to defending freedom of speech and regular citizens' access to government records, you want Laura Prather in your corner.

Co-chair of the media practice group at law firm Haynes Boone, Prather is a statewide and nationally recognized expert on the First Amendment and what are known as anti-SLAPP laws, which aim to prevent frivolous free speech lawsuits.

To the delight of many journalists and government transparency advocates, Prather led an effort during the 2019 Texas Legislature that successfully fended off attempts to gut Texas' anti-SLAPP laws (the acronym stands for strategic lawsuit against public participation). She led the bipartisan Protect Free Speech Coalition through extended negotiations and meetings with lawmakers that culminated in a four-hour House committee hearing. The result: the preservation of the Texas Citizens Participation Act with stronger protections for media.

"Were it not for Laura's dogged approach and exemplary work ethic, the TCPA would no longer be available as a means of protection for Texas citizens against retaliatory lawsuits," wrote [Tom Williams](#), who nominated Prather for this award and is the other chair of the Haynes Boone media practice group.

In addition to her expertise on media law, Prather is Haynes Boone's lead attorney in legislative efforts. She is also executive director of the American Bar Association's Forum on Communications Law. She is past president of the Defense Council Section of the Media Law Resource Center and past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. Prather in 2019 received The American Lawyer's Tony Mauro Media Lawyer Award for advocating for legislation to strengthen First Amendment rights in Texas. She is also a fellow at the Society of Professional Journalists.

Outside work, Prather was a board member at public TV station KLRU for 12 years and before that was on the board of directors at the Children's Advocacy Center, the Colorado River Foundation and Lifeworks.

### **What has helped or hindered your career?**

Many factors past and present have helped to advance my legal career. I currently work for a law firm, Haynes Boone, that is tremendously supportive of my legislative work and sees the value in

what I do — oftentimes on a pro bono basis — to help preserve free speech rights. I have also had the pleasure of working with extraordinarily bright attorneys who have helped me learn my craft.

To read the full Q&A, click [here](#). (Subscription required)