

Free-Speech Advocate Laura Prather Named Finalist for Professional Excellence in Advocacy Awards

August 2, 2019 Laura Prather

PRACTICES Media and Entertainment Litigation, Litigation

Haynes Boone Partner [Laura Prather](#) has been named a finalist for the Professional Excellence in Advocacy Awards for her work to support the Protect Free Speech Coalition and the Texas Citizens Participation Act (TCPA).

The awards are given by Professional Women in Advocacy, an organization that promotes women in public policy. Prather is among the three finalists in the “Excellence in a State Issue Campaign” category. The award highlights women who have successfully impacted the outcome of state or local legislative or regulatory issues on behalf of a client, organization or favored cause. The finalists were selected by women working in the government relations, advocacy, and public affairs sectors.

The finalists will be recognized during an awards reception at the Professional Women in Advocacy Conference on Oct. 21 in Washington, D.C.

“In an age of political logjams, it was a major breakthrough — proof that the spirit of compromise is alive, and so is the opportunity for the little guy to hold his own against the giants,” Donnis Baggett, executive vice president of the Texas Press Association, said in support of the nomination. “It wouldn’t have happened without the Protect Free Speech Coalition, and the coalition wouldn’t have existed without the efforts of Laura Prather.”

A partner in the Litigation Practice Group in Haynes Boone’s Austin office, Prather who “has spent her entire career dedicated to the protection of free speech rights,” according to the nomination.

“Laura has changed the legal landscape for free speech rights in Texas,” the nomination continues. “There are few legal practitioners who exude as much passion for the rights of free speech and implement that in a way that benefits the First Amendment rights of our citizenry.”

Prather was instrumental in the passage of the three most significant pieces of First Amendment legislation in recent Texas history – the reporter’s privilege, the Texas Citizens Participation Act, and the Defamation Mitigation Act. Through her efforts, Prather both formed and led the coalitions in support of all three of these measures, making Texas the 37th state to pass a reporter’s privilege, the 28th state to adopt an Anti-SLAPP statute, and the 32nd state to enact a retraction statute. All three laws are designed to promote and protect free speech rights in Texas.

The Protect Free Speech Coalition advocacy campaign resulted in a law that updated the Texas Citizens Participation Act and maintained its crucial core free speech protections, said Kelley Shannon, executive director of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas.

“The power of the people of Texas prevailed,” Shannon said in support of Prather’s nomination.

Prather is listed in *Chambers USA*, Chambers and Partners, for First Amendment Litigation (Nationwide) (2017-2019). Earlier this year, Prather was Inducted into the “Heroes of the 50 States:

The State Open Government Hall of Fame" (2019).