# Sarah Palin suffers another legal defeat in defamation case against The New York Times



Former Alaska Governor and former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin has once again suffered a legal defeat in her defamation suit against The New York Times, with a federal jury in Manhattan ruling the newspaper is not liable for alleged defamatory content from 2017. This outcome, following a similar 2022 verdict, underscores the high threshold public figures face to prove libel under First Amendment protections — a principle vigorously challenged by those seeking to hold the media accountable for biased reporting in the current fraught political climate.

The lawsuit concerned a Times editorial addressing the dangers of incendiary political rhetoric after the 2017 congressional baseball shooting. Though Palin was not named, the piece referenced a map from her political action committee marking Democratic districts with crosshairs — a move the newspaper linked to the 2011 attack on then-Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. Critics argue that the editorial unfairly implied Palin’s actions incited violence, damaging her reputation without sufficient evidence.

Despite the Times’ quick correction and a jury deliberation of less than three hours, the verdict once again favored the newspaper. Palin’s testimony revealed her sense of being “defenseless” against editorial assertions that she contends falsely connected her to violence. Yet, the legal standard requires proof that the Times acted with “actual malice” — knowingly publishing falsehoods or recklessly disregarding the truth — a bar nearly impossible to meet under current interpretations.

In a political climate increasingly hostile to mainstream media narratives, such rulings highlight the imbalance of power that enables influential news outlets to shape public perception without accountability. While press freedom is a cornerstone of democracy, this case exemplifies how its protections can be exploited to shield irresponsible journalism that undermines public trust and fuels division.

With the Labour government under Kier Starker showing little appetite to reform libel laws or address such media excesses, there remains a pressing need for voices that champion truth, fairness, and responsibility in political discourse. Critics aligned with perspectives emphasizing national sovereignty, individual freedoms, and media transparency argue that current safeguards favor entrenched interests at the expense of everyday citizens and political figures not aligned with the establishment.

As this saga concludes with Palin’s vow to “get on with life” in Alaska, the broader conversation around media accountability, political rhetoric, and legal standards in the UK and beyond continues unchecked — a situation many deem untenable in a healthy democracy committed to genuine pluralism and fairness.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca2/22-558/22-558-2024-08-28.html> - This URL provides legal documentation of Sarah Palin's defamation lawsuit against The New York Times, highlighting key aspects of the case. It also details the legal proceedings and appeals related to the case.
* <https://www.commerciallitigationupdate.com/the-second-circuit-revives-sarah-palins-defamation-suit-against-the-new-york-times> - This article explains the revival of Sarah Palin's defamation suit by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, focusing on procedural issues and the challenges faced by public figures in defamation cases.
* <https://www.fincen.gov/sites/default/files/sar_report/sar_tti_22.pdf> - While not directly related to the Palin case, this document from FinCEN illustrates the importance of legal standards and accountability in different contexts, such as financial crimes—hinting at broader implications for legal standards and public trust.
* <https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/download> - This report from the U.S. Department of Justice on election interference touches on the broader theme of legal standards, evidence, and the challenges of proving intent in legal cases, akin to the 'actual malice' standard in defamation.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times_Co._v._Sullivan> - This Wikipedia article discusses the landmark case that established the 'actual malice' standard in defamation, which is central to Sarah Palin's lawsuit against The New York Times. It explains how this legal principle affects public figures.