



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 29, 2011

Ms. Sarah W. Langlois  
Ogden, Gibson, Brooks, Longoria & Hall, L.L.P.  
Attorney for North Forest Independent School District  
1900 Pennzoil South Tower  
711 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2011-12494

Dear Ms. Langlois:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 428273.

The North Forest Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for four categories of information pertaining to investigations of the requestor's client. You state the district has released some responsive information to the requestor. You also state the district does not have information responsive to a portion of the request.<sup>1</sup> You claim the remaining responsive information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.107 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information, a portion of which is a representative sample.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body that receives a request for information to create information that did not exist when the request was received or to create information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 563 at 8 (1990), 555 at 1-2 (1990).

<sup>2</sup>We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

You claim the submitted information is excepted under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Section 552.103 provides in part:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). The district has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show that the section 552.103(a) exception is applicable in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the district received the request for information, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, no pet.); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.). The district must meet both prongs of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a). *See* Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990).

The question of whether litigation is reasonably anticipated must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See* Open Records Decision No. 452 at 4 (1986). To establish litigation is reasonably anticipated, a governmental body must provide this office with "concrete evidence showing that the claim that litigation may ensue is more than mere conjecture." *Id.* This office has stated that a pending complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the "EEOC") indicates litigation is reasonably anticipated. Open Records Decision Nos. 386 at 2 (1983), 336 at 1 (1982).

You state, and provide documentation showing, the requestor's client has filed an EEOC complaint against the district alleging discrimination based on race. You represent this complaint was pending on the date the request was received by the district. Based on your representations and our review of the submitted EEOC complaint, we agree the district reasonably anticipated litigation on the date it received the present request for information. Additionally, upon review of the submitted information and consideration of the district's arguments, we find the district has established that the submitted information is related to the

EEOC complaint for purposes of section 552.103. Thus, we agree the district may withhold the submitted information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup>

We note, however, once the information at issue has been obtained by all parties to the anticipated litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to the information. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). Thus, any information at issue that has either been obtained from or provided to all opposing parties in the anticipated litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a) and must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has concluded or is no longer anticipated. *See* Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Bob Davis  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSD/agn

Ref: ID# 428273

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.