



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 23, 2012

Ms. Candace Jones
Scurry County District Clerk
1806 25th Street, Suite 402
Snyder, Texas 79549-2530

OR2012-04297

Dear Ms. Jones:

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# 453639.

The 132nd Judicial District Court (the "court") received a request for records related to three specified cause numbers. You contend the court is not required to respond to this request for information. We have considered your arguments.

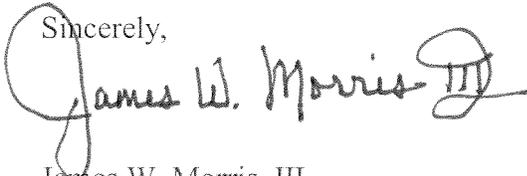
Although the Act is applicable to information "collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by a governmental body," *id.* § 552.002(a)(1), the Act's definition of "governmental body" "does not include the judiciary." Gov't Code § 552.003(1)(B). Information "collected, assembled, or maintained by or for the judiciary" is not subject to the Act but instead is "governed by rules adopted by the Supreme Court of Texas or by other applicable laws and rules." *Id.* § 552.0035(a); *cf.* Open Records Decision No. 131 (1976) (applying statutory predecessor to judiciary exclusion under Gov't Code § 552.003(1)(B) prior to enactment of Gov't Code § 552.0035). The present request is for information maintained by the court. Therefore, we conclude the requested information is not subject to the Act and need not be released in response to this request for information.¹

¹We note records of the judiciary may be public under other sources of law. *See* Gov't Code § 29.007(d)(4) (complaints filed with municipal court clerk); *id.* § 29.007(f) (municipal court clerks shall perform duties prescribed by law for county court clerk); Local Gov't Code § 191.006 (records belonging to office of county clerk shall be open to public unless access restricted by law or court order); *see also* *Star-Telegram, Inc. v. Walker*, 834 S.W.2d 54, 57 (Tex. 1992) (documents filed with courts are generally considered public and must be released); Attorney General Opinions DM-166 (1992) at 2-3 (public has general right to inspect and copy judicial records), H-826 (1976); Open Records Decision No. 25 (1974).

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, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James W. Morris III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a stylized "III".

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/em

Ref: ID# 453639

c: Requestor