



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 7, 2012

Ms. Elizabeth L. White
Associate Attorney
Ross, Banks, May, Cron & Cavin, P.C.
2 Riverway, Suite 700
Houston, Texas 77056-1918

OR2012-12331

Dear Ms. White:

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# 461441 (PIR #2039; Reference No. 3607-1).

The League City Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information related to a specified case number. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential. You claim section 552.101 in conjunction with section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code, which provides in part:

¹We note you also raise section 552.023 of the Government Code, which is not an exception to disclosure under subchapter C of the Act. Instead, section 552.023 provides a right of access to a person or a person's authorized representative to information related to the person that a governmental body would be required to withhold from the public to protect the person's privacy. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a).

(a) The following information is confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]:

- (1) a report of abuse, neglect, or exploitation made under this chapter;
- (2) the identity of the person making the report; and
- (3) except as provided by this section, all files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation made under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

(b) Confidential information may be disclosed only for a purpose consistent with this chapter and as provided by [the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”)] or investigating state agency rule and applicable federal law.

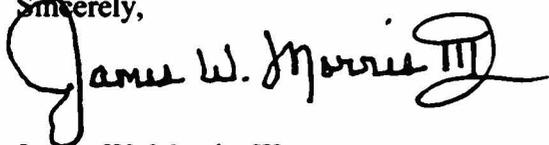
Hum. Res. Code § 48.101. Section 48.051 of the Human Resources Code provides that “a person having cause to believe that an elderly or disabled person is in the state of abuse, neglect, or exploitation” shall report certain prescribed information to the [DFPS] or another appropriate state agency. *Id.* § 48.051(a). The only entities authorized to conduct an investigation under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code are the DFPS and certain other state agencies, depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident. *See id.* §§ 48.151, .152, .252, .301. Therefore, reports made to a police department are generally not subject to section 48.101. The submitted report reflects it was created by the department. You explain, however, and the report itself also reflects the department referred the matter to the Adult Protective Services Division (“APS”) of the DFPS. Thus, because the legislature expressly made all information used by the APS in its investigations under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code confidential, the submitted report is confidential under section 48.101. *See id.* § 48.101(a)(3). Such information must not be released to the public, except for a purpose consistent with chapter 48 and as provided by a department or investigating state agency rule or federal law. *See id.* § 48.101(b); *but see id.* § 48.101(c)-(f) (permitting release of confidential information in certain circumstances). You do not indicate, nor does it otherwise appear, that any exception to confidentiality is applicable in this instance. Therefore, based on your representations and our review, we conclude the department must withhold the submitted report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code.²

²As we are able to make this determination, we need not address the other exception you claim.

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, stylized initial "J" and a distinct "III" at the end.

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

JWM/tch

Ref: ID# 461441

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)