



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

July 23, 2013

Mr. Keith R. Bradford  
Assistant County Attorney  
Nacogdoches County Attorney's Office  
101 West Main Street, Room 230  
Nacogdoches, Texas 75961

OR2013-12630

Dear Mr. Bradford:

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# 498803.

The Nacogdoches County Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3 (the "justice of the peace") received a request for a specified autopsy report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note 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." Gov't Code § 552.002(a)(1). However, the Act's definition of "governmental body" "does not include the judiciary." *Id.* § 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). You state the instant request is for records currently in the possession of the

justice of the peace. Therefore, we conclude the requested information is not subject to the Act and need not be released in response to this request for information.<sup>1</sup>

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Sean Nottingham  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

SN/tch

Ref: ID# 498803

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>1</sup>As we are able to make this determination, we need not address your argument against disclosure. We note records of the judiciary also 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).