

Date

Faye Morrison
P. O. Box 66614
Baton Rouge, LA 70896

Re: Ethics Board Docket No. 2016-318

Dear Ms. Morrison:

The Louisiana Board of Ethics, at its May 20, 2016 meeting, considered your request for an advisory opinion regarding whether you, as an employee of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (Department), would be required to disclose a reimbursement from the FBI of travel related expenses incurred in connection with attending the annual FBI CODIS meeting. You provided the following background information for consideration in connection with your request:

You are currently employed with the Department as an Attorney 3 assigned to the Louisiana State Police (State Police), and your job duties include representing the State Police Crime Lab. You, as well as the other legal representatives of State CODIS Administrators, have been invited to attend the annual FBI CODIS meeting in Norman, OK, to discuss the constitutional privacy issues that may arise with the use of Rapid DNA collection and testing. The FBI will provide meal vouchers and reimbursement of travel and lodging expenses to all of the legal representatives of the State CODIS Administrators. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §531, the FBI is part of the United States Department of Justice.

The Board concluded, and instructed me to inform you, that the Code of Governmental Ethics would not prohibit you from receiving meal vouchers and reimbursement from the FBI of travel and lodging expenses incurred in connection with attending the annual FBI CODIS meeting, nor would you be required to file a disclosure affidavit. La. R.S. 42:1111A prohibits a public servant from receiving anything of economic value, other than compensation and benefits from the governmental entity to which she is duly entitled, for the performance of the duties and responsibilities of her office or position. However, La. R.S. 42:1123(41) provides an exception to the prohibitions set forth in La. R.S. 42:1111A, which allows the acceptance by a public servant of complimentary admission to, lodging reasonably related to, and reasonable transportation to and from an educational or professional development seminar or conference held in any state of the US or Canada, provided that (1) the public servant is requested or invited to attend by the sponsoring nonprofit organization, (2) the sponsor is not a person seeking to have legislation passed, (3) the seminar or conference is related to the public service of the

servant and (4) the public servants agency head approves the acceptance, provided an affidavit is filed with the Board of Ethics within sixty days after such acceptance. Since the FBI is part of the federal government, it would not present a violation of the Code if you receive meal vouchers and reimbursement from the FBI of travel and lodging expenses incurred in connection with attending the annual FBI CODIS meeting. Furthermore, you would not be required to file a disclosure affidavit in accordance with La. R.S. 42:1123(41).

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as set forth herein. Changes to the facts as presented may result in a different application of the provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics. The Board issues no opinion as to past conduct or as to laws other than the Code of Governmental Ethics. If you have any questions, please contact me at (800) 842-6630 or (225) 219-5600.

Sincerely,

LOUISIANA BOARD OF ETHICS

Vivian Haley Williams
For the Board

DRAFT
THIS IS NOT AN OPINION OF THE BOARD OF
ETHICS