



## Edit Referral

### H-24-380 Referral Information

**Hotline ID:** H-24-380

**Date of Submission:** 8/29/2024

**Entity Type:** Local

**Entity Category Type:** County

**Entity:** Jefferson County

**Sub Entity Name:**

**Category:** Contract/Agreements

**1-2 sentence description of concern:** Retroactive application of the "Silenced No More Act" prohibiting non-disparagement provisions in severance agreements in the case of Jefferson County Administrator Philip Morley, who resigned abruptly in 2021 and was awarded a \$70,000 severance that included a non-disparagement agreement.

**Report Issued:** No

**Reporting Type:** No Action Needed

**Report Number:**

**Investigation Contracted:** No

**Contract Number:**

**Contract Name:**

**Billing Time Code:**

**Costs:**

**Public Records Request:** No

**Flag For Annual Report:** No

**Substantiated:** No

**ARRA:** No

**Action:** Closed

**Hotline Contact:**

**cc:**

**Referral Date:**

**Action Taken:** No

**Response Date:**

**Report Date:**

**Follow Up Date:**

**Date Closed:** 8/29/2024

**H-24-380 Contact Information**

**Hotline ID:** H-24-380 **Date of Submission:** 8/29/2024

**Submission Method:** Web

**Submission Type:** **Staff:**

**Author(Last, First):**

**Address:**

**City:** **State:** WA **Zip:**

**Home Phone:**

**Work Phone:**

**Mobile Phone:**

**Email:**

**Contact Preference:**

**Waived Confidentiality:** No

## **H-24-380 Referral Details**

### **Hotline ID:**

H-24-380

### **What state or local organization is involved?**

### **Please identify the specific concerns you are hoping the audit will address.**

Retroactive application of the "Silenced No More Act" prohibiting non-disparagement provisions in severance agreements in the case of Jefferson County Administrator Philip Morley, who resigned abruptly in 2021 and was awarded a \$70,000 severance that included a non-disparagement agreement.

### **Please provide a detailed description of the assertion or outstanding achievement, including who, when, where, what, how and how much.**

In 2021, Jefferson County administrator Philip Morley resigned, but was awarded a \$70,000 severance package which included a "non-disparagement clause." Effective June 9, 2022, non-disparagement clauses are illegal in Washington State. Per a local news article (link below), "Morley's separation agreement also contains a mutual "non-disparagement clause." Under the agreement, neither Morley nor the county can make disparaging comments about Morley's employment, his termination, the agreement and "discussions or negotiations related to this agreement." The contract also sets out provisions that neither side take legal action against the other from his time as a county employee. Future disputes could be resolved through binding arbitration, if necessary. [...] The agreement also said it would be kept separate from Morley's personnel file, "along with any documents describing his termination as an involuntary termination, any documents related to related to the alleged reasons for Morley's termination of employment that could suggest otherwise, along with a document reflecting his resignation."" Concerns: (a) per the "Silenced No More Act" these documents must be made public; (b) the terms of Mr. Morley's employment specified that a severance payment would be due upon termination, however, severance was issued, and his termination was classified, as a voluntary resignation. This is alarming. Sources: (1) <https://www.ptleader.com/stories/morley-gets-severance-package-of-70k-plus,75320> (2) <https://www.peninsuladailynews.com/news/longtime-county-administrator-abruptly-resigns-in-jefferson-county/>

### **How did this issue come to your attention?**

Researching the structure of county governance and past county administrators in the area.

### **What employee(s), contractors, etc., were involved in the assertion or achievement? Please include employee titles if possible.**

Philip Morley, former Jefferson County Administrator. Jefferson County Commissioners Kate Dean, Greg Brotherton, and Heidi Eisenhour

### **Please provide the names of any witnesses to the assertion or achievement, if possible.**

### **Please provide any additional details or comments that would help us understand your assertion or achievement.**

Please make findings public. The residents of Jefferson County have not been offered an honest explanation for the administrators departure or justification for \$70,000 of tax-payer funds being used for a voluntary resignation.

H-24-380  
Activity  
Log

Hotline ID: H-24-380

Entry Date ▼	Log Entry
08/29/2024	Referral updated by 'JEANA Gillis (gillisj)'. Hotline Referral closed by JEANA Gillis (gillisj) because no action was needed. Action changed from (not set) to Closed.

To attach a screen shot hold down the "alt" key and then click the "Print Scrn" key on your keyboard. The PrintKey window will appear. Click on the "Save" button and save the screenshot to your computer. Close the PrintKey window. Click on one of the "Browse" buttons below. Locate your screen shot, select it and then click the "Open" button.

To add more than 3 documents click the "Add" button. Only the following file types are allowed: zip, gif, tif, jpg, jpeg, png, bmp, doc, pdf, ppt, txt, xls, rpt, mdb, msg.

Attachment

No records to display.

Choose File

No file chosen

Clear