



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 14, 2005

Mr. Robert R. Ray
Assistant City Attorney
City of Longview
P. O. Box 1952
Longview, Texas 75606-1952

OR2005-06245

Dear Mr. Ray:

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# 227994.

The City of Longview (the "city") received a request for a police report for an incident involving the requestor's daughter on April 22 or 23, 2005. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision" and encompasses information protected by statute. Section 58.007 of the Family Code makes confidential the law enforcement records of a juvenile who, on or after September 1, 1997, engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision. *See* Fam. Code § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision"). Section 58.007(c) provides:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapter B.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). We have reviewed the submitted information and conclude that it does not involve allegations that a juvenile engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision after September 1, 1997. Thus, the submitted information may not be withheld on the basis of section 552.101 in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code.

Section 552.101 also encompasses section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(a) The following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). After reviewing the submitted documents and the information provided by your office, we determine that the information at issue was not used or developed in an investigation of abuse or neglect under chapter 261. We therefore determine that section 261.201 is not applicable to the information at issue in this ruling. Accordingly, the city may not withhold any of this information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201.

We note that section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information if it (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and

injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. The submitted documents contain information that the city would normally have to withhold under common-law privacy. *See id.* We note, however, that as the parent of the minor with the privacy interest, the requestor has a special right of access to information that would ordinarily be withheld to protect her daughter's common-law privacy, and such information can not be withheld from her solely on that basis. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(b) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates or person's agent on grounds that information is considered confidential by privacy principles). Thus, under the present circumstances, none of the requested information may be withheld under section 552.101 on the basis of common-law privacy.

Additionally, the submitted information contains a Texas driver's license number, which you have marked. Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides in relevant part the following:

(a) Information is excepted from the requirement of Section 552.021 if the information relates to:

- (1) a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state; [or]
- (2) a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state[.]

Gov't Code § 552.130. We agree that the Texas driver's license number in the submitted documents is generally excepted under section 552.130. However, section 552.130 also protects an individual's privacy interests. The driver's license number is related to the requestor, and that requestor, therefore, has a special right of access to such information under section 552.023. Thus, you may not withhold the Texas driver's license number from the requestor. Therefore, as you raise no further exceptions to disclosure, the submitted information must be released to the requestor in its entirety.¹

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by

¹We note that some of the information that the city must release in this instance may be confidential by law. Here, however, the requestor has a special right of access under section 552.023 of the Government Code to her own and her minor daughter's information. Thus, should the city receive another request for this same information from a person who would not have a special right of access to it, the city should resubmit the same information and request another ruling.

filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

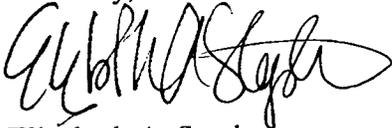
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Tex. Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Stephens
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

EAS/krl

Ref: ID#227994

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Lesli K. Rosser
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(w/o enclosures)