



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

January 20, 2006

Mr. Asem Eltiar  
Assistant Police Legal Advisor  
Arlington Police Department  
P.O. Box 1065  
Arlington, Texas 76004-1065

OR2006-00690

Dear Mr. Eltiar:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 243882.

The Paris Police Department (the "department") received a request for police reports from January 1 to January 5, 2004 pertaining to specified addresses. The department claims the information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered your claimed exception to disclosure and have reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201(a) of the Family Code 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, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Exhibit B was used or developed in an investigation of child abuse. Thus, we find that the information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. You have not indicated that the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, the information is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). Accordingly, the department must withhold Exhibit B from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code as information made confidential by law.

section 58.007 of the Family Code, which governs law enforcement records that relate to juvenile offenders whose conduct occurred on or after September 1, 1997.<sup>1</sup> Section 58.007 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). For purposes of section 58.007, "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2).

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<sup>1</sup>You assert that the submitted information is made confidential by section 51.14 of the Family Code. We note, however, that the Seventy-fourth Legislature repealed section 51.14 of the Family Code and replaced it with section 58.007 of the Family Code. We note also that the Seventy-fifth Legislature amended section 58.007 of the Family Code.

In this instance, Exhibit C-11 pertains to a theft by an unidentified person that occurred after September 1, 1997. Because the report fails to identify a juvenile suspect, section 58.007 does not make this information confidential, and it may not be withheld on this basis. The department must release Exhibit C-11. However, the department must withhold the remainder of Exhibit C under section 58.007.

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 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); *Texas 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 Office of the Attorney General 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. 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,



Yen-Ha Le  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

YHL/sdk

Ref: ID# 243882

Enc: Submitted documents

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(w/o enclosures)