



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 24, 2007

Ms. Catherine C. Kemp
Records Supervisor
City of Rowlett Police Department
P. O. Box 370
Rowlett, Texas 75030-0370

OR2007-00791

Dear Ms. Kemp:

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# 269760.

The Rowlett Police Department (the "department") received a request for information regarding a particular incident at a specified address. 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." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The type 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. Upon review, we find that submitted documents contain information that is considered highly intimate or embarrassing and is not of legitimate concern to the public. We therefore determine that the department must withhold

the information we have marked pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ The remaining information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the city may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

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).

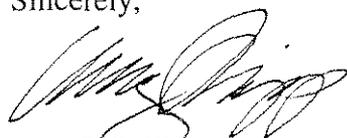
Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be

¹We note that the requestor may be the authorized representative of the individual at issue in the report. As such, the requestor may have a special right of access to the information that is excepted from disclosure. Thus, the information we have marked must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code unless the requestor is the individual's authorized representative, in which case it must be released. 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).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy L.S. Shipp', written in a cursive style.

Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/krl

Ref: ID# 269760

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Rhett Williams
6413 Whiteoak Drive
Rowlett, Texas 75089
(w/o enclosures)