



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

February 25, 2009

Ms. Katie Lentz
Williamson County Sheriff's Office
508 South Rock Street
Georgetown, Texas 78626

OR2009-02487

Dear Ms. Lentz:

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# 337629.

The Williamson County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for a specific incident report. You claim that the submitted 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. Section 552.101 encompasses section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part:

(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

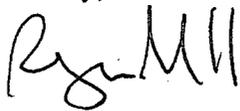
an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Upon review, we find that the submitted information consists of a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect of a child and was created pursuant to an abuse or neglect investigation as defined in section 261.001. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “child abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of section 261.201); *id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” as a person under 18 years of age). Therefore, this information falls within the scope of section 261.201. You have not indicated that the sheriff has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information. Therefore, we conclude that the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code and must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (construing predecessor statute).¹

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

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Ryan T. Mitchell
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RTM/eb

¹We note that the requestor, as parent of the child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, may have a right of access to certain abuse and neglect records maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Section 261.201(g) of the Family Code provides that DFPS, upon request and subject to its own rules, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section if DFPS has edited the information to protect the confidentiality of the identity of the person who made the report and any other person whose life or safety may be endangered by the disclosure. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(g).

Ref: ID# 337629

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)