



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 6, 2009

Deputy D. Huffman
Parker County Sheriff's Office
129 Hogle Street
Weatherford, Texas 76086

OR2009-14028

Dear Mr. Huffman:

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# 357561.

The Parker County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for an offense report and related information pertaining to a specified case. You state the sheriff has released some information to the requestor. You claim 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 as follows:

(a) Except as provided by Section 261.203, the following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act] 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.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Youth Commission, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

(l) Before a child or a parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (k), the custodian of the record or file must redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a victim or witness under 18 years of age unless that victim or witness is:

(A) the child who is the subject of the report; or

(B) another child of the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative requesting the information;

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under [the Act], or other law; and

(3) the identity of the person who made the report.

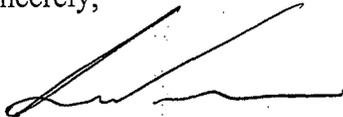
Act of April 10, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 20, § 1, sec. 261.201, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 113, 262, *amended by* Act of June 1, 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., ch. 779, §1, 2009 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 1965, 1965–66 (Vernon) (to be codified as an amendment to Fam. Code § 261.201(a)); Act of June 3, 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., ch. 1377, § 13, 2009 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 4324, 4327–28 (Vernon) (to be codified at Fam. Code § 261.201(k), (l)). We note the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse. *See* Fam. Code § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Upon review, we find the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. However,

the requestor is the mother of the child victim listed in the report, and the mother is not alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. In this instance, the sheriff may not withhold this report from this requestor under section 261.201(a). *Id.* § 261.201(k). We note, however, section 261.201(l)(3) states the identity of the reporting party must be withheld. *Id.* § 261.201(l)(3). Thus, the sheriff must withhold the reporting party's identity under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201(l)(3). The remaining information must be released to the requestor.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, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/eeg

Ref: ID# 357561

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹We note the remaining information being released contains confidential information regarding the alleged child victim to which the requestor has a right of access as the child's parent. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). If the sheriff receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, then the sheriff should again seek a decision from this office. We also note the requestor may have a right of access to certain abuse and neglect records maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS") pursuant to section 261.201(g) of the Family Code. *Id.* § 261.201(g).