



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 23, 2010

Ms. Yvette Aguilar
Assistant City Attorney
City of Corpus Christi
321 John Sartain
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

OR2010-04018

Dear Ms. Aguilar:

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# 374609.

The Corpus Christi Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified police report. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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 information made confidential by other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part:

(a) [T]he 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 . . . 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.

Fam. Code § 261.001(a), (k), (l). You state the information at issue contains a report of alleged or suspected abuse of a child. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of section 261.201); *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 falls within the scope of section 261.201. As you do not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the submitted information is generally confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986)* (addressing predecessor statute). As you acknowledge, however, the requestor is the parent of the child victim listed in the report. Further, the parent is not alleged to have committed

the alleged abuse. Therefore, department may not use section 261.201(a) to withhold this information from this requestor. Fam. Code § 261.201(k). Section 261.201(1)(3) states, however, the identity of the reporting party must be withheld. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(3). Thus, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201(1)(3). Additionally, section 261.201(1)(2) states any information that is excepted from required disclosure under the Act or other law may still be withheld from disclosure. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(2). You also assert portions of the remaining information are excepted from public disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Therefore, we will address your arguments under that exception.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information relates to an inactive investigation by the department for which the statute of limitations time has not passed. Additionally, you state the case is currently pending investigation by the Corpus Christi Independent School District Police Department, which asserts that release of this information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of the case. Based on these representations, we determine that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the information you have marked. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). Thus, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(1)(3) of the Family Code. The department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.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.

¹We note the remaining information contains confidential information regarding the child victim to which the requestor, as the child’s parent, has a right of access. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). If the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, then the department should again seek a decision from this office.

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,



Kate Hartfield
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/dls

Ref: ID# 374609

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)