



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

May 13, 2010

Ms. Yvette Aguilar
Assistant City Attorney
City of Corpus Christi
P.O. Box 9277
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9277

OR2010-06889

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# 379252.

The Corpus Christi Police Department (the "department") received a request for report numbers 1002140120 and 1002140100. You claim that some of submitted information is 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 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 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.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the department 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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k), (l). You state that report number 1002140120 pertains to alleged or suspected child abuse. Upon review, we agree report number 1002140120 was used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261. See Fam. Code § 261.001(1) (defining "abuse" for purposes of Family Code ch. 261); 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). Therefore, we find report number 1002140120 is generally confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code.

However, we note and you acknowledge, that the requestor is a parent of the child victim listed in the information. Further, this individual is not alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. As such, the department may not use section 261.201(a) to withhold report number 1002140120 from this requestor. *Id.* § 261.201(k). Section 261.201(1)(3), however, states the identity of the reporting party must be withheld. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(3). Thus, the department must withhold the reporting party's identity, which you have marked, under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201(1)(3). In addition, section 261.201(1)(2) provides that, notwithstanding section 261.201(k), 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 assert portions of report number 1002140120 are excepted from public disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Accordingly, we will address your argument under section 552.108 for this report, as well as the remaining information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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(a)(1) 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 that report numbers 1002140120 and 1002140100 directly relate to active criminal cases that are pending investigation or prosecution. You also state that the release of the information you have marked would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *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). Accordingly, the department may withhold the information you have marked in report numbers 1002140120 and 1002140100 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

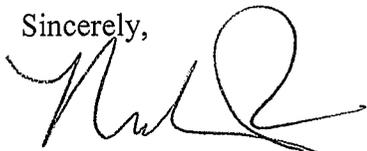
In summary, the department must withhold the identity of the reporting party in report number 1002140120 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(1)(3) of the Family Code. The department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released to this 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.

¹We note the 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 department receives another request for this particular 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nneka Kanu', written in a cursive style.

Nneka Kanu
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NK/jb

Ref: ID# 379252

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)