



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 17, 2010

Ms. Natasha Brooks
Assistant City Attorney
City of Midland
P.O. Box 1152
Midland, Texas 79702-1152

OR2010-07016

Dear Ms. Brooks:

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# 379481.

The Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified incident report. You claim that the requested 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. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code. Section 261.201 provides in 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, other than the [Texas 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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k)-(l). Upon review, we find the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of Fam. 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). We therefore conclude that the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201. However, the requestor is a parent of the child who is

listed as the victim of the alleged or suspected abuse and she is not alleged to have committed the abuse. Therefore, the submitted report may not be withheld from this requestor on the basis of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.201(k). However, section 261.201(1)(2) provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(2). You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Additionally, we note the information at issue is subject to section 58.007 of the Family Code. Accordingly, we will consider the applicability of these sections to the information at issue.

Section 552.101 also encompasses section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 provides:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and
- (3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

Id. § 58.007. The submitted report involves juvenile delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a) (defining “delinquent conduct” for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007); *see also id.* § 51.02(2) (defining a “child” for purposes of section 58.007 as a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). You do not inform us, and it does not appear, that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 of the Family Code apply. Accordingly, the submitted report must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

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,



Adam Leiber
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACL/rl

Ref: ID# 379481

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)