



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 8, 2010

Mr. Mark G. Mann
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

OR2010-10101

Dear Mr. Mann:

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# 385835 (Garland Identification Number GCA10-0339).

The Garland Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that some of the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under section 552.108 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."¹ Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides:

- (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

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k). Upon review, we find the submitted incident report was used or developed in an investigation by the department of alleged or suspected child abuse. *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). Accordingly, the submitted report is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. In this instance, the requestor is a parent of the child victim listed in the report, and the requestor is accused of committing the alleged abuse. As such, the submitted report may not be provided to the requestor pursuant to section 261.201(k). *Id.* § 261.201(k) (stating a child's parent may not obtain information that is subject to section 261.201(a) concerning reported abuse or neglect of the child if the parent is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect). You do not inform us, and we are not aware, that the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume no such rule exists. Accordingly, the department must withhold the submitted incident report in its entirety 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) (predecessor statute). We note that basic information is not released when information is being withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your 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_oi1.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,



Laura Ream Lemus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LRL/jb

Ref: ID# 385835

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)