



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 2, 2010

Ms. Michelle T. Rangel
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County Attorney's Office
301 Jackson Street, Suite 728
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2010-11596

Dear Ms. Rangel:

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# 388748.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for all information pertaining to a specified incident. You state some of the requested information will be released. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.136 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 in part as follows:

(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.

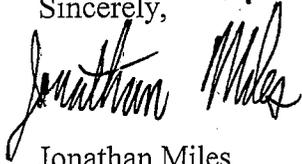
Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k). You state the submitted information pertains to the alleged abuse or neglect of a child. Upon review, we agree the submitted information pertains to an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect and consists of files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in such investigation. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” 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). Accordingly, we agree the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. Although the requestor’s client is a parent of the child victim listed in the submitted information, the requestor’s client is also alleged to have committed the suspected abuse or neglect. Consequently, the requestor does not have a right of access pursuant to section 261.201(k). You have not indicated the sheriff has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Therefore, the sheriff must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Miles". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Jonathan Miles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JM/eeg

Ref: ID# 388748

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)