



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 21, 2010

Ms. Lysia H. Bowling  
City Attorney  
City of San Angelo  
P.O. Box 1751  
San Angelo, Texas 76902

OR2010-19216

Dear Ms. Bowling:

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# 404420 (Case #2010-0015269).

The San Angelo Police Department (the "department") received a request for a police report pertaining to named individuals. You claim the 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. This exception encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as 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:

...

(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)(2)-(3). Upon review, we find the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation by the department of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261. *See id.* § 261.001(1)(E). Accordingly, we find the submitted information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code.

In this instance, however, the submitted information reveals the requestor is the mother of the child victim listed in the information at issue. Further, the requestor is not the individual alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. Thus, the department may not use subsection 261.201(a) to withhold the submitted information from this requestor. *Id.* § 261.201(k). However, subsection 261.201(l)(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(l)(2). Thus, we will address your argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the submitted information.

Subsection 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). Generally, a governmental body claiming subsection 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 the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon your representation and our review, we conclude the release of the submitted information 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, subsection 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

However, we note basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See Houston Chronicle*, 531 S.W.2d at 186-8; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The identity of the complainant is included in the basic information. *See* ORD 127 at 4. We note, however, subsection 261.201(l)(3) of the Family Code states the identity of the reporting party must be withheld prior to releasing the report to the parent. Fam. Code § 261.201(l)(3). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the submitted information under subsection 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code; however, in releasing the basic information, the department must withhold the identity of the complainant, which we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with subsection 261.201(l)(3) of the Family Code.<sup>1</sup>

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](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

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<sup>1</sup>We note the requestor has a special right of access to the information the department is releasing. Because such information is confidential with respect to the general public, if the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a ruling from this office.

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 "Sean Nottingham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" being more prominent than the last name "Nottingham".

Sean Nottingham  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

SN/vb

Ref: ID# 404420

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)