



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

March 23, 2011

Ms. Sheri Bryce Dye
Assistant District Attorney
Bexar County
300 Dolorosa, 4th Floor
San Antonio, Texas 78205

OR2011-03982

Dear Ms. Dye:

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# 412186.

The Bexar County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for all communications between Bexar County Jail administrators and the Texas Commission on Jail Standards during a specified time period.¹ You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, 552.107, 552.108, 552.109, and 552.115 of the Government Code.² We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the sheriff's obligations under the Act. Pursuant to section 552.301(e) of the Government Code, the governmental body is required to submit to this office within

¹As you have not submitted a copy of the written request for information, we take our description from your brief.

²Although you also raise section 552.022 of the Government Code, we note section 552.022 is not an exception to disclosure. Rather, section 552.022 enumerates categories of information that are not excepted from disclosure unless they are expressly confidential under other law. See Gov't Code § 552.022.

fifteen business days of receiving the request (1) general written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). As of the date of this letter, you have not submitted to this office comments explaining why the stated exceptions apply, a copy of the written request for information, or a copy or representative sample of the information requested. Consequently, we find the sheriff failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to submit to this office the information required in section 552.301(e) results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a governmental body may demonstrate a compelling reason to withhold information by showing the information is made confidential by another source of law or affects third party interests. *See* ORD 630. Because the sheriff has failed to comply with the requirements of the Act, the sheriff has waived all of its claimed discretionary exceptions to disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Although the sheriff also raises mandatory exceptions to disclosure, because you have not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the information confidential by law. We, therefore, conclude the sheriff must release the requested information to the requestor pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government 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 "Jennifer Burnett".

Jennifer Burnett
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/dls

Ref: ID# 412186

No submitted documents

c: Requestor