



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

June 6, 2011

Ms. Jessica Sangsvang  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2011-07997

Dear Ms. Sangsvang:

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# 424489 (City of Fort Worth Public Information Request No. 4787-09).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified cause number. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note, and you acknowledge, that the department did not comply with its deadlines under section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). The information at issue is therefore presumed to be subject to required public disclosure and must be released, unless there is a compelling reason to withhold any of the information. *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); Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). This statutory presumption can generally be overcome when information is confidential by law or third-party interests are at stake. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 630 at 3, 325 at 2 (1982). You claim that the submitted information is confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code. Because the application of section 552.101 can provide a compelling reason for non-disclosure under section 552.302, we will consider your claim under this exception.

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 former section 51.14(d) of the Family Code. Prior to its repeal by the Seventy-fourth Legislature, section 51.14(d) of the Family Code provided for the confidentiality of juvenile law enforcement records. *See* Open Records Decision No. 181 (1977) (concluding former section 51.14(d) of the Family Code excepts police reports which identify juvenile suspects or furnish basis for their identification). Law enforcement records pertaining to juvenile criminal conduct occurring before January 1, 1996, are governed by former section 51.14 of the Family Code, which was continued in effect for that purpose.<sup>1</sup> Former section 51.14 provided in relevant part as follows:

(d) Except as provided by Article 15.27, Code of Criminal Procedure, and except for files and records relating to a charge for which a child is transferred under Section 54.02 of this code to a criminal court for prosecution, the law-enforcement files and records are not open to public inspection nor may their contents be disclosed to the public, but inspection of the files and records is permitted by:

- (1) a juvenile court having the child before it in any proceeding;
- (2) an attorney for a party to the proceeding; and
- (3) law-enforcement officers when necessary for the discharge of their official duties.

Fam.Code § 51.14 (repealed 1995). In this instance, the submitted information pertains to an incident that occurred in 1994 and lists as an arrestee an individual who qualified as a "child" at the time of the offense. *See Id.* § 52.01 (defining "child" for purposes of title 3 of Family Code as individual who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). Further, the requestor does not fall within one of the categories in section 51.14(d) under which inspection of the records would be permitted. Therefore, we determine former section 51.14(d) is applicable to the submitted information. *See id.* § 51.04(a) (Title 3 covers cases involving delinquent conduct engaged in by a child). Thus, the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with former section 51.14 of the Family Code.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Act of May 27, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 262, § 100, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 2517, 2591.

<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against the disclosure of a portion of the submitted information.

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 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/em

Ref: ID# 424489

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)