



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

July 6, 2011

Mr. David K. Walker  
County Attorney  
Montgomery County  
207 W. Phillips, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2011-09560

Dear Mr. Walker:

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# 422804 (ORR# 2011-1722).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim 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.

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 the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. This office has found some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are generally highly intimate and embarrassing. See Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses,

operations, and physical handicaps). You claim the submitted information is confidential in its entirety pursuant to common-law privacy. Generally, only highly intimate information that implicates the privacy of an individual is withheld. However, in certain instances, where it is demonstrated that the requestor knows the identity of the individual involved, as well as the nature of certain incidents, the entire report must be withheld to protect the individual's privacy.

In this case, you have not demonstrated, and the submitted information does not reflect, a situation in which this information must be withheld in its entirety on the basis of common-law privacy. However, upon review, we have marked the portions of the submitted information that we find to be highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. The sheriff must withhold this marked information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. As you raise no other exceptions, the remaining information must be released.

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,



Bob Davis  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSD/eb

Ref: ID# 422804

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)