



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 8, 2011

Ms. Vivian J. Harvey
Assistant County Attorney
Henderson County
100 East Tyler Street, Room 100
Athens, Texas 75751

OR2011-09698

Dear Ms. Harvey:

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# 426737.

The Henderson County Sheriff's Department (the "sheriff") received a request for all information pertaining to the investigation of a named individual. 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 section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, 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 department 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). Because the requested information pertains to an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect, the information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See 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), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we determine the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). We note the requestor is an attorney representing the father of the child victim listed in the report. However, the submitted information indicates the father is the individual alleged to have committed the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect; thus, the requestor does not have a right of access under section 261.201(k). *See id.* § 261.201(k). Accordingly, the sheriff must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.¹

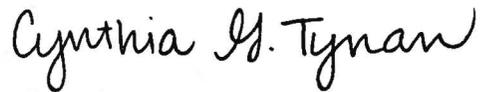
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

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,



Cynthia G. Tynan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CGT/sdk

Ref: ID# 426737

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)