



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 26, 2011

Mr. Jesse Blakley Jr.
Assistant District Attorney
Brazoria County
111 East Locust, Suite 408A
Angleton, Texas 77515

OR2011-13902

Dear Mr. Blakley:

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# 431553.

The Brazoria County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received seven requests from the same requestor for all reports and notes related to a specified capital murder case, including all personal interviews, telephone calls, written correspondence, e-mails, or other information prepared for the trial. 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 information protected by other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(a) Except as provided by Section 261.203, the 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.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Upon review, we agree the submitted information was used or developed during an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *see also 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). Thus, we agree this information is within the scope of section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. As you do not indicate the sheriff has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the submitted information is confidential and must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family 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,



Kirsten Brew
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KB/em

Ref: ID# 431553

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)