



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 22, 2011

Ms. Michelle Rangel  
Assistant County Attorney  
Fort Bend County  
301 Jackson Street, Suite 728  
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2011-18905

Dear Ms. Rangel:

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# 440692.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for all reports and records related to a named individual at a specified address during a specified date range. You claim that the requested 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 the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be demonstrated. *See id.* at 681-82. A compilation of an individual's criminal history record information is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public

records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of criminal history information). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. The present request requires the sheriff to compile unspecified records concerning the individual at issue. We find this request for unspecified law enforcement records implicates the individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, it must withhold any such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.<sup>1</sup>

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,



Debbie K. Lee  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

DKL/agn

Ref: ID # 440692

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>1</sup>Because section 552.101 is dispositive, we need not address the applicability of your other claimed exception.