



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 3, 2012

Mr. Joe Gorfida, Jr.
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, L.L.P.
1800 Lincoln Plaza
500 North Akard
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2012-00056

Dear Mr. Gorfida:

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# 441303.

The City of Sachse (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a report filed on the requestor's son. You claim that 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 public 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. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code. The relevant language of section 58.007 reads as follows:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are

separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

...

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e), (j). Upon review, we find the submitted information involves a juvenile engaged in delinquent conduct occurring after September 1, 1997; therefore, the submitted information is subject to section 58.007. *See id.* § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct"). However, the requestor is a parent of the juvenile offender listed in the report. The requestor has a right to inspect law enforcement records concerning her child under section 58.007(e). *See id.* § 58.007(e). However, section 58.007 of the Family Code provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). We note the submitted information is also subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. Accordingly, we will consider the applicability of this section to the submitted information, as well as your arguments under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act] and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with [the Family 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.

Id. § 261.201(a). We find that the information in question was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261 of the Family Code, so as to fall within the scope of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.001(1)(E) (definition of “abuse” for purposes of Fam. Code ch. 261 includes indecency with a child under Penal Code section 21.11); *see also* Penal Code § 21.11 (defining “child” for purposes of section 21.11 as a minor younger than 17 years of age). As you do not indicate that the city’s police department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume that no such rule exists. We therefore conclude that the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201(a). Accordingly, the submitted information must be withheld in its entirety 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 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,



Sarah Casterline
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SEC/ag

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 441303

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)