



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 22, 2012

Mr. Charles H. Weir
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2012-07764

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 458445 (COSA File No. W007005).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to case number 00455046. You claim the requested 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.

Initially, we must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code. Section 552.301 prescribes procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Section 552.301(b) requires a governmental body ask for a decision from this office and state which exceptions apply to the requested information by the tenth business day after receiving the request. Gov't Code § 552.301(b). You state the city received the request for information on April 16, 2012. Thus, the city's deadline to request a ruling from this office was April 30, 2012. The city's request for a ruling from this office was postmarked May 1, 2012. *See id.* § 552.308 (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail). Accordingly, the city did not request a decision from this office within the ten-business-day period prescribed by subsection 552.301(b).

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third-party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Because section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome this presumption, we will address your claim under this section.

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 that other statutes make confidential, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part 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 find the submitted information was used in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” as a person under eighteen years of age who is not and has not been married and who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Therefore, this information falls within the scope of section 261.201(a). You have not indicated the city's police department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Thus, the city must withhold the submitted information 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,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/ag

Ref: ID# 458445

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)