



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

October 4, 2012

Ms. Monique Auchey  
Records Custodian  
Leander Police Department  
705 Leander Drive  
Leander, Texas 78641

OR2012-15836

Dear Ms. Auchey:

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# 466891.

The Leander Police Department (the "department") received a request for all police reports, including case notes, pertaining to a specified address during a specified period of time and all records pertaining to reports made against a named individual by two other individuals during the same specified period of time. You indicate you have released some responsive information. 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.

Initially, we note you have submitted information that falls outside the scope of the categories of information requested. Therefore, this information, which we have marked, is not responsive to the present request. The department need not release non-responsive information in response to the request, and this ruling will not address that 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 the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is 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 established. *Id.* at 681-82. A compilation of an individual's criminal history 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) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouses files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. We note information relating to routine traffic violations does not implicate privacy concerns. *Cf. Gov't Code § 411.081(b)*.

The present request, in part, requires the department to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning the named individual. We find this request for unspecified law enforcement records implicates the named individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the department maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the department must withhold such information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. We note you have submitted information that pertains to routine traffic offenses or does not depict the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant. Thus, this information is not part of a compilation of the named individual's criminal history and may not be withheld under section 552.101 on that basis. Accordingly, we will address your arguments against the disclosure of this information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides:

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

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). You assert the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. Upon review, we find the information we have marked was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child neglect under chapter 261 of the Family Code, so as to fall within the scope of section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining "abuse" and "neglect" for purposes of Family Code chapter 261); *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). You have not indicated the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, the information we have marked is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code. However, you have failed to demonstrate how any portion of the remaining information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect under chapter 261. Thus, we conclude no portion of the remaining information is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code and none of it may be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the requested information. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301 (e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the remaining submitted information relates to pending investigations by the department. Based on your representation, we agree release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable to the remaining responsive information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-87; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the remaining responsive information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

As previously noted, section 552.101 of the Government Code encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which is subject to the two-part test discussed above. Common-law privacy also protects the types of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court, which includes information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Indus. Found.*, 540 S.W.2d at 683. In addition, this office has found some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps). Upon review, we find the portions of the basic information we have marked are highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public

concern. Therefore, the department must withhold this information pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining information at issue is highly intimate or embarrassing and a matter of no legitimate public interest. Therefore, no portion of the remaining responsive information may be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, to the extent the department maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the department must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. With the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the remaining responsive information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing the basic information, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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,



Michelle R. Garza  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MRG/som

Ref: ID# 466891

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)