



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 10, 2012

Sergeant Michael Munson
Custodian of Records
Webster Police Department
217 Pennsylvania Avenue
Webster, Texas 77598

OR2012-16195

Dear Sergeant Munson:

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# 467549.

The Webster Police Department (the "department") received a request for report number 12-1845. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 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."¹ Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part the following:

(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 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

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

(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). We find that the information in question was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child endangerment 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 chapter 261 of the Family Code), 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 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). As you do not indicate that the 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 requested 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.²

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,



Vanessa Burgess
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

VB/dls

²As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your argument against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 467549

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)