



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 20, 2013

Ms. Cary Grace  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Austin  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin, Texas 78767-8828

OR2013-14550

Dear Ms. Grace:

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# 501225.

The Austin Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified offense report involving the requestor and another named individual. 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.

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 common-law right of privacy, which protects information if it (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. The type of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included 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. *Id.* at 683.

Generally, only information that either identifies or tends to identify a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense must be withheld under common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 440 (1986), 393 (1983), 339 (1982). However, a governmental body is required to withhold an entire report when identifying information is inextricably intertwined with other releasable information or when the requestor knows the identity of the alleged victim. *See* ORDs 393, 339; *see also Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d 519 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1992, writ denied) (identity of witnesses to and victim of sexual harassment was highly intimate or embarrassing information and public did not have legitimate interest in such information); ORD 440 (detailed descriptions of serious sexual offenses must be withheld). In this instance, the submitted information pertains to an alleged sexual assault. Additionally, the requestor knows the identity of the alleged sexual assault victim. Thus, withholding only the victim's identifying information from this requestor would not preserve the victim's common-law right to privacy. Accordingly, to protect the victim's privacy, the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code 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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to 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# 501225

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)