



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 9, 2013

Ms. S. McClellan
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Section
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2013-15658

Dear Ms. McClellan:

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# 503168 (DPD Request No. 2013-07960).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information related to a specified arrest. 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.

We note the department did not comply with its deadlines under section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. Section 552.301 prescribes procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to determine whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a). Section 552.301(b) requires the governmental body to ask for the attorney general's decision and claim its exceptions to disclosure not later than the tenth business day after the date of its receipt of the written request for information. *See id.* § 552.301(b). Section 552.301(e) requires the governmental body to submit to the attorney general, not later than the fifteenth business day after the date of its receipt of the request, (1) written comments stating why the governmental body's claimed exceptions apply to the information at issue; (2) a copy of the request for information; (3) a signed statement of the date of the governmental body's

receipt of the request or evidence sufficient to establish the date; and (4) the specific information at issue or representative samples if the information is voluminous. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A)-(D). Section 552.302 of the Government Code provides that if a governmental body fails to comply with section 552.301, the requested information is presumed to be subject to required public disclosure and must be released, unless there is a compelling reason to withhold any of the information. *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 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ).

You state the department received the present request for information on July 5, 2013; therefore, the department's deadlines under subsections 552.301(b) and 552.301(e) were July 19 and July 26. The department requested this decision by United States mail meter-marked August 16, 2013. *See Gov't Code* § 552.308 (prescribing requirements for proof of compliance with Gov't Code § 552.301). Thus, the department did not comply with section 552.301, and the submitted information is presumed to be public under section 552.302. This statutory presumption can generally be overcome when information is confidential by law or third-party interests are at stake. *See Open Records Decision* Nos. 630 at 3 (1994), 325 at 2 (1982). Therefore, we will address your claim under section 552.101 of the Government Code, which can provide a compelling reason for non-disclosure.

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. This exception encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, 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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] 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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). You contend the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201. We find the information at issue consists of files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, or working papers used or developed in an

investigation under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003 (defining “child” for purposes of Fam. Code title 5), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of Fam. Code ch. 261). Thus, the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201(a)(2). *See id.* § 261.201(a)(1). As you do not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (addressing predecessor statute).

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, 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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 503168

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)