



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 30, 2014

Ms. Katie Lentz
Open Records
Williamson County Sheriff's Office
508 South Rock Street
Georgetown, Texas 78626

OR2014-19630

Dear Ms. Lentz:

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# 542949.

The Williamson County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for a specified police report pertaining to a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(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 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.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Youth Commission, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

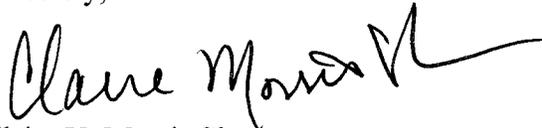
Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k). The submitted information reveals it was used in an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect conducted by the sheriff's office under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining "child" for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001 (defining "abuse" and "neglect" for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we find the submitted information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. We note the requestor has provided a signed authorization form for the named individual, who is a parent of the child victim listed in the information at issue. Thus, we understand the requestor is the authorized representative of the named individual. However, we note the named individual is alleged to have committed the suspected abuse or neglect. Thus, the requestor does not have a right of access to the information at issue under section 261.201(k). *See id.* § 261.201(k). Therefore, we conclude the submitted information is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (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.

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Morris Sloan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 542949

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)