



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 8, 2016

Ms. Mariví Gambini
Paralegal
City Attorney's Office
City of Irving
P.O. Box 152288
Irving, Texas 75015-2288

OR2016-03029

Dear Ms. Gambini:

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# 597520.

The City of Irving (the "city") received a request for information from a specified Animal Services case. You claim the submitted 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 information protected by the common-law informer's privilege, which has long been recognized by Texas courts. *See Aguilar v. State*, 444 S.W.2d 935, 937 (Tex. Crim. App. 1969). The informer's privilege protects the identities of persons who report activities over which the governmental body has criminal or quasi-criminal law-enforcement authority, provided the subject of the information does not already know the informer's identity. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 515 at 3 (1988), 208 at 1-2 (1978)*. The privilege protects the identities of individuals who report violations of statutes to the police or similar law-enforcement agencies, as well as those who report violations of statutes with civil or criminal penalties to "administrative officials having a duty of inspection or of law enforcement within their particular spheres." *See Open*

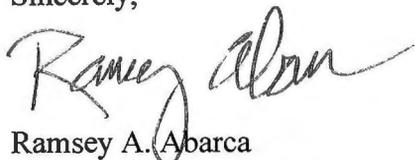
Records Decision No. 279 at 2 (1981) (citing 8 John H. Wigmore, *Evidence in Trials at Common Law*, § 2374, at 767 (J. McNaughton rev. ed. 1961)). The report must be of a violation of a criminal or civil statute. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 582 at 2 (1990), 515 at 4–5. The privilege excepts the informer’s statement only to the extent necessary to protect the informer’s identity. *See* Open Records Decision No. 549 at 5 (1990).

You assert a portion of the submitted information is protected under the informer’s privilege because it reveals the identity of an individual who filed a complaint with the city’s Animal Services relating to an alleged violation of the city code. You explain the Animal Services officers are law enforcement officials who enforce chapter six of the city code. You inform us a violation of chapter six is punishable by a fine. You do not indicate, nor does it appear, the subject of the complaint knows the identity of the complainant. Based on your representations and our review, we find the city has demonstrated the applicability of the common-law informer’s privilege to the information we have marked. Thus, the city may withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law informer’s privilege. However, none of the remaining information consists of identifying information of the complainant. Accordingly, the city may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 on the basis of the informer’s privilege. As you do not raise any other exceptions to disclosure, the remaining submitted information must be released.

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,



Ramsey A. Abarca
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RAA/dls

Ref: ID# 597520

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)