



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 31, 2016

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

OR2016-24144

Dear Ms. Buendia:

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# 638363 (ORR# 2016-22057).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> 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. This exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 of the Family Code provides, in part:

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<sup>1</sup>We note the department failed to comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting a ruling; however, section 552.101 of the Government Code is a mandatory exception that constitutes a compelling reason to withhold information sufficient to overcome the presumption of openness caused by a failure to comply with section 552.301. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.007, .301, .302, .352. Accordingly, we will consider the department's argument under section 552.101.

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

...

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e), (j). For purposes of section 58.007(c), a "child" is a person ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the reported conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we find the submitted information involves juveniles engaged in delinquent conduct on or after September 1, 1997. Thus, the submitted information is subject to section 58.007(c). In this instance, however, the requestor is one of the juvenile offenders at issue and the requestor is now an adult. Thus, the requestor has a right to inspect juvenile law enforcement records concerning herself pursuant to

section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.007(e). However, pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1), any personally identifiable information concerning other juvenile suspects, offenders, victims, or witnesses must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Thus, the department must withhold the identifying information of the other juvenile offenders, which we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. Additionally, section 58.007(j)(2) provides information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Accordingly, we will address the department's remaining argument under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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 demonstrated. *See id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Indus. Found.*, 540 S.W.2d at 682. In considering whether a public citizen's date of birth is private, the Third Court of Appeals looked to the supreme court's rationale in *Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts v. Attorney General of Texas*, 354 S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). *Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at \*3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). The supreme court concluded public employees' dates of birth are private under section 552.102 of the Government Code because the employees' privacy interest substantially outweighed the negligible public interest in disclosure.<sup>2</sup> *Texas Comptroller*, 354 S.W.3d at 347-48. Based on *Texas Comptroller*, the court of appeals concluded the privacy rights of public employees apply equally to public citizens, and thus, public citizens' dates of birth are also protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *City of Dallas*, 2015 WL 3394061, at \*3. We note the requestor has a right of access to her private information under section 552.023 of the Government Code. *See Gov't Code* § 552.023(a); Open Records Decision No. 481 at (4) (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). Upon review, we find the information we marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The remaining information includes the dates of birth of the other juvenile offenders. We note the privacy interests of these individuals who have been de-identified pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code are protected.

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<sup>2</sup>Section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure "information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." *Gov't Code* § 552.102(a).

Therefore, the department may not withhold the dates of birth of the de-identified individuals under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, the department must withhold the identifying information of other juvenile offenders, which we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. The department must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must release the remaining information to this requestor.

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,



Paige Thompson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PT/eb

Ref: ID# 638363

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)