



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 4, 2016

Ms. Leslie O. Haby
Assistant Criminal District Attorney
Civil Division
Bexar County
101 West Nueva Street, 7th Floor
San Antonio, Texas 78205

OR2016-24649

Dear Ms. Haby:

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# 635035 (ORR# 5351).

The Civil Division of the Bexar County Criminal District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for information "within the Brady list pertaining to any investigator/s with the 81st Judicial District Attorney's Office, including but not limited to [a named individual]." The district attorney's office claims the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.142 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision."² Gov't

¹We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

²The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 at 2 (1987), 480 at 5 (1987).

Code § 52.101. This section encompasses section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

[T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], 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.

Fam. Code § 61.201(a). Upon review, we find some of the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261. *See id.* §§ 01.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of section 261.201). Thus, the information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. The district attorney’s office does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, the district attorney’s office must withhold this information, which we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.³ *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

Section 552.108(b)(3) of the Government Code reads as follows:

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

...

(3) the internal record or notation:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

³As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address the arguments of the district attorney’s office to withhold this information.

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

Gov't Code §552.108(b)(3). A governmental body claiming an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* §§ 552.108, .301(e)(1)(A); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 434 at 2-3 (1986). The district attorney's office states the information it has indicated under section 552.108(b)(3) reflects the mental impressions and legal strategies of attorneys representing the state. It also asserts this information was "generated to apprise assistant district attorneys about the existence of exculpatory evidence that may need to be disclosed in criminal cases involving the particular officer[.]" Upon review, we agree the information at issue reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of attorneys representing the state. Accordingly, we find the district attorney's office may withhold the information it has indicated under section 552.108(b)(3) of the Government Code.

Section 552.142 is applicable to records of certain deferred adjudications. The submitted information includes an order of nondisclosure that was issued pursuant to former section 411.081(d) of the Government Code. The district attorney's office asserts this order applies to the remaining information. We note the order of nondisclosure was issued prior to September 1, 2015. Although section 552.142 of the Government Code was amended in 2015 by the 84th Legislature, an order of nondisclosure issued pursuant to former section 411.081(d) prior to September 1, 2015, is subject to the former version of section 552.142, which was continued in effect for that purpose. *See* Act of May 27, 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1279, § 32, Tex. Gen. Laws 4327, 4339. Thus, we will address the arguments of the district attorney's office under the former version of section 552.142 of the Government Code, which provides as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if an order of nondisclosure with respect to the information has been issued under [former] Section 411.081(d).

(b) A person who is the subject of information that is excepted from [required public disclosure] under this section may deny the occurrence of the arrest and prosecution to which the information relates and the exception of the information under this section, unless the information is being used against the person in a subsequent criminal proceeding.

Act of June 1, 2003, 78th Leg., R.S., ch. 1236, § 5, 2003 Tex. Gen. Laws 3502, 3504, *amended by* Act of May 27, 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1279, §§ 26-27, Tex. Gen. Laws 4327, 4338 (current version at Gov't Code § 552.142). Although Senate Bill 1902 amended and redesignated former subsections 411.081(d) through (i) of the Government Code, we note the former versions of these subsections were continued in effect for that purpose. *See* Act of May 27, 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1279, § 32, Tex. Gen. Laws 4327, 4339. Former section 411.081(d) of the Government Code authorizes a person

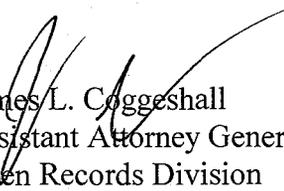
placed on deferred adjudication for certain offenses to petition the court for an order of nondisclosure, which prohibits criminal justice agencies from disclosing to the public criminal history record information related to the offense giving rise to the deferred adjudication. *See* Act of June 1, 2003, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1236, § 3, Tex. Gen. Laws 3502, 3503, *amended by* Act of May 27, 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1279, § 4, Tex. Gen. Laws 4327, 4328 (current version at Gov't Code § 411.0725(b)-(e)). Under this provision, a criminal justice agency may only disclose criminal history record information that is the subject of the order to other criminal justice agencies, for criminal justice or regulatory purposes; non-criminal justice agencies listed in former section 411.081(i); or the person who is the subject of the order. *See* Act of June 1, 2003, 84th Leg., R.S., ch. 1236, § 3, Tex. Gen. Laws 3502, 3503 (amended 2015). Upon review, we find the remaining information is subject to the order of nondisclosure. The district attorney's office states the requestor is not an entity or individual entitled to receive information protected by former section 411.081(d). Therefore, the district attorney's office must withhold the remaining information under former section 552.142 of the Government Code.

To conclude, the district attorney's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. The district attorney's office may withhold the information it has indicated under section 552.108(b)(3) of the Government Code. The district attorney's office must withhold the remaining information under former section 552.142 of the Government Code.

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,



James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/bw

Ref: ID# 635035

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)