



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 1, 2016

Ms. Ann-Marie Sheely
Assistant County Attorney
County of Travis
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2016-04864

Dear Ms. Sheely:

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# 600969.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all incident or arrest reports involving a named individual. The sheriff's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the sheriff's office claims.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of 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 satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. A compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of criminal history information). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. Upon review, we find the present request

requires the sheriff's office to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning the named individual. Accordingly, we find the request implicates the named individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff's office maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee or criminal defendant, the sheriff's office must withhold such information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.¹

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,



David L. Wheelus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 600969

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the sheriff's office's remaining argument against disclosure.