



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 17, 2016

Mr. Nicholas Toulet  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Midland  
P.O. Box 1152  
Midland, Texas 79702-1152

OR2016-06195

Dear Mr. Toulet:

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# 601893 (ID# 18408).

The Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for any records pertaining to a named individual. You state you have released some information to the requestor. You claim some of 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 other statutes, including section 261.201 of the Family Code. Section 261.201(a) 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 § 261.201(a). Upon review, we find report number 150802007 consists of information that was used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261, so as to fall within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of section 261.201 of Family Code). You do not indicate the department has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we find this report is generally confidential pursuant to section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.

However, we note the requestor is a representative of the Probation Office of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas (the “probation office”). Section 261.201(a) provides that information encompassed by subsection (a) may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” *Id.* § 261.201(a). Chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides that “[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety] any criminal history record information maintained by the [Texas Department of Public Safety] about a person.” *See Gov’t Code* § 411.089(a). In addition, section 411.087(a) of the Government Code provides in pertinent part the following:

(a) [a] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety] criminal history record information maintained by the [Texas Department of Public Safety] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

*Id.* § 411.087(a)(2). We note criminal history record information (“CHRI”) is defined as “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *See id.* § 411.082(2). We note report number 150802007 contains CHRI of the named individual. However, a criminal justice agency that receives CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to

section 411.087(a)(2) may only receive such information for a criminal justice purpose. *See id.* §§ 411.083(c), .087(b); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 655 (1997) (discussing limitations on release of criminal history record information).

You acknowledge the requestor represents a criminal justice agency and intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. Thus, the requestor is authorized to obtain the CHRI in report number 150802007 from the department pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, but only for purposes consistent with the Family Code. *See* Gov't Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(a)(2); *see also* Fam. Code § 261.201(a). We are unable to determine whether the requestor intends to use the CHRI for purposes consistent with the Family Code. Consequently, if the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI in report number 150802007 for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the department must release the information at issue that is otherwise subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code and that shows the type of allegation made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions. Although you raise common-law privacy for this information, we note a statutory right of access prevails over the common-law. *See Collins v. Tex Mall, L.P.*, 297 S.W.3d 409, 415 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2009, no pet.) (statutory provision controls and preempts common law only when statute directly conflicts with common-law principle); *CenterPoint Energy Houston Elec. LLC v. Harris County Toll Rd.*, 436 F.3d 541, 544 (5th Cir. 2006) (common law controls only where there is no conflicting or controlling statutory law). In that instance, the department must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. If the department determines the requestor does not intend to use the CHRI for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the department must withhold this report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(b)-(g) (listing entities authorized to receive section 261.201 information); Open Records Decision Nos. 655, 440 at 2 (1986) (construing predecessor statute).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. 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>1</sup> *Tex. 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. Accordingly, the department must withhold all public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, upon review, we find the department has failed to demonstrate the information it marked in Exhibit C is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public interest. Therefore, the department may not withhold the marked information in Exhibit C under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title, or registration issued by this state or another state or country.<sup>2</sup> Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1), (2). Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, if the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI in report number 15082007 for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the department must release the report that is otherwise subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code and that shows the type of allegation made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions. In that instance, the department must withhold the remaining information in the report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. If the department determines the requestor does not intend to use the CHRI in the report for purposes consistent with the Family Code, then the department must withhold the report in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. The department must withhold all public citizens' dates of birth from the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must also withhold the motor

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<sup>1</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).

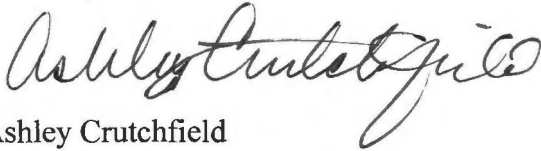
<sup>2</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.<sup>3</sup>

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,



Ashley Crutchfield  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

AC/dls

Ref: ID# 601893

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>3</sup>We note the remaining information contains social security numbers. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act. *See* Gov't Code § 552.147(b).