



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 31, 2016

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

OR2016-12213

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# 618585 (ORR# 2016-08321).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified case. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, 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:

¹We 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.

(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 the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Accordingly, we find this information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. As you do not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the submitted information is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code and must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paige Thompson".

Paige Thompson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PT/dls

Ref: ID# 618585

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)