



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 3, 2016

Mr. Oscar G. Gabaldón, Jr.
Assistant City Attorney
City of El Paso
P.O. Box 1890
El Paso, Texas 79950

OR2016-24489

Dear Mr. Gabaldón:

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# 635238 (ORR# 16-1026-7819).

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. The department claims the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note in Open Records Letter No. 2016-10113 (2016), we issued a previous determination authorizing the department to withhold the dates of birth of public citizens under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without the necessity of again requesting an attorney general decision with regard to the applicability of this exception. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a); Open Records Decision No. 673 at 7-8 (2001) (delineating elements of second type of previous determination under Gov't Code § 552.301(a)). Thus, pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2016-10113, the department must withhold the dates of birth of public citizens on that ground.

¹Although the department raises section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with a statutory grant of confidentiality and a judicial grant of confidentiality, it has not submitted arguments explaining how these apply to the submitted information. Therefore, we assume the department has withdrawn these claims. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

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 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. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). Upon review, we find some of the submitted information, which we have marked, satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we conclude the remaining information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the department may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of constitutional privacy, which consists of two interrelated types of privacy: (1) the right to make certain kinds of decisions independently and (2) an individual’s interest in avoiding disclosure of personal matters. Open Records Decision No. 455 at 4 (1987). The first type protects an individual’s autonomy within “zones of privacy,” which include matters related to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education. *Id.* The second type of constitutional privacy requires a balancing between the individual’s privacy interests and the public’s need to know information of public concern. *Id.* The scope of information protected is narrower than that under the common-law doctrine of privacy; the information must concern the “most intimate aspects of human affairs.” *Id.* at 5 (citing *Ramie v. City of Hedwig Village, Texas*, 765 F.2d 490 (5th Cir. 1985)). Upon review, we find the remaining information does not fall within the zones of privacy or implicate an individual’s privacy interests for purposes of constitutional privacy. Therefore, the remaining information is not confidential under constitutional privacy, and the department may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator’s license, driver’s license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release.² *See* Gov’t Code § 552.130. The department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

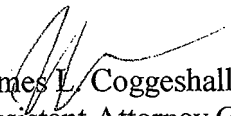
²The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 at 2 (1987), 480 at 5 (1987).

To conclude, pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2016-10113, the department must withhold the dates of birth of public citizens under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must also withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.

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# 635238

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)