



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 1, 2016

Ms. Carah-Beth Bass  
Counsel for Victoria County Sheriff's Office  
Allison, Bass, & Magee, L.L.P.  
A. O. Watson House  
402 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2016-26620

Dear Ms. Bass:

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# 635864.

The Victoria County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office"), which you represent, received a request for all incident reports filed with the sheriff's office during a specified period and the total number of incident reports filed during a specified period. You state you have released some information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in part:

(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:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

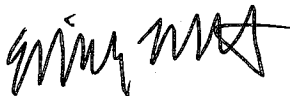
(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

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 by the sheriff's office 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 sheriff's office has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, the requested documents are confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).* Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.<sup>1</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,



Emily Kunst  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EK/eb

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 635864

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)