



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 24, 2017

Mr. Mark E. Dempsey
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

OR2017-06063

Dear Mr. Dempsey:

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# 650300 (GCA 16-0874).

The Garland Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified automobile accident. You state you released some information. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.1085, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. This office has

¹Although you do not raise section 552.147 of the Government Code in your brief, we understand you to raise this exception based on your markings.

concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). This office has also found personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 523 (1989) (common-law privacy protects credit reports, financial statements, and other personal financial information), 373 (1983) (sources of income not related to financial transaction between individual and governmental body protected under common-law privacy). The court of appeals has concluded public citizens' dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *See 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.).

Upon review, we find the information we marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. We note the remaining date of birth you seek to withhold belongs to the requestor's client. The requestor has a right of access to this information under section 552.023 of the Government Code, and the department may not withhold this information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a) ("person's authorized representative has special right of access, beyond right of general public, to information held by governmental body that relates to person and that is protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect that person's privacy interests"); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). Therefore, the department must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.²

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. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. Upon review, we find portions of the remaining information consist of motor vehicle record information. Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.136 of the Government Code provides, "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential."³ *Id.* § 552.136(b);

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

³The 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).

see id. § 552.136(a) (defining “access device”). This office has determined insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. Accordingly, the department must withhold the insurance policy numbers we marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

Section 552.147(a) of the Government Code excepts the social security number of a living individual from public disclosure. *Id.* § 552.147(a). Accordingly, the department may withhold the social security number you marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

Section 552.1085 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part, the following:

(c) A sensitive crime scene image in the custody of a governmental body is confidential and excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 and a governmental body may not permit a person to view or copy the image except as provided by this section. This section applies to any sensitive crime scene image regardless of the date that the image was taken or recorded.

Id. § 552.1085(c). For purposes of section 552.1085, “sensitive crime scene image” means “a photograph or video recording taken at a crime scene, contained in or part of a closed criminal case, that depicts a deceased person in a state of dismemberment, decapitation, or similar mutilation or that depicts the deceased person’s genitalia.” *See id.* § 552.1085(a)(6). Upon review, we find none of the submitted photographs consist of sensitive crime scene images for the purposes of section 552.1085. Accordingly, the department may not withhold the submitted photographs under section 552.1085(c) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must withhold the insurance policy numbers we marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The department may withhold the social security number you marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.⁴

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.

⁴We note the requestor has a right of access to some of the information being released in this instance. *See Gov’t Code* § 552.023(a); ORD 481 at 4. Thus, if the department receives another request for the same information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a decision from this office.

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 black ink, appearing to read 'MJC', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Meagan J. Conway
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MJC/sb

Ref: ID# 650300

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)