



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 3, 2017

Ms. Michelle Gilbert
Open Records
Williamson County Sheriff's Office
508 South Rock Street
Georgetown, Texas 78626

OR2017-06879

Dear Ms. Gilbert:

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# 651474.

The Williamson County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for a specified incident report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. 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 of the Government Code encompasses information protected by section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code, which pertains to the disclosure of reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of elderly and disabled persons in certain facilities. Section 48.101 provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

(a) The following information is confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]:

- (1) a report of abuse, neglect, or exploitation made under this chapter;
- (2) the identity of the person making the report; and

(3) except as provided by this section, all files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation made under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

(b) Confidential information may be disclosed only for a purpose consistent with this chapter and as provided by [the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (the “DFPS”)] or investigating state agency rule and applicable federal law.

Hum. Res. Code § 48.101(a), (b). Section 48.051 of the Human Resources Code provides “a person having cause to believe that an elderly or disabled person is in the state of abuse, neglect, or exploitation” shall report certain prescribed information to the DFPS or another appropriate state agency. *See id.* § 48.051(a). The only entities authorized to conduct an investigation under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code are DFPS and certain other state agencies, depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident. *See id.* §§ 48.151, .152, .252, .301. Thus, reports made by the sheriff’s office generally are not subject to section 48.101. The submitted information consists of investigation report number 2016-05-00274, which was created by the sheriff’s office in connection with a criminal investigation conducted by the sheriff’s office. However, the information at issue reveals the Adult Protective Services division of DFPS (“APS”) was involved in the investigation of report number 2016-05-00274. Thus, because the legislature expressly made all information used by the APS in its investigations under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code confidential, report number 2016-05-00274 is confidential under section 48.101. *See id.* § 48.101(a)(3). Such information must not be released to the public, except for a purpose consistent with chapter 48 and as provided by DFPS or investigating state agency rule or federal law. *See id.* § 48.101(b). *But see id.* § 48.101(c)-(f) (permitting release of confidential information in certain circumstances). The sheriff’s office does not indicate, nor does it appear, an exception to confidentiality applies in this instance. Accordingly, we conclude the sheriff’s office must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code.¹

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/>

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

[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 that reads "D. Michelle Case". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the end.

D. Michelle Case
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DMC/nmd

Ref: ID# 651474

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)