



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 6, 2017

Ms. Josette Flores  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of El Paso  
P.O. Box 1890  
El Paso, Texas 79950-1890

OR2017-07276

Dear Ms. Flores:

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# 653067 (City Case No. 17-1018-083).

The City of El Paso (the "city") received a request for records of all telephone calls reporting on the requestor's address. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. 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 exception encompasses the informer's privilege, which has long been recognized by Texas courts. *See Aguilar v. State*, 444 S.W.2d 935, 937 (Tex. Crim. App. 1969); *Hawthorne v. State*, 10 S.W.2d 724, 725 (Tex. Crim. App. 1928). The informer's privilege protects from disclosure the identities of persons who report activities over which the governmental body has criminal or quasi-criminal law-enforcement authority, provided the subject of the information does not already know the informer's identity. *See Open Records Decision No. 208 at 1-2 (1978)*. The informer's privilege protects the identities of individuals who report violations of statutes to the police or similar law-enforcement agencies, as well as those who report violations of statutes with civil or criminal penalties to "administrative officials having a duty of inspection or of law enforcement within their particular spheres." *Open Records Decision No. 279 at 1-2 (1981)* (citing 8 John H. Wigmore, *Evidence in Trials at Common Law*, § 2374, at 767 (J.

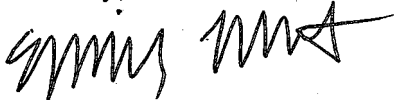
McNaughton rev. ed. 1961)). The report must be of a violation of a criminal or civil statute. See Open Records Decision Nos. 582 at 2 (1990), 515 at 4 (1988).

You state the information in Exhibit B reveals the identity of one or more complainants who reported possible violations of city ordinances that carry criminal penalties to the El Paso Police Department and/or the city's ordinance enforcement, which are authorized to enforce the laws and ordinances at issue. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude the information we have marked identifies the complainants. Thus, the city may withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law informer's privilege. However, you have failed to demonstrate the remainder of the information in Exhibit B consists of the identifying information of an individual who reported a criminal violation to the department for purposes of the informer's privilege, or that the subject of the information does not already know the informer's identity. Accordingly, the city may not withhold the remaining information in Exhibit B under section 552.101 on that basis.

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/nmd

Ref: ID# 653067

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)