



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 12, 2017

Mr. Matthew L. Grove
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County Attorney's Office
401 Jackson Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2017-07822

Dear Mr. Grove:

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# 653122.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all records involving a specified address during a specified time period. You state the sheriff's office will release some information to the requestor. 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 representative sample of information.¹

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 section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

¹We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(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 report numbers 15-8972 and 15-30690 were used or developed in investigations of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect. Therefore, we find report numbers 15-8972 and 15-30690 are subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of Family Code ch. 261); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section 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). 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 rule exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the sheriff’s office must withhold report numbers 15-8972 and 15-30690 in their entireties under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.² *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (addressing predecessor statute).

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); Open Records Decision No. 434 (1986). You provide a representation stating the remaining information pertains to closed criminal investigations that did not result in convictions or deferred adjudications. Thus, section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to the remaining information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic “front-page” information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref’d*

²As our ruling on this information is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against its disclosure.

n.r.e. per curiam, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). See also Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.³

In summary, the sheriff's office must withhold report numbers 15-8972 and 15-30690 in their entireties under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

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,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/sdk

Ref: ID# 653122

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.