



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 9, 2017

Mr. Vance Hinds  
Assistant Ellis County and District Attorney  
Ellis County  
109 South Jackson  
Waxahachie, Texas 75165

OR2017-10016

Dear Mr. Hinds:

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# 657018.

The Ellis County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a named individual. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

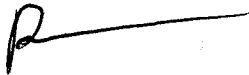
Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is 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. A compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. United States Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of

information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. In this instance, the request seeks unspecified law enforcement records concerning the named individual. Thus, the request implicates the named individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff's office maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the department must withhold such information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.<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,



Patrick P. Mehaffy  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PPM/eb

Ref: ID# 657018

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

---

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