



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 5, 2017

Mr. Tony Resendez
Counsel for the La Vernia Independent School District
Walsh, Gallegos, Trevino, Russo, & Kyle, P.C.
P.O. Box 460606
San Antonio, Texas 78246

OR2017-14938

Dear Mr. Resendez:

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# 665071.

The La Vernia Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for three categories of information pertaining to specified topics during a specified time period. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.103 of the Government Code provides as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure

under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the section 552.103(a) exception is applicable in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing (1) litigation was pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, orig. proceeding); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.); Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990). A governmental body must meet both prongs of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a).

The district states it is a party to pending litigation. The district explains, and provides documentation demonstrating, that a lawsuit styled *John and Jane Doe v. La Vernia Independent School District*, Case No. 5:17-CV-00310, was pending in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, San Antonio Division prior to the district's receipt of this request for information. Therefore, we agree litigation was pending on the date the district received the present request for information. You also state the submitted information is related to the pending litigation. Based on your representations and our review, we find the information at issue is related to the pending litigation. Therefore, the district may withhold the submitted information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.

Generally, however, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). Thus, information that has either been obtained from or provided to the opposing parties in the pending litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a), and it must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Buchanan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Emily Buchanan
Attorney
Open Records Division

EB/eb

Ref: ID# 665071

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)