



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 23, 2017

Mr. Ricardo Vela Jr.
Assistant District Attorney
Dallas County District Attorney's Office
133 North Riverfront Boulevard, LB-19
Dallas, Texas 75207

OR2017-19299

Dear Mr Vela:

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# 672407.

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified 9-1-1 call. You claim the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code.¹ We have also received comments from the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released). We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code exempts from disclosure "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 section 411.192 of the Government Code, which governs the release of information maintained by the Department of Public Safety ("DPS") concerning the licensure of an individual to carry a concealed handgun. Section 411.192 provides, in relevant part:

¹Although you raise section 552.102 of the Government Code, you make no arguments to support this exception. Therefore, we assume you have withdrawn your claim that this exception applies to the submitted information. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

(a) [DPS] shall disclose to a criminal justice agency information contained in its files and records regarding whether a named individual or any individual named in a specified list is licensed under this subchapter. Information on an individual subject to disclosure under this section includes the individual's name, date of birth, gender, race, zip code, telephone number, e-mail address, and Internet website address. Except as otherwise provided by this section and by Section 411.193, all other records maintained under this subchapter are confidential and are not subject to mandatory disclosure under the [Act].

(b) An applicant or license holder may be furnished a copy of disclosable records regarding the applicant or license holder on request and the payment of a reasonable fee.

Gov't Code § 411.192(a)-(b). The submitted information contains concealed handgun license information obtained from DPS. In this instance, the requestor is neither a license holder nor a criminal justice agency. Thus, the district attorney's office must withhold the concealed handgun license information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.192 of the Government Code.²

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the common-law informer's privilege, which Texas courts have long recognized. *See Aguilar v. State*, 444 S.W.2d 935, 937 (Tex. Crim. App. 1969). 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. *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)*. However, witnesses who provide information in the course of an investigation but do not make a report of the violation are not informants for the purposes of claiming the informer's privilege. The privilege excepts the informer's statement only to the extent necessary to protect that informer's identity. *Open Records Decision No. 549 at 5 (1990)*. We note the informer's privilege does not apply where the informant's identity is known to the individual who is the subject of the complaint. *See ORD 208 at 1-2*.

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

We understand portions of the remaining information identify a complainant who reported violations of law to county law enforcement officers. There is no indication the subject of the complaint knows the identity of the complainant. Based upon your representations and our review, we conclude the district attorney's office has demonstrated the applicability of the common-law informer's privilege to the information at issue. Therefore, the district attorney's office may withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law informer's privilege.³

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). The court of appeals has concluded public citizens' dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *See Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.).

Upon review, we find some of the information at issue satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the district attorney's office must withhold the information we have marked and the submitted public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, none of the remaining information is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest and thus, none of it may be withheld under section 552.101 on the basis of common-law privacy.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 411.083 of the Government Code, which pertains to criminal history record information ("CHRI"). CHRI generated by the National Crime Information Center ("NCIC") or by the Texas Crime Information Center is confidential under federal and state law. CHRI means "information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions." Gov't Code § 411.082(2). Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI obtained from the NCIC network or other states. *See* 28 C.F.R. § 20.21. The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual law with respect to CHRI it generates. Open Records Decision No. 565 at 7 (1990); *see generally* Gov't Code ch. 411 subch. F.

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

Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI DPS maintains, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F, or subchapter E-1, of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 411.083. Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for a criminal justice purpose. *Id.* § 411.089(b)(1). Thus, any CHRI obtained from DPS or any other criminal justice agency must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Government Code chapter 411. We note, however, records relating to routine traffic violations are not considered criminal history information. *Cf. id.* § 411.082(2)(B) (criminal history record information does not include driving record information). Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining information consists of confidential CHRI. Therefore, the district attorney's office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 730.004 of the Transportation Code, which provides "an agency may not disclose personal information about any person obtained by the agency in connection with a motor vehicle record." Transp. Code § 730.004. "Personal information" includes a person's name, address, but not the zip code, and driver identification number. *Id.* § 730.003(6). DPS is an "agency" for purposes of chapter 730. *See id.* § 730.003(1) ("agency" is state agency that compiles or maintains motor vehicle records). The district attorney's office states a portion of the submitted information was obtained by the district attorney's office from DPS. *See id.* § 730.007(a)(2)(A)(I) (personal information may be disclosed to government agency in carrying out its functions). An authorized recipient of personal information may not re-disclose the personal information and to do so is a misdemeanor offense. *Id.* § 730.013(a), (d). Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate the remaining information consists of personal information obtained by the district attorney's office in connection with a motor vehicle record. Thus, the district attorney's office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with sections 730.004 and 730.013 of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator's license or driver's license or a motor vehicle title or registration issued by a Texas agency, or an agency of another state or country. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). Accordingly, we find the district attorney's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.147 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the social security number of a living person. Gov't Code § 552.147(a). Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining information is subject to section 552.147 of the

Government Code, and the district attorney's office may not withhold the remaining information on this basis.

In summary, the district attorney's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.192 of the Government Code. The district attorney's office may withhold the information we marked and indicated under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law informer's privilege. The district attorney's office must withhold the information we have marked and the submitted public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The district attorney's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

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,



Sidney M. Pounds
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SMP/sdk

Ref: ID# 672407

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)