



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 1, 2017

Mr. William T. Little
Assistant County & District Attorney
County of Ellis
109 South Jackson
Waxahachie, Texas 75165

OR2017-20020

Dear Mr. Tittle:

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# 674045.

The Ellis County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all information concerning a specified motor vehicle accident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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. This section encompasses chapter 411 of the Government Code, which pertains to criminal history record information ("CHRI") generated by the National Crime Information Center or by the Texas Crime Information Center. Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI that states obtain from the federal government or other states. Open Records Decision No. 565 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual law with respect to CHRI it generates. *Id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code makes CHRI the Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") maintains confidential, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in subchapters E-1 and F of chapter 411 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 411.083(a). Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to

¹Although you raise section 552.083 of the Government Code as an exception to disclosure, we note this section does not exist. We understand you to raise section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code based on the substance of your arguments.

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). Other entities specified in chapter 411 of the Government Code are entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS or another criminal justice agency; however, those entities may not release CHRI except as provided by chapter 411. *See generally id.* §§ 411.090-.127. Thus, any CHRI generated by the federal government or another state may not be made available to the requestor except in accordance with federal regulations. *See* ORD 565. Furthermore, 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, subchapter F. We note section 411.083 does not apply to active warrant information or other information relating to one's current involvement with the criminal justice system. Gov't Code § 411.081(b) (police department allowed to disclose information pertaining to person's current involvement in the criminal justice system). We note CHRI does not include driving record information. *See id.* § 411.082(2)(B). Upon review, we find some of the information submitted is CHRI for chapter 411 purposes. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.² However, we find you have not demonstrated any of the remaining information consists of CHRI for purposes of chapter 411 of the Government Code, and the sheriff's office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

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 portions of the remaining information satisfy the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Thus, the sheriff's office must withhold the public citizen's date of birth and the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find you have failed to demonstrate the remaining information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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

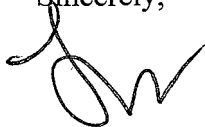
Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. However, you have failed to demonstrate any of the remaining information is subject to section 552.130. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold any of the remaining information on that ground.

In summary, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the public citizen's date of birth and the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

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,



Jahanna Ward
Attorney
Open Records Division

JW/som

Ref: ID# 674045

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)