



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 16, 2017

Ms. Annette Vargas
Records Clerk
Milam County Sheriff's Office
512 North Jefferson, Suite A
Cameron, Texas 76520

OR2017-26189

Dear Ms. Vargas:

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# 687490.

The Milam County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident involving a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception 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 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act] 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:

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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(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 the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse. *See 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), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Thus, this information is generally confidential under section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. However, we note section 261.201(a) provides information encompassed by subsection (a) may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” *Id.* § 261.201(a).

Chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. We note the requestor is an enforcement investigator with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (the “TDLR”). Sections 411.093 and 411.122 of the Government Code both provide the TDLR is entitled to obtain criminal history record information maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) that relates to a person who is an applicant for a license issued by the TDLR. Gov’t Code §§ 411.093(a), .122(a)(1), .122(d)(10). In addition, section 411.087(a) of the Government Code provides, in pertinent part:

(a) Unless otherwise authorized by Subsection (e), a person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from the [Department of Public Safety] criminal history record information maintained by the [Department of Public Safety] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

Id. § 411.087(a)(2). “Criminal history record information” (“CHRI”) is defined as “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.” *See id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, when read together, sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code may grant the

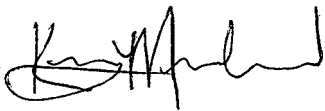
TDLR a right of access to criminal history record information in the submitted incident report.

The requestor states in her request the requested information relates to an applicant for licensure with the TDLR. Thus, if the sheriff's office determines release of the requested report is consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the requestor is authorized to obtain the named individual's CHRI contained in the submitted information and the sheriff's office must release the CHRI to this requestor. In that instance, the remainder of the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201(a) of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code. If the sheriff's office determines release of the information in the submitted documents is not consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the sheriff's office must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family 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,



Kenny Moreland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KJM/eb

Ref: ID# 687490

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)