



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 26, 2018

Mr. Matthew Grove
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County
401 Jackson Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2018-01787

Dear Mr. Grove:

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# 695692.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to two named individuals. The sheriff's office claims the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions.


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 that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing fact, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of criminal history

information). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. The requestor asks for all information held by the sheriff's office concerning two named individuals. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff's office maintains any unspecified law enforcement information depicting either of the named individuals as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the sheriff's office must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.¹

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,



James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/tdw

Ref: ID# 695692

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address the other arguments of the sheriff's office to withhold this information.