



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 11, 2019

Lt. William Ryan  
Pharr Police Department  
1900 South Cage Boulevard  
Pharr, Texas 78577

OR2019-00864

Dear Lt. Ryan:

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# 745733 (Ref. No. P000593-101718).

The Pharr Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified incident report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, we note the submitted information may have been the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2018-08608 (2018). In that ruling, we determined the department must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. We have no indication the law, facts, or circumstances on which the prior ruling was based have changed. Accordingly, to the extent the submitted information is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we conclude the department must rely on Open Records Letter No. 2018-08608 as a previous determination and withhold the identical information in accordance with that ruling. *See*

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<sup>1</sup>We 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 that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes information is or is not excepted from disclosure). However, to the extent the submitted information is not identical to the information at issue in Open Records Letter No. 2018-08608, we will we will consider whether the submitted information is otherwise excepted under the Act.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov’t Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, 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:

(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 relates to an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect conducted by the department. *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), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we find this information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. You do not indicate the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.<sup>2</sup> *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your argument against disclosure.

In summary, to the extent the submitted information is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we conclude the department must rely on Open Records Letter No. 2018-08608 as a previous determination and withhold the identical information in accordance with that ruling. To the extent the submitted information is not identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 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](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,



Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/mo

Ref: ID# 745733

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)