



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 6, 2019

Ms. Stacie S. White
Counsel for the Town of Flower Mound
Taylor, Olson, Adkins, Sralla & Elam, L. L. P.
6000 Western Place, Suite 200
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

OR2019-12015

Dear Ms. White:

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# 763688.

The Town of Flower Mound (the "town"), which you represent, received a request for all records pertaining to a named individual during a specified time period. You state the town will redact social security numbers under section 552.147(b) of the Government Code and information pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. 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. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication

¹Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.147(b). Open Records Decision No. 684 is a previous determination issued by this office authorizing all governmental bodies to withhold certain categories of information without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

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) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public.

The present request requires the town to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning the named individual. We find this request for unspecified law enforcement records implicates the named individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the town maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the town must withhold any such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

However, information that refers to an individual solely as a victim, witness, or involved person is not part of a compilation of the individual's criminal history and may not be withheld under section 552.101 on that basis. We note you have submitted information in which the named individual is not depicted as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant. This information does not implicate the privacy interests of the individual and may not be withheld as a compilation of criminal history. Accordingly, we will address your arguments against disclosure of this information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information made confidential by federal law. The remaining information contains information that was reported to the National Trace Center of the Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (the "ATF"). Public Law number 112-55 states, in pertinent part,

[D]uring the current fiscal year and in each fiscal year thereafter, no funds appropriated under [the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012] or any other [a]ct may be used to disclose part or all of the contents of the Firearms Trace System database maintained by the National Trace Center of the [ATF] or any information required to be kept by licensees pursuant to section 923(g) of title 18, United States Code, or required to be reported pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (7) of such section, except to: (1) a Federal, State, local, or tribal law enforcement agency, or a Federal, State, or local prosecutor . . . unless such disclosure of such data to an[] . . . entit[y] described in (1) . . . of this proviso would compromise the identity of any

undercover law enforcement officer or confidential informant, or interfere with any case under investigation; and no person or entity described in (1) . . . shall knowingly and publicly disclose such data; and all such data shall be immune from legal process, shall not be subject to subpoena or other discovery, shall be inadmissible in evidence, and shall not be used, relied on, or disclosed in any manner, nor shall testimony or other evidence be permitted based on the data, in a civil action in any State[.]

Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-55, 125 Stat. 552, 609-10 (2011). The remaining information contains a Firearms Trace Summary, which consists of content from the Firearms Trace System database maintained by the National Trace Center. Upon review, we find the submitted Firearms Trace Summary is confidential under Public Law number 112-55. *See Miller v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 562 F. Supp. 2d 82, 111 (D.D.C. 2008) (holding Firearms Trace Report properly withheld under Freedom of Information Act exemption 3, which covers records that are exempt from disclosure by statute). Accordingly, the town must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Public Law number 112-55.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 411.083 of the Government Code, which pertains to criminal history record information ("CHRI"). CHRI generated by the National Crime Information Center 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 federal government or other states. *See Open Records Decision No. 565* (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual laws with respect to CHRI it generates. *See id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI the Texas Department of Public Safety ("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(a)*. 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). 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 obtained from DPS or any other criminal justice agency must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with chapter 411, subchapter F, of the Government Code. We note 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). However, upon review, we find you have not demonstrated any portion of the remaining information is

confidential CHRI for purposes of chapter 411 of the Government Code, and the town may not withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

As previously noted, section 552.101 of the Government Code encompasses common-law privacy, which is subject to the two-part test discussed above. *Indus. Found.*, 540 S.W.2d at 685. 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). This office also has found personal financial information not relating to a financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992) (employee's designation of retirement beneficiary, choice of insurance carrier, election of optional coverages, direct deposit authorization, forms allowing employee to allocate pretax compensation to group insurance, health care or dependent care), 523 (1989) (common-law privacy protects credit reports, financial statements, and other personal financial information), 373 (1983) (sources of income not related to financial transaction between individual and governmental body protected under common-law privacy). 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 remaining information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the town must withhold the information you marked, the additional information we marked, and all public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

You state the town will redact the information you marked under section 552.130(c) of the Government Code.² Section 552.130 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. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130. We note the remaining information contains additional motor vehicle record information. Accordingly, the town must withhold the information you marked and the additional information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, to the extent the town maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the town must withhold any such

²Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e).

information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The town must withhold the information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Public Law number 112-55. The town must withhold the information you marked, the additional information we marked, and all public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The town must withhold the information you marked and the additional information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The town 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,



Emily Kunst
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

EK/jxd

Ref: ID# 763688

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)