



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 17, 2019

Ms. M. Shelby Percy
Counsel for the City of Red Oak
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, L.L.P.
500 North Akard Street, Suite 1800
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2019-16344

Dear Ms. Percy:

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# 771212 (ORR# 107230).

The Red Oak Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for records related to a named individual. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the department claims 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."¹ Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and
- (3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also id.* § 51.03(a) (defining “delinquent conduct” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). The submitted information involves a juvenile offender, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.008 apply. Therefore, the department must generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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:

- (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 a department 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). Accordingly, the information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. The department does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we find the submitted information is also generally confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code.

However, we note the requestor is a representative of the National Background Investigations Bureau (the "NBIB") and requests the information as part of a background investigation for an employment position of national security or public trust. We understand the NBIB is under contract to perform such investigations on behalf of the United States Office of Personnel Management (the "OPM"). OPM is authorized to perform background investigations of prospective federal employees to ensure applicants have not broken the law or engaged in other conduct making them ineligible for federal employment. *See Mittleman v. Office of Pers. Mgmt.*, 76 F.3d 1240, 1243 (D.C. Cir. 1996); *see also* 5 U.S.C. §§ 1104 (president may delegate personnel management functions to OPM), 1304 (investigations conducted by OPM), 3301 (president may prescribe regulations for admission of individuals into civil service); 5 C.F.R. pts. 731, 732, 736 (authorizing OPM to investigate applicants for federal employment). OPM is subject to Executive Order Number 10,450, which provides "[t]he appointment of each civilian officer or employee in any department or agency of the Government shall be made subject to investigation." Exec. Order No. 10,450, § 3, 18 Fed. Reg. 2489 (Apr. 27, 1953), reprinted as amended in 5 U.S.C. § 7311 (2000). While the scope of the investigation depends on the relation of the employment to national security, "in no event shall the investigation include less than a national agency check (including a check for the fingerprint files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation), and written inquiries to appropriate local law enforcement agencies." *Id.*

OPM has a right of access to the criminal history record information ("CHRI") of state and local criminal justice agencies when it receives the consent of the individual being investigated for release of such information. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 9101(b)(1), (c). CHRI is defined as "information collected by criminal justice agencies on individuals consisting of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, indictments, informations, or other formal criminal charges, and any disposition arising therefrom, sentencing, correction supervision and release[.]" but does not include "identification information such as fingerprint records to the extent that such information does not indicate involvement in the criminal justice system." *Id.* § 9101(a)(2).

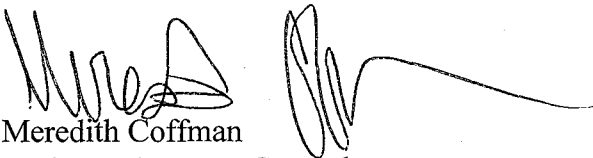
In this instance, the requestor states she is conducting a background investigation for a national security or public trust position. Furthermore, the requestor has submitted written consent from the individual under investigation for the release of the submitted information. Therefore, the requestor has a right of access to the submitted CHRI pertaining to the named individual. Federal law provides OPM's right of access to CHRI preempts state confidentiality provisions. *Id.* § 9101(b)(4) (section 9101 "shall apply notwithstanding any other provision of law . . . of any State"); *see also English v. Gen. Elec. Co.*, 496 U.S. 72, 79

(1990) (state law is preempted to extent it actually conflicts with federal law); *Louisiana Pub. Serv. Comm'n v. FCC*, 476 U.S. 355, 369 (1986) (federal agency acting within scope of its congressionally delegated authority may preempt state regulation). Accordingly, the department must release the CHRI pertaining to the named individual to the requestor. The department must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with sections 261.201(a) and 58.008(b) 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,



Meredith Coffman
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MC/be

Ref: ID# 771212

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)