



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 27, 2019

Mr. Jonathan Miles
Open Records Attorney
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711-3247

OR2019-17644

Dear Mr. Miles:

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# 780368 (HHSC Ref. No. OR-18661).

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (the "commission") received a request for interview and testing records related to a specified position. You state you will redact social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147(b) of the Government Code and certain dates of birth pursuant to the previous determination issued in Open Records Letter No. 2017-01942 (2017).¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

Section 552.122(b) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a test item developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. Gov't Code § 552.122(b). The term "test item"

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 Letter No. 2017-01942 authorizes the commission to withhold certain dates of birth pertaining to current and former commission employees under section 552.102 of the Government Code.

²We 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.

in section 552.122 includes any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated, but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. Open Records Decision No. 626 at 9 (1994). Whether information falls within the section 552.122 exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See id.* at 6. Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122 where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976). Section 552.122 also protects the answers to test questions when the answers might reveal the questions themselves. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-640 at 3 (1987); ORD 626 at 8.

Upon review, we conclude the submitted test questions consist of test items under section 552.122(b). We also find release of the responses to these questions would tend to reveal the questions themselves. Therefore, the commission may withhold the submitted information under section 552.122(b) of the Government 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,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/jxd

Ref: ID# 780368

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)