



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 12, 2019

Mr. Andrew Heston
Assistant District Attorney
Brazoria County
111 East Locust, Suite 408 A
Angleton, Texas 77515

OR2019-22192

Dear Mr. Heston:

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# 780199.

Brazoria County (the "county") received a request for information pertaining to a named individual. The county claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception.

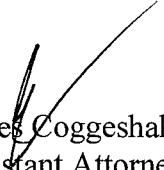
Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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 county concerning a named individual. Therefore, to the extent the county maintains any unspecified law enforcement records depicting the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the county must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



James Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/be

Ref: ID# 780199

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)