



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 18, 2019

Mr. Michael T. Garner  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Conroe  
P.O. Box 3066  
Conroe, Texas 77305

OR2019-26151

Dear Mr. Conroe:

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# 794853.

The Conroe Police Department (the "department") received a request for blood test results related to a specified incident. 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 information.

Initially, we must address the department's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code when requesting a decision from this office under the Act. Pursuant to section 552.301(b), a governmental body must ask for a decision from this office and state the exceptions that apply within ten business days of receiving the written request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b). You received the request for information on August 12, 2019. You do not inform us the department was closed on any business days between August 12, 2019, and August 26, 2019. This office does not count the date the request was received or holidays for purposes of calculating a governmental body's deadlines under the Act. Accordingly, the ten business day deadline for requesting a ruling from this office was August 26, 2019. However, the envelope in which the city submitted the information required by section 552.301(b) to this office was post marked August 27, 2019. *See id.* § 552.308(a)(1) (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail).

Consequently, we find the department failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ). You claim section 552.108 of the Government Code for the submitted information. Because sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness, we will address the applicability of these sections for the submitted information.<sup>1</sup> However, we find you have failed to establish a compelling reason to address the exception you claim.

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. This section encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. The Third 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 the department must withhold the public citizen's date of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code 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. Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the public citizen's date of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department 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.

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

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,



Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/eb

Ref: ID# 794853

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)