



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 4, 2019

Ms. Heather Silver
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar, 6 Floor 6W
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2019-34113

Dear Ms. Silver:

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# 808475 (ORR# D032312-103119).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Initially, we note the submitted information includes police officers' body worn camera recordings. Body worn cameras are subject to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Chapter 1701 provides the procedures a requestor must follow when seeking a body worn camera recording. Section 1701.661(a) provides:

A member of the public is required to provide the following information when submitting a written request to a law enforcement agency for information recorded by a body worn camera:

(1) the date and approximate time of the recording;

¹We 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.

- (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and
- (3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

Occ. Code § 1701.661(a). In this instance, the requestor does not give the requisite information under section 1701.661(a). As the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings at issue pursuant to chapter 1701, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. However, pursuant to section 1701.661(b), a “failure to provide all the information required by Subsection (a) to be part of a request for recorded information does not preclude the requestor from making a future request for the same recorded information.” *Id.* § 1701.661(b).

Next, we note the remaining information includes a search warrant that is subject to section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a)(17) provides for required public disclosure of “information that is also contained in a public court record,” unless the information is made confidential under the Act or other law. Gov’t Code § 552.022(a)(17). Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the Government Code, this section is a discretionary exception and does not make information confidential under the Act. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (waiver of discretionary exceptions), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to Gov’t Code § 552.108 subject to waiver). As such, section 552.108 does not make information confidential for the purposes of section 552.022. Accordingly, the department may not withhold the search warrant at issue under section 552.108. However, because section 552.101 of the Government Code makes information confidential for purposes of section 552.022, we will address its applicability to the document subject to section 552.022(a)(17), as well as the remaining 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 section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides:

(a) Except as provided by Section 261.203, the following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under chapter 552, Government Code, 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 information at issue was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of Family Code chapter 261); *see also 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 disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Thus, the information at issue is confidential under section 261.201. Accordingly, the department must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.² *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

In summary, as the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings at issue pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. The department must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) 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 <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,



Kieran Hillis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/eb

² As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

Ref: ID# 808475

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)