



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 13, 2019

Mr. Matthew Entsminger
Assistant County Attorney
County of Travis
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2019-35321

Dear Mr. Entsminger:

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# 801751.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state you will release some information. You state you will withhold motor vehicle record information pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code and dates of birth pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2019-05541 (2019).¹ You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts "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).

¹ Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. See Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). See *id.* § 552.130(d), (e). Open Records Letter No. 2019-05541 is a previous determination issued to the sheriff's office authorizing it to withhold the dates of birth of public citizens under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without seeking a ruling from this office. See Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (listing elements of second type of previous determination under section 552.301 (a) of the Government Code).

To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987).

Upon review, we find some of the information at issue satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Therefore, with the exception of the information we marked for release, the sheriff's office must withhold the information you marked and the additional information we marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find the sheriff's office has failed to demonstrate the information we marked for release is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold the information we marked for release under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. The sheriff's office 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.

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,



Meagan Hunter
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MH/be

Ref: ID# 801751

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)