



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 26, 2020

Mr. Thomas M. Gilliland
Media Relations
Harris County Sheriff's Office
1200 Baker Street, 2nd Floor
Houston, Texas 77002-1206

OR2020-06206

Dear Mr. Gilliland:

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# 814691 (ORR# 18SO9002269).

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. The sheriff's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted information.

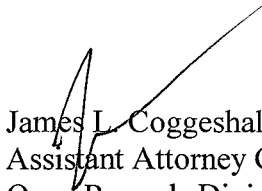
Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly 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). However, the submitted information indicates the requestor is an authorized representative of the individual whose information is at issue. Section 552.023(a) of the Government Code provides a governmental body may not deny access to a person or a person's representative to whom the information relates on the grounds that the information is considered confidential under privacy principles. Gov't Code § 552.023(a); see Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals

request information concerning themselves). Thus, the requestor has a right of access to the private information pertaining to the individual at issue pursuant to section 552.023. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must release the submitted information.¹

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 L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/gw

Ref: ID# 814691

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹ Because the requestor has a special right of access to some of the information being released, the sheriff's office must again seek a decision from this office if it receives another request for the same information from another requestor.