



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 23, 2020

Ms. Stacie S. White
Counsel for the City of Southlake
Taylor Olson Adkins Sralla Elam, L.L.P.
6000 Western Place, Suite 200
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

OR2020-08894

Dear Ms. White:

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# 818560.

The Southlake Department of Public Safety (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information related to case number 1447930001. The department states it is withholding motor vehicle record information pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code and social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147(b) of the Government Code.¹ The department further states it is withholding certain information pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).² The department claims some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the department claims 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

¹ Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 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). Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. *See id.* § 552.147(b).

² Open Records Decision No. 684 is a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold certain information without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

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. 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). 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 agree most of the information the department marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. However, we find the department has not demonstrated some of the information it marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. This information, which we have marked for release, may not be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. Therefore, with the exception of the information we marked for release, the department must withhold the information it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. 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.

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,

Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/be

Ref: ID# 818560

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)