



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 27, 2020

Ms. Heather Silver  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Dallas  
1400 South Lamar, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor. 6W  
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2020-11855

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# 824222 (ORR# D003677).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information related to a specified incident involving a named individual. The department claims 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 representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

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 information protected by section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], 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:

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<sup>1</sup> We 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.

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under [chapter 261 of the Family Code] 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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). The submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse by the department. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Thus, this information falls within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. Therefore, we find the submitted information is generally confidential under section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. Section 261.201(a), however, also provides information encompassed by subsection (a) may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” *Id.* § 261.201(a).

Chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. The requestor is a representative of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (the “TDLR”). Sections 411.093 and 411.122 of the Government Code both provide the TDLR is entitled to obtain criminal history record information (“CHRI”) maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) that relates to a person who is an applicant for a license issued by the TDLR. Gov’t Code §§ 411.093(a), .122(a)(1), .122(d)(10). Section 411.087 of the Government Code provides an agency that is entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS is also authorized to “obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency[.]” *Id.* § 411.087. CHRI is defined as “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *See id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, when read together, sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code may grant the TDLR a right of access to CHRI in the submitted information.

The requestor states she is conducting a criminal background check on an individual who has applied for licensure with the TDLR. Accordingly, if the department determines release of the information at issue is consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the requestor has a right of access to CHRI about the individual pursuant to sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code. In that instance, the department must release the information that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions, and must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. However, if the department determines release of the CHRI is not consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the department must withhold the submitted

information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 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,

Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/jxd

Ref: ID# 824222

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)