



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 28, 2020

Ms. Julie P. Doshier
Counsel for the City of Allen
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith
500 North Akard, Suite 1800
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2020-21712

Dear Ms. Doshier:

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# 842157 (Ref. No. 116376).

The City of Allen (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for all pertaining to all incidents which occurred at a specified location involving named individuals during a specified time period. The city states it will redact dates of birth of members of the public pursuant to the previous determination issued in Open Records Letter No. 2018-11817 (2018).¹ The city also states it is withholding access device numbers pursuant to section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.² 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 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

¹ Open Records Letter No. 2018-11817 authorized the city to withhold dates of birth of members of the public under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without the necessity of requesting an attorney general's decision. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 at 7-8 (2001) (listing elements of second type of previous determination under section 552.301(a) of the Government Code).

² Section 552.136(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.136(b) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See id.* § 552.136(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.136(e). *See id.* § 552.136(d), (e).

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. A compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of criminal history information). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public.

Upon review, we find the present request, in part, requires the city to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning the named individuals. Accordingly, to the extent the city maintains law enforcement records depicting the other named individuals as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the city must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we note the city has submitted information that does not list any of the named individuals as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant. This information does not consist of a compilation of the named individuals' criminal histories, and the city may not withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy on that basis.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in part, as follows:

(a) [T]he 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). Some of the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect conducted by the city. *See 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 the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1), (4) (defining "abuse" and "neglect" for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we find this information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. The city does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information and therefore we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the city must withhold the information you marked

under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.³ *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also id.* § 51.03(a)-(b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See id.* § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Some of the remaining information involves a juvenile offender, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). It does not appear any of the exceptions in section 58.008 apply. Accordingly, the city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.⁴

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information protected by section 730.004 of the Transportation Code, which provides “an agency may not disclose personal information about any person obtained by the agency in connection with a motor vehicle record.” Transp. Code § 730.004. “Personal information” means “information that identifies a person,” and includes a person’s photograph, social security number, driver identification number, name, address but not zip code, telephone number, or medical and disability information. *Id.* § 730.003(6). The Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) is an “agency” for purposes of chapter 730. *See id.* § 730.003(1) (“agency” is state agency that compiles or maintains motor vehicle records). You state some of the remaining information consists of records that were obtained by the city’s police department from

³ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

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DPS. *See id.* § 730.007(a)(2)(A)(i) (personal information may be disclosed to government agency in carrying out its functions). An authorized recipient of personal information may not re-disclose the personal information and to do so is a misdemeanor offense. *Id.* § 730.013(a), (d). Accordingly, the city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with sections 730.004 and 730.013 of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information made confidential by chapter 772 of the Health and Safety Code, which authorizes the development of local emergency communication districts. Section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code applies to an emergency communication district for a county with a population of more than 20,000 and makes confidential the originating telephone numbers and addresses of 9-1-1 callers that are furnished by a 9-1-1 service supplier. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 (1996). The city indicates it is part of an emergency communication district that is subject to section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code. The city marked telephone numbers that it seeks to withhold. We conclude the city must withhold the marked telephone numbers under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code if they consist of the originating telephone numbers furnished by a 9-1-1 service supplier. If the marked information does not consist of the originating telephone numbers provided by a 9-1-1 service supplier, it may not be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 772.318.

As noted above, section 552.101 of the Government Code encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*, 540 S.W.2d 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). This office has found that personal financial information not relating to the financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision No. 600 (1992). 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.). Generally, only highly intimate information that implicates the privacy of an individual is withheld. However, in certain instances, where it is demonstrated the requestor knows the identity of the individual involved as well as the nature of certain incidents, the entire report must be withheld to protect the individual's privacy. In this instance, the requestor knows both the identity of the individual involved and the nature of the incidents. Therefore, withholding only the individual's identity or certain details of the incident from the requestor would not preserve the subject individual's common-law right to privacy. Upon review, we find some of the remaining information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. However, we note some of the information at issue pertains to individuals who have been de-identified pursuant to sections 730.004 and 730.013 of the Transportation Code. Therefore, with the exception of the information we marked for release, the city 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.⁵ However, we find you have failed to demonstrate the remaining information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Therefore, the city may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 on that basis.

You state the city will withhold motor vehicle record information you have marked pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code.⁶ Section 552.130 provides information relating to a motor vehicle record operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See Gov't Code § 552.130.* With the exception of the information we have marked for release, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. However, we find section 552.130 is not applicable to the information we have marked for release. Therefore, the city may not withhold the information we have marked for release on that ground.

In summary, to the extent the city maintains law enforcement records depicting the other named individuals as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the city must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. The city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. The city must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with sections 730.004 and 730.013 of the Transportation Code. The city must withhold the marked telephone numbers under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code if they consist of the originating telephone numbers furnished by a 9-1-1 service supplier. With the exception of the information we marked for release, the city 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. With the exception of the information we have marked for release, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining information.⁷

⁵ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

⁶ 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 redact such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e).

⁷ We note the requestor has a right of access to some of the information being released. *See Gov't Code § 552.023* (person or person's authorized representative has special right of access to records that contain information relating to the person that are protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect that person's privacy interests); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). Thus, if the city receives another request for the same information from a different requestor, the city must again seek a decision from this office.

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,

Sean McCormick
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SMC/rm

Ref: ID# 842157

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)