



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 10, 2020

Mr. James M. Yakovsky
Assistant County Attorney
Angelina County
P.O. Box 1845
Lufkin, Texas 75902-1845

OR2020-22830

Dear Mr. Yakovsky:

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# 844291.

The Angelina County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all reports and photographs pertaining to a specified case. 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 section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(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:

- (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). You state the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect. Based on your representations and our review of the information at issue, we agree the submitted information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of Family Code ch. 261); *see also 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). You state the sheriff’s office has not adopted rules that governs the release of this type of information. Accordingly, the submitted information is generally confidential pursuant to section 261.201(a) of the Family Code and must be withheld from the requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code on this basis.

The requestor is a representative of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (the “commission”). Section 261.201 provides information encompassed by subsection (a) may only be released to certain persons and entities under limited circumstances. *See id.* § 261.201(a). The requestor has not demonstrated the commission falls within any category of persons or entities that are authorized to receive information made confidential by section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.201 (b)-(g) (listing entities authorized to receive information made confidential by section 261.201 (a)). Accordingly, the sheriff’s office must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.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,

Amy Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

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¹ As our ruling for this information is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against its disclosure.

Ref: ID# 844291

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)