



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 11, 2020

Ms. M. Shelby Pearcy
Counsel for the City of Rowlett
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, L.L.P.
500 North Akard Street, Suite 1800
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2020-22929

Dear Mr. Pearcy:

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# 845122 (ORR# 116758 & 116883).

The City of Richardson (the "city") received two requests from different requestors for information pertaining to two named individuals, including specified incidents. The city 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). 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 the *Industrial Foundation* decision. *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.). The city must generally withhold the submitted date of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. We also find some of the remaining information, which we have marked, satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in the *Industrial Foundation* decision. Accordingly, the city must generally withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, the remaining

information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the city may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle 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. The city must generally withhold the submitted driver's license and license plate numbers, issuing years, and issuing state under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

However, the requestors may represent the individual whose information is at issue. Section 552.023 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 individual requests information concerning herself). We note section 552.130 of the Government Code protects personal privacy. Thus, if either requestor represents the individual whose information is at issue, then that requestor has a right of access to the individual's private information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code, and the city may not withhold from that requestor the information pertaining to the individual at issue under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy or section 552.130.

In summary, the city must withhold (1) the submitted date of birth and the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and (2) the submitted driver's license and license plate numbers, issuing years, and issuing state under section 552.130 of the Government Code, unless a requestor has a right of access to this information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code. The city 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,

James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/rm

Ref: ID# 845122

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)