



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 11, 2020

Mr. John P. Beauchamp
General Counsel
Texas Commission on Law Enforcement
6330 E. Highway 290, Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78723-1035

OR2020-22930

Dear Mr. Beauchamp:

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# 847167 (ORR# 07 30 2020).

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (the "commission") received a request for information pertaining to two named individuals. The commission 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. This section encompasses section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code, which governs the public availability of information submitted to the commission under subchapter J of chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code.¹ The submitted information contains F-5 forms that were created prior to the effective date of the amendment of section 1701.454 by the Seventy-ninth Legislature. *See* Act of May 25, 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., ch. 1298, § 4, 2005 Tex. Gen. Laws 4094, 4096. Thus, these F-5 forms are governed by the previous version of section 1701.454. *See id.* § 6.² Former section 1701.454 provides as follows:

¹The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education was renamed the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement by the 83rd Legislature. *See* Act of May 6, 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., ch. 93, § 1.01, 2013 Tex. Gen. Laws 174, 174.

²Section 6 of the amending legislation states

(a) A report or statement submitted to the commission under this subchapter is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under [the Act] unless the person resigned or was terminated due to substantiated incidents of excessive force or violations of the law other than traffic offenses.

(b) Except as provided by this subsection, a commission member or other person may not release the contents of a report or statement submitted under this subchapter. The report or statement may be released only by the commission employee having the responsibility to maintain the report or statement and only if:

(1) the head of a law enforcement agency or the agency head's designee makes a written request on the agency's letterhead for the report or statement accompanied by the agency head's or designee's signature; and

(2) the person who is the subject of the report or statement authorizes the release by providing a sworn statement on a form supplied by commission that includes the person's waiver of liability regarding an agency head who is responsible for or who takes action based on the report or statement.

Occ. Code. § 1701.454 (repealed 2005). The commission informs us the F-5 forms at issue are not subject to release under the provisions of former section 1701.454. Accordingly, the commission must withhold these F-5 form under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with former section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code.

The remaining information consists of F-5 Separation of Licensee forms that were submitted to the commission pursuant to subchapter J of chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Section 1701.454 provides as follows:

(a) All information submitted to the commission under this subchapter is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under [the Act], unless the person resigned or was terminated due to substantiated incidents of excessive force or violations of the law other than traffic offenses.

(b) Except as provided by this subchapter, a commission member or other person may not release information submitted under this subchapter.

[t]he changes in law made by this Act in relation to employment termination reports apply only to an employment termination report under Subchapter J, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, regarding a resignation or termination that occurs on or after the effective date of this Act. An employment termination report regarding a resignation or termination that occurs before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law as it existed immediately before the effective date and that law is continued in effect for that purpose."

Occ. Code § 1701.454. The remaining F-5 forms do not reflect the named former officers to whom these forms apply were terminated due to substantiated incidents of excessive force or violations of the law other than traffic offenses. Therefore, the commission must withhold the remaining F-5 forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code.

In summary, the commission must withhold the submitted F-5 forms that were created prior to the effective date of the amendment of section 1701.454 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with former section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code. The commission must withhold the remaining F-5 forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.454 of the Occupations 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,

James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/rm

Ref: ID# 847167

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)