



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 16, 2020

Ms. Mary E. Miller
Assistant District Attorney
Denton County Sheriff's Office
127 North Woodrow Lane, Suite 300
Denton, Texas 76205

OR2020-26078

Dear Ms. Miller:

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# 850147 (ORR# S004141).

The Denton County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to two named individuals and a specified address. The sheriff's office claims some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions 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 sheriff's office must withhold the submitted dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. We also find some of the remaining information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in the *Industrial Foundation* decision. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must also withhold the information we have marked and the submitted recordings in their entirety 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 sheriff's office 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 sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information it has marked, as well as the information we have marked, under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the sheriff's office must withhold the following under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy: (1) the submitted dates of birth; (2) the submitted recordings in their entirety; and (3) the information we have marked on that ground. The sheriff's office must also withhold the information marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office 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/jm

Ms. Mary E. Miller - Page 3

Ref: ID# 850147

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)