



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 2, 2020

Mr. Adam T. Anderson  
Assistant County Attorney  
Montgomery County  
501 North Thompson, Suite 300  
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2020-29952

Dear Mr. Anderson:

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# 856378.

The Montgomery County Constable Precinct 1 (the "constable's office") received a request for a specified incident report. The constable's office 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. 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 entirety of the information must be withheld to protect the individual's privacy. The requestor knows the identity of the individual involved and the nature of the incident in the submitted information. 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 of privacy. Accordingly, to protect the privacy of the individual to whom the information relates, the constable's office must generally withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

However, the requestor 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). Thus, if the requestor represents this individual, then the requestor has a right of access to this individual's private information pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code. Accordingly, if the requestor represents the individual whose information is at issue, then the constable's office must release the information to her pursuant to section 552.023 of the Government Code. If the requestor does not represent the individual at issue, then the constable's office must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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/jxd

Ref: ID# 856378

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)