



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 8, 2020

Mr. Gregory L. Grigg  
Chief of Police  
Deer Park Police Department  
2911 Center Street  
Deer Park, Texas 77536-4942

OR2020-30714

Dear Mr. Grigg:

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# 858585 (Req. # 2020-2751).

The Deer Park Police Department (the "department") received a request for all information pertaining to a specified incident and information pertaining to the court docket on a specified date. You state you have no information responsive to a portion of the request.<sup>1</sup> You state you released some information to the requestor with redactions made pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code.<sup>2</sup> You also state you will redact public citizens' dates of birth pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2016-07970 (2016).<sup>3</sup> We understand you to claim some of the submitted information is not subject to the Act. You also claim

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<sup>1</sup> The Act does not require a governmental body that receives a request for information to create information that did not exist when the request was received. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 563 at 8 (1990), 555 at 1-2 (1990), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

<sup>2</sup> Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See Gov't Code* § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e).

<sup>3</sup> Open Records Letter No. 2016-07970 authorizes the department to withhold public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without requesting a ruling from this office. *See Open Records Decision No. 673 at 7-8 (2001)* (listing elements of second type of previous determination under section 552.301(a) of the Government Code).

some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we understand you to argue some of the submitted information is not subject to the Act. The Act applies to “public information,” which is defined in section 552.002 of the Government Code as:

(a) . . . information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

(1) by a governmental body; or

(2) for a governmental body and the governmental body:

(A) owns the information;

(B) has a right of access to the information; or

(C) spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information; or

(3) by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in the officer’s or employee’s official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body.

Gov’t Code § 552.002(a). Thus, virtually all of the information in a governmental body’s physical possession constitutes public information and thus is subject to the Act. *Id.* § 552.002(a)(1); *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 549 at 4 (1990), 514 at 1-2 (1988). The Act also encompasses information that a governmental body does not physically possess. Information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained by a third party, including an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in his or her official capacity, may be subject to disclosure under the Act if a governmental body owns, has a right of access, or spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information. Gov’t Code § 552.002(a); *see* Open Records Decision No. 462 at 4 (1987). Information is “in connection with the transaction of official business” if the information is created by, transmitted to, received by, or maintained by a person or entity performing official business or a government function on behalf of a governmental body and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.002(a-1). Moreover, section 552.001 of the Act provides that it is the policy of this state that each person is entitled, unless otherwise expressly provided by law, at all times to complete information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees. *See id.* § 552.001(a).

The department argues some of the submitted information is not “public information” subject to the Act because it is not a department record. However, we note the information at issue is in the possession of the department and the department has submitted the information at issue as responsive to the instant request for information. Accordingly, we find the department maintains this information in connection with the transaction of its official business. Thus, the information at issue constitutes public information subject to the Act and may only be withheld if an exception to disclosure under the Act applies.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” *Id.* § 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 *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. The doctrine of common-law privacy protects a compilation of an individual’s criminal history, which is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. United States Dep’t of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual’s privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one’s criminal history). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen’s criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. We note records relating to routine traffic violations are not considered criminal history information. *Cf. Gov’t Code* § 411.082 (2)(B) (criminal history record information does not include driving record information). Further, active warrant information or other information relating to an individual’s current involvement in the criminal justice system does not constitute criminal history information for the purposes of section 552.101. *See id.* § 411.081(b) (police department allowed to disclose information pertaining to person’s current involvement in the criminal justice system). Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See Open Records Decision No. 455* (1987).

We understand you to assert a portion of the present request requires the department to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning named individuals. We note, however, the portion of the request at issue is for information pertaining to a specified incident. Thus, we find this request does not require the department to compile an individual’s criminal history and does not implicate the privacy interests of any individual. Accordingly, the department may not withhold the information at issue as a criminal history compilation under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, upon review, we find a portion of the submitted information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Therefore, with the exception of the information we marked for release, the department must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find the department has failed to demonstrate the

remaining information at issue is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. Thus, the department may not withhold the remaining information at issue under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

You state the city will redact information under section 552.130(c) of the Government Code. 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*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and the additional information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also id.* § 51.03(a)-(b) (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision" for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See id.* § 51.02(2) (defining "child" for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Upon review, we find the information at issue does not list a juvenile as a suspect, offender, or defendant. Thus, the department has not demonstrated the information at issue involves juvenile conduct for purposes of section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. Accordingly, the department may not withhold any portion of the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

In summary, with the exception of the information we marked for release, the department must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and the additional information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department 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,

Meagan Hunter  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MH/gw

Ref: ID# 858585

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)