



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 8, 2022

Ms. Amy Bass-Domel  
Williamson County Sheriff's Office  
508 South Rock Street  
Georgetown, Texas 78626

OR2022-03458

Dear Ms. Bass-Domel:

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# 930364.

The Williamson County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all calls to a specified location during a specified time period. The sheriff's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the sheriff's office claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201 of the Family Code provides, in part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Portions of the submitted information, including the types of information we marked, relate to reports of alleged abuse or neglect made to the sheriff's office. However, we are unable to determine the ages of the victims listed in the information at issue. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining "child" for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1), (4) (defining "abuse" and "neglect" for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Accordingly, we must rule in the alternative. To the extent any of the submitted information, including the types of information we marked, involves a victim who was a child at the time of the incident at issue, then the information is subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code. In that instance, as the sheriff's office does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, the sheriff's office must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.<sup>1</sup> *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).* However, to the extent the submitted information does not involve a victim of alleged abuse or neglect who was a child at the time of the incident at issue, then the information is not subject to chapter 261 of the Family Code and the sheriff's office may not withhold the information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. In that instance, we will consider the applicability of other exceptions to disclosure of the information.

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.

*Id.* § 58.008(b); *see also id.* § 51.03 (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. *See Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 22.* The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See*

---

<sup>1</sup> As our ruling is dispositive for this information, we need not address the remaining arguments against its disclosure.

Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). We note section 58.008(b) does not apply to law enforcement records that relate to a juvenile involved only as a complainant, victim, witness, or other involved party; rather, the juvenile must be involved as a suspect, offender, or defendant. Upon review, we find portions of any remaining information, including the types of information we marked, relate to reports involving delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision. However, we are unable to determine the ages of the suspects listed in the information at issue. Accordingly, we must rule in the alternative. To the extent any suspect listed in any remaining information, including the types of information we marked, was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then, as it does not appear any of the exceptions in section 58.008 apply, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.<sup>2</sup> However, to the extent any remaining information does not involve a suspect who was under ten years of age or was seventeen years of age or older at the time of the conduct, then the information does not involve juvenile conduct for purposes of section 58.008(b) of the Family Code, and no portion of the information at issue may be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis. Therefore, in that instance, we will consider the applicability of other exceptions to disclosure of any remaining information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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. Upon review, we find no portion of any remaining information relates to an identified individual. Accordingly, the sheriff’s office may not withhold any remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, to the extent any of the submitted information involves a victim who was a child at the time of the incident at issue, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. To the extent any suspect listed in any remaining information was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. The sheriff’s office must release any 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.

---

<sup>2</sup> As our ruling is dispositive for this information, we need not address the remaining arguments against its disclosure.

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,

Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/jxd

Ref: ID# 930364

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)