



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 24, 2022

Ms. April M. Liwanag  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460  
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2022-05681

Dear Ms. Liwanag:

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# 931539 (BON Ref. No. 22-7).

The Texas Board of Nursing (the "board") received a request for licensure files concerning two named individuals. The board has released some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.137, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim 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. Section 552.101 encompasses information made confidential by other statutes, such as section 301.207 of the Occupations Code. Section 301.207 provides as follows:

The following information that a person submits to the board for a petition for a declaratory order of eligibility for a license or for an application for an initial license or a license renewal under this chapter is confidential to the same extent information collected on a nurse as part of an investigation of a complaint is confidential under Section 301.466:

- (1) information, including diagnosis and treatment, regarding a person's physical or mental condition, intemperate use of drugs or alcohol, or chemical dependency;
- (2) information regarding a person's criminal history; and
- (3) any other information in the petition for declaratory order of eligibility.

Occ. Code § 301.207. You state the information you marked is confidential under section 301.207. Upon review, we agree the information you marked is confidential under section 301.207 of the Occupations Code. Further, we find the requestor is not entitled to receive this information under section 301.466(b). We understand the information at issue does not fall under section 301.466(c). Accordingly, we conclude the board must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 301.207 of the Occupations Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. The 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.). Thus, the board must withhold the public citizens' dates of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law privacy.

Section 552.137 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body" unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). *See Gov't Code* § 552.137(a)-(c). The e-mail addresses at issue are not excluded by subsection (c). Therefore, the board must withhold the personal e-mail addresses you marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their public disclosure.

Section 552.147(a) of the Government Code excepts the social security number of a living individual from public disclosure. *Id.* § 552.147(a). Accordingly, the board may withhold the social security numbers you marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

In summary, the board must withhold the information you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 301.207 of the Occupations Code. The board must withhold the public citizens' dates of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the common-law privacy. The board must withhold the personal e-mail addresses you marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their public disclosure. The

board may withhold the social security numbers you marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code. The board 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,

D. Michelle Case  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

DMH/jm

Ref: ID# 931539

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)