



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 4, 2022

Ms. Jennifer Burnett
Assistant General Counsel
The University of Texas System
210 West Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2903

OR2022-30508

Dear Ms. Burnett:

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# 976100 (ORR# 206799).

The University of Texas at San Antonio (the "university") received a request for information pertaining to specified communications. The university states it will withhold information pursuant to section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.¹ The university claims some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.² 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).

¹ Section 552.136 of the Government Code permits a governmental body to withhold the information described in section 552.136(b) without the necessity of seeking a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.136(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.136(e). *See id.* § 552.136(d), (e).

² We note the university did not comply with the requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nevertheless, section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness caused by a failure to comply with section 552.301.

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. This office has found personal financial information not relating to the financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992), 545 (1990). Upon review, we agree the information that the university has marked under common-law privacy satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in the *Industrial Foundation* decision. Accordingly, the university must withhold the information it has marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The university 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/jxd

Ref: ID# 976100

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)