



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 2, 2022

Ms. Paige Saenz
Counsel for City of Kyle
The Knight Law Firm, LLP
223 West Anderson Lane, Suit A-105
Austin, Texas 78752

OR2022-37178

Dear Ms. Saenz:

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# 988084 (City ID No. W012507-090822).

The City of Kyle (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for a specified severance agreement. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

The city argues the submitted information should be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code because it is marked "confidential." Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. However, we note information is not confidential under the Act simply because the party submitting the information anticipates or requests that it be kept confidential. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 677 (Tex. 1976). In other words, a governmental body cannot, through an agreement or contract, overrule or repeal provisions of the Act. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-672 (1987); Open Records Decision Nos. 541 at 3 (1990) ("[T]he obligations of a governmental body under [the predecessor to the Act] cannot be compromised simply by its decision to enter into a contract."), 203 at 1 (1978) (mere expectation of confidentiality by person supplying information does not satisfy requirements of statutory predecessor to section 552.110 Government Code). Consequently, unless the information at issue comes within an exception to disclosure, it must be released, notwithstanding any expectation or agreement to the contrary.

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.*, 540 S.W.2d at 685. To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-882. Types of information considered highly intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). Upon review, we find you have not demonstrated any of the submitted information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Thus, the submitted information may not be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city must release the submitted 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,

Nick Ybarra
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NY/pt

Ref: ID# 988084

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)