



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 22, 2006

Ms. Susan Camp-Lee
Sheets & Crossfield, P.C.
309 East Main Street
Round Rock, Texas 78664-5246

OR2006-06583

Dear Ms. Camp-Lee:

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# 252106.

The Round Rock Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a named department officer and his K-9. You claim that portions of the requested information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.117, 552.119, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that you have not submitted information pertaining to the officer's K-9. To the extent any such responsive information existed on the date the department received the request for information, we assume it has been released. If not, any such information must be released at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts "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 1324a of title 8 of the United States Code provides that an Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 "may not be used for purposes other than for enforcement of this chapter" and for enforcement of other federal statutes governing crime and criminal investigations. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1324a(b)(5); *see also* 8 C.F.R. § 274a.2(b)(4). In this instance, release of the submitted Form I-9 and its

attachment would be “for purposes other than for enforcement” of the referenced federal statutes. Accordingly, we conclude that the Form I-9 and its attachment are confidential and may only be released in compliance with the federal laws and regulations governing the employment verification system.

Next, you claim that the submitted information includes medical records that are subject to the Medical Practices Act (“MPA”). *See* Occ. Code §§ 151.001-165.160. Section 159.002 of the MPA provides in part:

(b) A record of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that is created or maintained by a physician is confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(c) A person who receives information from a confidential communication or record as described by this chapter, other than a person listed in Section 159.004 who is acting on the patient’s behalf, may not disclose the information except to the extent that disclosure is consistent with the authorized purposes for which the information was first obtained.

Occ. Code § 159.002(b), (c). Medical records must be released upon the patient’s signed, written consent, provided that the consent specifies (1) the information to be covered by the release, (2) reasons or purposes for the release, and (3) the person to whom the information is to be released. Occ. Code §§ 159.004, .005. Section 159.002(c) also requires that any subsequent release of medical records be consistent with the purposes for which the governmental body obtained the records. Open Records Decision No. 565 at 7 (1990). Medical records may be released only as provided under the MPA. Open Records Decision No. 598 (1991). Upon review, however, we find that no portion of the submitted information consists of medical records. Thus, the MPA is inapplicable to the submitted information.

You also claim that a portion of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code. Chapter 560 of the Government Code provides that a governmental body may not release fingerprint information except in certain limited circumstances. *See* Gov’t Code §§ 560.001 (defining “biometric identifier” to include fingerprints), 560.002 (prescribing manner in which biometric identifiers must be maintained and circumstances in which they can be released), 560.003 (providing that biometric identifiers in possession of governmental body are exempt from disclosure under Act). You do not inform us, and the submitted information does not indicate, that section 560.002 permits the disclosure of the submitted fingerprint information. Therefore, the department must withhold this information, which we have marked, under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 also encompasses section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code. The submitted information contains an L-3 Declaration of Psychological and Emotional Health

required by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (the "TCLEOSE"). This declaration form is confidential pursuant to section 1701.306, which provides in relevant part:

(a) The [TCLEOSE] may not issue a license to a person as an officer or county jailer unless the person is examined by:

(1) a licensed psychologist or by a psychiatrist who declares in writing that the person is in satisfactory psychological and emotional health to serve as the type of officer for which a license is sought; and

...

(b) An agency hiring a person for whom a license as an officer or county jailer is sought shall select the examining physician and the examining psychologist or psychiatrist. The agency shall prepare a report of each declaration required by Subsection (a) and shall maintain a copy of the report on file in a format readily accessible to the commission. A declaration is not public information.

Occ. Code § 1701.306. Therefore, the department must withhold the L-3 declaration form under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 1701.306.

We next address your claim that the portions of the submitted information are subject to the doctrine of common-law privacy, which is also encompassed by section 552.101. Common-law privacy protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). This office has found that information that reflects an individual's personal financial decisions and is not related to a financial transaction between the individual and a governmental body is generally excepted from disclosure under common-law privacy. Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992) (public employee's withholding allowance certificate, designation of beneficiary of employee's retirement benefits, direct deposit authorization, and employee's decisions regarding voluntary benefits programs, among others, protected under common-law privacy), 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history protected under common-law privacy). Upon review, we find that the department must withhold the personal financial information that we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure a peace officer's home address, home telephone number, social security number, and information indicating whether the peace officer has family members, regardless of whether the officer

complies with section 552.024 or section 552.1175. *See* Gov't Code § 552.117(a)(2). Section 552.117(a)(2) applies to peace officers as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Therefore, the department must withhold the information we have marked pursuant to section 552.117(a)(2).

You have also marked Texas motor vehicle record information. Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides that a motor vehicle operator's, driver's license, motor vehicle title, or registration issued by a Texas agency is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1), (2). We agree that the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information that you have highlighted in green under section 552.130.¹

Lastly, we note that some of the submitted information is subject to section 552.136 of the Government Code, which states that "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential." Gov't Code § 552.136.² Therefore, you must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.136.

In summary, the submitted Form I-9 and its attachment may only be released in accordance with federal law. The fingerprint information we have marked must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code. The submitted L-3 Declaration of Psychological and Emotional Health form is confidential under section 1703.306 of the Occupations Code and must also be withheld under section 552.101. The personal financial information that we have marked must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. The information we have marked must be withheld under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code. The Texas motor vehicle information that you have highlighted in green must be withheld under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Finally, the insurance policy numbers that we have marked must be withheld under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The remaining submitted information must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the

¹As our ruling on this issue is dispositive, we need not address your arguments under section 552.119.

²The Office of the Attorney General will raise mandatory a exception like section 552.136 on behalf of a governmental body but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



L. Joseph James
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LJJ/krl

Ref: ID# 252106

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Dan L. Hargrove
Mr. Cyrus F. Rea II
Hargrove & Rea, P.C.
110 Broadway, Suite 550
San Antonio, Texas 78205
(w/o enclosures)