



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 6, 2009

Ms. Luz E. Sandoval-Walker
Assistant City Attorney
City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza, 9th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901

OR2009-06053

Dear Ms. Sandoval-Walker:

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# 342167.

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified incident report. 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.

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 information protected by other statutes, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007. For purposes of section 58.007, "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. See Fam. Code § 51.02(2). The relevant language of section 58.007 reads as follows:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from 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 Subchapter B, D, and E.

...

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Id. § 58.007(c), (e), (j). We have reviewed the submitted information and find it involves allegations of juvenile delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See* Fam. Code § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). Thus, this information is subject to section 58.007. We note, however, that the requestor is the mother of the juvenile suspect listed in the submitted information. Under section 58.007(e), the requestor may inspect law enforcement records concerning her own child. Fam. Code § 58.007(e). However, any personally identifiable information concerning other juvenile suspects, offenders, victims, or witnesses must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Section 58.007(j) states further that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *Id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Accordingly, we will address your remaining argument against disclosure of the submitted information.

Section 552.101 also encompasses section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides in relevant part:

(a) The 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, 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). Upon review, we conclude that the submitted information constitutes a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “child abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of section 261.201); *id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201). Therefore, this report falls within the scope of section 261.201(a)(1). You have not indicated that the department has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information. Accordingly, we find the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201(a)(1) of the Family Code and the department must withhold it in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (construing predecessor statute).

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 http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/eeg

Ref: ID# 342167

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)