



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 22, 2010

Ms. Michelle T. Rangel
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County
301 Jackson Street, Suite 728
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2010-10955

Dear Ms. Rangel:

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# 387843.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for all incident reports related to a specified address, as well as all incident reports involving two named individuals. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 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 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 if it (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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 a compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find

that a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. The present request, in part, seeks all information pertaining to two named individuals. We find that this request for unspecified law enforcement records implicates the privacy rights of the named individuals. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individuals as suspects, arrestees, or criminal defendants, the sheriff must withhold such information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. We note you have submitted a report in which the named individuals are not listed as suspects, arrestees, or criminal defendants. This information is not part of a criminal history compilation and thus does not implicate the privacy rights of the named individuals. Accordingly, we will address your remaining arguments for this information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses information made confidential by statute, including 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. Section 58.007 provides in relevant part:

(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.

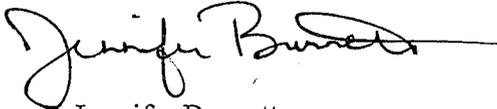
Fam. Code § 58.007(c). Upon review, we agree report number 09-8439 pertains to juvenile delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a) (defining "delinquent conduct" for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007); *see also* § 51.02(2) (defining a "child" for purposes of section 58.007 as a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). It does not appear, and you do not indicate, that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 of the Family Code apply. Accordingly, report number 09-8439 must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code.

In summary, to the extent the department maintains law enforcement records depicting the named individuals as suspects, arrestees, or criminal defendants, the department must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. Report number 09-8439 must be withheld in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code.

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, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Burnett
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/dls

Ref: ID# 387843

Enc.: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)