



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 16, 2011

Mr. Charles H. Weir
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283

OR2011-06816

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 421852 (COSA File W000404).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for a specified case. You claim that 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.

Initially, we must address the city's obligations under the Act. Section 552.301 describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information it wishes to withhold. Pursuant to section 552.301(b) of the Government Code, the governmental body must request a ruling from this office and state the exceptions to disclosure that apply within ten business days after receiving the request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b). The city states it received the request for information on March 31, 2011. However, you did not request a ruling from this office until April 20, 2011. *See id.* § 552.308. Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the information is public. Information that is presumed public must be released unless

a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *Id.* § 552.302; *see also Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-2 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). Normally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third-party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Because section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness, we will consider whether or not the information at issue is excepted under the Act.

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 section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with [the Family 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, audiotapes, videotapes, 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). The submitted information was used in the investigation of an alleged sexual assault of a child. *See id.* § 261.001(1)(E) (definition of “abuse” includes sexual assault under Penal Code section 22.011); *see also* Penal Code § 22.011(c) (defining “child” for purposes of Penal Code section 22.011). Upon review, we find the submitted information falls within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. You do not inform us, and we are not aware, that the city has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 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,



Paige Lay
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PL/eeg

Ref: ID# 421852

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)