



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 7, 2011

Mr. Robert E. Hager
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, LLP
1800 Lincoln Plaza
500 North Akard Street
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2011-08024

Dear Mr. Hager:

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# 420005 (Rowlett # 48588).

The Rowlett Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for all police records regarding two named persons from 2009 through the date of the request. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions.

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. This section encompasses the common-law right to 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). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be met. *Id.* at 681-82. 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) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police

stations and compiled summary of criminal history information). Furthermore, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public.

In this instance, the requestor asks for "any and all police records" involving the named persons since 2009. This request requires the department to compile unspecified police records concerning the named individuals, thus implicating their rights to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the department maintains any law enforcement records depicting either of the named individuals as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the department must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.¹

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,



Misty Haberer Barham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHB/bs

Ref: ID # 420005

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.