



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 28, 2011

Ms. Tamma Willis
McLennan County Sheriff's Office
901 Washington Avenue
Waco, Texas 76701

OR2011-17415

Dear Ms. Willis:

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# 437174.

The McLennan County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for the sheriff's report concerning case number 11-2377. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 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 information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code. Section 261.201 provides in relevant part:

(a) Except as provided by Section 261.203, the following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act] 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, 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). Upon review, we find the submitted information was used or developed in the sheriff's investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 261.001(1) (defining "abuse" for purposes of chapter 261), 101.003(a) (defining "child" for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Therefore, this information falls within the scope of section 261.201. You do not indicate the sheriff has adopted a rule that governs the release of the information in this instance; therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the submitted information is confidential under section 261.201(a)(1). *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986)* (predecessor statute). Accordingly, the sheriff must withhold this information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 261.201(a).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,



Kenneth Leland Conyer
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KLC/agn

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 437174

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)