



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

March 13, 2013

Ms. Susan Gomez  
Communications Manager  
County of Wise  
200 Rook Ramsey Drive  
Decatur, Texas 76234

OR2013-04227

Dear Ms. Gomez:

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# 481334.

The Wise County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for nine categories of personnel records of a named police officer. You state you do not have information responsive to portions of the request.<sup>1</sup> You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.102, and 552.117 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 made confidential by other statutes, such as section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code, which provides:

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

(a) The [Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education ("TCLEOSE")] may not issue a license to a person unless the person is examined by:

(1) a licensed psychologist or by a psychiatrist who declares in writing that the person is in satisfactory psychological and emotional health to serve as the type of officer for which a license is sought; and

(2) a licensed physician who declares in writing that the person does not show any trace of drug dependency or illegal drug use after a blood test or other medical test.

(b) An agency hiring a person for whom a license is sought shall select the examining physician and the examining psychologist or psychiatrist. The agency shall prepare a report of each declaration required by Subsection (a) and shall maintain a copy of the report on file in a format readily accessible to [TCLEOSE]. A declaration is not public information.

Occ. Code § 1701.306(a), (b). Upon review, we find the sheriff's office must withhold the L-2 Declaration of Medical Condition and L-3 Declaration of Psychological and Emotional Health forms we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses laws that make criminal history record information ("CHRI") confidential. CHRI generated by the National Crime Information Center ("NCIC") or by the Texas Crime Information Center is confidential under federal and state law. CHRI means "information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions." Gov't Code § 411.082(2). Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI obtained from the NCIC network or other states. *See* 28 C.F.R. § 20.21. The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual law with respect to CHRI it generates. Open Records Decision No. 565 at 7 (1990). *See generally* Gov't Code ch. 411, subch. F. Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI the Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") maintains, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F of the Government Code. *See id.* § 411.083. Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for a criminal justice purpose. *Id.* § 411.089(b)(1). Other entities specified in chapter 411 of the Government Code are entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS or another criminal justice agency; however, those entities may not release CHRI except as provided by chapter 411. *See generally id.* §§ 411.090-.127. Thus, any CHRI obtained from DPS or any other criminal justice agency must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Government Code chapter 411, subchapter F. Upon

review, we find the information we have marked constitutes CHRI for purposes of chapter 411. Therefore, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 also encompasses section 560.003 of the Government Code, which exempts a biometric identifier from disclosure under the Act. *Id.* § 560.003. "Biometric identifier" means a retina or iris scan, fingerprint, voiceprint, or record of hand or face geometry. *Id.* § 560.001. Therefore, the sheriff's office must withhold the fingerprints we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be established. *Id.* at 681-82. This office has found that the following types of information are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy: some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses, *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps); and personal financial information not relating to the financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body. *See generally* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 at 9-10 (1992) (employee's designation of retirement beneficiary, choice of insurance carrier, election of optional coverages, direct deposit authorization, forms allowing employee to allocate pretax compensation to group insurance, health care or dependent care), 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, participation in voluntary investment program, election of optional insurance coverage, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history), 455 at 9 (1987) (employment applicants salary information not private). However, this office has noted the public has a legitimate interest in information relating to those who are involved in law enforcement. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 562 at 10 (1990) (personnel file information does not involve most intimate aspects of human affairs but in fact touches on matters of legitimate public concern), 470 at 4 (job performance does not generally constitute public employee's private affairs), 444 at 3 (1986) (public has obvious interest in information concerning qualifications and performance of law enforcement employees), 405 at 2 (1983) (manner in which public employee's job was performed cannot be said to be of minimal public interest), 329 (1982) (reasons for employee's resignation ordinarily not private). Upon review, we find the information we have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing information of no legitimate public concern and must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find the remaining information is not highly intimate or embarrassing information of no legitimate public concern and may not be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.102(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” Gov’t Code § 552.102(a). We understand you to assert the privacy analysis under section 552.102(a) is the same as the common-law privacy test under section 552.101 of the Government Code as discussed above. *See Indus. Found*, 540 S.W.2d at 685. In *Hubert v. Harte-Hanks Texas Newspapers, Inc.*, 652 S.W.2d 546, 549-51 (Tex. App.—Austin 1983, *writ ref’d n.r.e.*), the Third Court of Appeals ruled the privacy test under section 552.102(a) is the same as the *Industrial Foundation* privacy test. However, the Texas Supreme Court expressly disagreed with *Hubert’s* interpretation of section 552.102(a) and held its privacy standard differs from the *Industrial Foundation* test under section 552.101. *See Tex. Comptroller of Pub. Accounts v. Attorney Gen. of Tex.*, 354 S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). The supreme court then considered the applicability of section 552.102, and held section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure the dates of birth of state employees in the payroll database of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. *See id.* at 346. Upon review, we find the sheriff’s office must withhold the dates of birth we have marked under section 552.102(a) of the Government Code. However, we find none of the remaining information is subject to section 552.102(a) of the Government Code and none of it may be withheld on that basis.

Section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure the home addresses, home telephone numbers, emergency contact information, and social security number of a peace officer, as well as information that reveals whether the peace officer has family members, regardless of whether the peace officer complies with section 552.024 or section 552.1175 of the Government Code. Gov’t Code § 552.117(a). Section 552.117(a)(2) applies to peace officers as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Section 552.117(a)(2) also applies to the personal cellular telephone number of a current or former official or employee of a governmental body, provided the cellular telephone service is not paid by a governmental body. *See Open Records Decision No. 506* at 5-6 (1988) (section 552.117 not applicable to cellular telephone numbers paid for by governmental body and intended for official use). We understand the information we have marked pertains to a currently licensed peace officer as defined by article 2.12. Accordingly, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code; however, the marked cellular telephone number may be withheld only if the cellular service is not paid for by a governmental body.

Some of the remaining information is subject to section 552.1175 of the Government Code.<sup>2</sup> Section 552.1175 of the Government Code provides, in part, the following:

Information that relates to the home address, home telephone number, emergency contact information, or social security number of [a peace officer

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<sup>2</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise mandatory exceptions on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 481* (1987), *480* (1987), *470* (1987).

as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure], or that reveals whether the individual has family members is confidential and may not be disclosed to the public under this chapter if the individual to whom the information relates:

- (1) chooses to restrict public access to the information; and
- (2) notifies the governmental body of the individual's choice on a form provided by the governmental body, accompanied by evidence of the individual's status.

Gov't Code § 552.1175(b). The remaining information contains information pertaining to peace officers not employed by the sheriff's office. We note a post office box number is not a "home address" for purposes of section 552.1175. *See* Open Records Decision No. 622 at 6 (1994). Accordingly, to the extent the information we have marked relates to individuals who are currently licensed as peace officers and who elect to restrict access to the information in accordance with section 552.1175(b), the sheriff's office must withhold the marked information under section 552.1175 of the Government Code. Conversely, if the individuals whose information is at issue are not currently licensed as peace officers or do not elect to restrict access to the information in accordance with section 552.1175(b), the marked information may not be withheld under section 552.1175 of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or a personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code. § 552.130. Upon review, we find the sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.136(b) of the Government Code states that "[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental body is confidential." *Id.* § 552.136(b). This office has determined that insurance policy numbers are access device numbers for purposes of section 552.136. *See id.* § 552.136(a) (defining "access device"). Therefore, the sheriff's office must withhold the insurance policy number we have marked under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

Section 552.137 excepts from disclosure "an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body" unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). *See id.* § 552.137(a)-(c). The e-mail address at issue is not excluded by subsection (c). Therefore, the sheriff's office must withhold the personal e-mail address we have marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owner affirmatively consents to its public disclosure.

Section 552.140 of the Government Code provides a military veteran's DD-214 form or other military discharge record that is first recorded with or that otherwise first comes into the possession of a governmental body on or after September 1, 2003 is confidential for a period of seventy-five years and may only be disclosed in accordance with section 552.140 or in accordance with a court order. *See id.* § 552.140(a)-(b). We have marked a DD-214 form. You do not inform us when the sheriff's office came into possession of this form. Therefore, we must rule conditionally. If the sheriff's office came into possession of the form we have marked on or after September 1, 2003, the sheriff's office must withhold it under section 552.140 of the Government Code. If the sheriff's office received the form before September 1, 2003, then the sheriff's office may not withhold it pursuant to section 552.140 of the Government Code. In that instance, the sheriff's office must withhold the personal information we have marked on this form pursuant to sections 552.102 and 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code.

In summary, the sheriff's office must withhold the following under section 552.101 of the Government Code: (1) the L-2 Declaration of Medical Condition and L-3 Declaration of Psychological and Emotional Health forms we have marked under section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code; (2) the CHRI we have marked under section 411.083 of the Government Code; (3) the information we have marked under section 560.003 of the Government Code; and (4) the information we have marked under common-law privacy. The sheriff's office must withhold the dates of birth we have marked under section 552.102 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code; however, the marked cellular telephone number may be withheld only if the cellular service is not paid for by a governmental body. The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.1175 if the individuals are currently licensed as peace officers and elected to restrict access to their information in accordance with section 552.1175(b). The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under sections 552.130 and 552.136 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the e-mail address we have marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owner has consented to its release. The sheriff's office must withhold the military discharge form we have marked under section 552.140 if the military discharge form came into the sheriff's office's possession on or after September 1, 2003. The remaining information must be released.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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<sup>3</sup>We note Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009) is a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold certain categories of information, including L-2 and L-3 declarations under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 1701.306 of the Occupations Code; fingerprints under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code; e-mail addresses of members of the public under section 552.137 of the Government Code; and a military discharge record under section 552.140 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

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](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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thana Hussaini', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Thana Hussaini  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TH/som

Ref: ID# 481334

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)