



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 12, 2015

Mr. Brendan W. Guy  
Assistant Criminal District Attorney  
County of Victoria  
205 North Bridge, Suite 301  
Victoria, Texas 77901-8085

OR2015-09206

Dear Mr. Guy:

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# 563147.

The Victoria County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all documents related to a named individual during a specified time period, including a specified case. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note you have not submitted information responsive to the portion of the request regarding the specified case. To the extent any information responsive to this portion of the request existed on the date the sheriff's office received the request, we assume the sheriff's office has released it. If the sheriff's office has not released any such information, it must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) 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 satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. This office has found 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. United States 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 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 reports pertaining to a named individual during a specified time period. This request requires the sheriff's office to compile the named individual's criminal history and implicates the named individual's right to privacy. Therefore, to the extent the sheriff's office maintains law enforcement records, other than the specified case, listing the named individual as a suspect, arrestee, or criminal defendant, the sheriff's office must withhold such information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.<sup>1</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.

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.

Ref: ID# 563147

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)