



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 17, 2015

Ms. Susan Fillion  
Assistant County Attorney  
County of Harris  
Harris County Sheriff's Office  
1200 Baker Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002-1206

OR2015-14566

Dear Ms. Fillion:

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# 574593 (HCSO# 14SO600674).

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for a specified incident report. The sheriff's office claims the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception 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. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201(a) of the Family Code provides as follows:

[T]he 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). You assert the requested information was used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of section 261.201). Upon review, we find the information is within the scope of section 261.201. However, section 261.201(a) provides information encompassed by this section may be disclosed “for purposes consistent with [the Family Code] and applicable federal or state law.” *Id.* § 261.201(a).

We note chapter 411 of the Government Code constitutes “applicable state law” in this instance. The requestor is an enforcement investigator with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (the “TDLR”). Sections 411.093 and 411.122 of the Government Code both provide the TDLR is entitled to obtain criminal history record information maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) that relates to a person who is an applicant for a license issued by the TDLR. Gov’t Code §§ 411.093(a), .122(a)(1), .122(d)(10). Section 411.087 of the Government Code provides an agency that is entitled to obtain criminal history record information from DPS is also authorized to “obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that criminal justice agency[.]” *Id.* § 411.087(a)(2). Criminal history record information is defined as “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.” *See id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, when read together, sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code may grant the TDLR a right of access to criminal history record information in the submitted incident report.

The requestor states in her request the requested information relates to an applicant for a license issued by the TDLR. Thus, if the sheriff’s office determines release of the requested report is consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the sheriff’s office must release the information that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions pursuant to sections 411.087, 411.093, and 411.122 of the Government Code, but must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. If the sheriff’s office determines release of the information in the submitted documents is not consistent with the purposes of the Family Code, then the sheriff’s office must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 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.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,



James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/cbz

Ref: ID# 574593

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)