



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 11, 2016

Ms. Sarah Stallberg
Assistant County Attorney
County of Montgomery
501 North Thompson, Suite 300
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2016-00766

Dear Ms. Stallberg:

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# 594002 (ORR No. 15PIA679).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for a specified incident report. 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.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of 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. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). In considering whether a public citizen's date of birth is private, the Third Court of Appeals looked to the supreme court's rationale in *Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts v. Attorney General of Texas*, 354

S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). *Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). The supreme court concluded public employees' dates of birth are private under section 552.102 of the Government Code because the employees' privacy interest substantially outweighed the negligible public interest in disclosure.¹ *Tex. Comptroller*, 354 S.W.3d at 347-48. Based on *Texas Comptroller*, the court of appeals concluded the privacy rights of public employees apply equally to public citizens, and thus, public citizens' dates of birth are also protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *City of Dallas*, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3. Upon review, we find some of the submitted information satisfies the standard articulated by the Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find you have not demonstrated any of the remaining information at issue is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold any portion of the remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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 personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a). The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. However, none of the remaining information is subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code, and the sheriff's office may not withhold it on that basis.

In summary, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

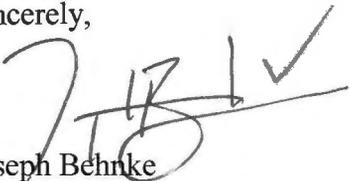
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for

¹Section 552.102(a) 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).

providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Joseph Behnke
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/som

Ref: ID# 594002

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)