



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 29, 2016

Ms. Victoria D. Honey
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, Third Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2016-06926

Dear Ms. Honey:

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# 603648 (PIR No. W048397).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for a specified police report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information. We have also received and considered comments from the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (providing that interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." *Id.* § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [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.

...

(k) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), an investigating agency, other than the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services] or the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, on request, shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, or to the child if the child is at least 18 years of age, information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section. The investigating agency shall withhold information under this subsection if the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of the child requesting the information is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect.

(l) Before a child or a parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (k), the custodian of the record or file must redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a victim or witness under 18 years of age unless that victim or witness is:

(A) the child who is the subject of the report; or

(B) another child of the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative requesting the information; [and]

...

(3) the identity of the person who made the report.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (k), (l)(1),(3). Upon review, we find the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 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), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). Thus, the submitted information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. However, the requestor is a parent of the child victim named in the submitted information, and she is not alleged to have committed the suspected abuse. Therefore, the submitted information may not be withheld from the requestor under section 261.201(a). *See id.* § 261.201(k). However, section 261.201(l)(1) states the personally identifiable information of a victim or witness who is under the age of eighteen and is not a child of the

parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative requesting the information must be withheld from disclosure. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(1). Thus, the city must withhold the identifying information of the listed witnesses under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(1)(1) of the Family Code. Further, section 261.201(1)(3) states the identity of the reporting party must be withheld. *Id.* § 261.201(1)(3). Thus, in conjunction with section 552.101 of the Government Code, the city must withhold the identifying information of the listed reporting party under subsection 261.201(1)(3) of the Family Code. The city must release the remaining information to this requestor.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.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,



Lee Seidlits
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CLS/bw

Ref: ID# 603648

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹The requestor has a special right of access under section 261.201(k) of the Family Code to the information being released. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(k). Thus, if the city receives another request for this same information from an individual who does not have a right of access to the information, the city should request another ruling. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302; Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001).