



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 10, 2016

Mr. Guillermo Trevino
Assistant City Attorney
City of Forth Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, Third Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2016-10570

Dear Mr. Trevino:

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# 609241 (PIR No. W049596).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state the department will release most of the requested information. 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.

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 section 411.153 of the Government Code, which provides, as follows:

- (a) A DNA record stored in the DNA database is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under [the Act].
- (b) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly discloses to an unauthorized recipient information in a DNA record or information related to a DNA analysis of a sample collected under this subchapter.

(c) An offense under this section is a state jail felony.

(d) A violation under this section constitutes official misconduct.

Gov't Code § 411.153. A "DNA record" means the results of a forensic DNA analysis performed by a DNA laboratory. *See id.* § 411.141(6)-(7). "Forensic analysis" is defined as "a medical, chemical, toxicologic, ballistic, or other expert examination or test performed on physical evidence, including DNA evidence, for the purpose of determining the connection of the evidence to a criminal action." *See* Crim. Proc. Code art. 38.35(4); *see also* Gov't Code § 411.141(10) (providing that "forensic analysis" has meaning assigned by article 38.35). A "DNA database" means "one or more databases that contain forensic DNA records maintained by the director of [the Department of Public Safety ("DPS")]." Gov't Code § 411.141(5); *see id.* § 411.001(3).

The director of DPS is required to establish certain procedures for DNA laboratories. *See id.* §§ 411.142(h) (requiring director establish standards for DNA analysis), .144(a). Section 411.144 of the Government Code provides that a DNA laboratory conducting a forensic DNA analysis under subchapter G of chapter 411 shall comply with subchapter G and the rules adopted under subchapter G. *See id.* § 411.144(d); 37 T.A.C. §§ 28.81, .82 (describing minimum standards by which forensic DNA laboratory must abide); *see also* Gov't Code § 411.147(b). The director of DPS may release a DNA record in certain instances, including to a criminal justice agency for criminal justice or law enforcement purposes. *See* Gov't Code § 411.147(c).

The department states the information you have marked consists of records relating to DNA analyses of samples collected under subchapter G of chapter 411 of the Government Code. We note this information is contained in records of a criminal investigation and appears to be the result of forensic DNA analyses performed by a DNA laboratory in accordance with DPS regulations. Therefore, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.153 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 414.009 of the Government Code, which provides, in part, as follows:

(a) A person who is a member or employee of the [Texas Crime Stoppers Council] or who accepts a report of criminal activity on behalf of a crime stoppers organization commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly divulges to a person not employed by a law enforcement agency the content of a report of a criminal act or the identity of the person who made the report without the consent of the person who made the report.

Id. § 414.009(a). The department states the information you have marked consists of reports, tips, and information submitted to a crime stoppers organization or a person who accepted a report of criminal activity on behalf of a crime stoppers organization. *See id.* § 414.001(2)(B) (defining “crime stoppers organization” as public organization operated on local or statewide level, that pays rewards to persons who report to organization information about criminal activity, and that forwards information to appropriate law enforcement agency). Accordingly, we conclude the information you marked is confidential under section 414.009 of the Government Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.153 of the Government Code and section 414.009 of the Government 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, 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,



Britni Ramirez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BR/dls

Ref: ID# 609241

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)