



KEN PAXTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 13, 2016

Mr. Matthew L. Grove  
Assistant County Attorney  
Fort Bend County  
401 Jackson Street, Third Floor  
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2016-13456

Dear Mr. Grove:

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# 613921.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for (1) information pertaining to two named sheriff's office deputies and (2) information pertaining to a specified incident. You state the sheriff's office does not have some of the requested information.<sup>1</sup> You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.115 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, we note the sheriff's office has redacted portions of the submitted information. We understand some of the redactions were made under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

<sup>2</sup>We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Code pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 670 (2001).<sup>3</sup> You have further redacted motor vehicle record information pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code and information pursuant to section 552.136(c) of the Government Code.<sup>4</sup> However, we note the sheriff's office also redacted dates of birth and other portions of the submitted information. A governmental body may not withhold information from the public without asking this office for a decision under section 552.301 of the Government Code unless a provision of the Act or a previous determination specifically authorizes the governmental body to do so. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (previous determinations). You do not assert, nor does our review of the records indicate, the sheriff's office has been authorized to withhold a date of birth or the remaining redacted information without seeking a ruling from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a); ORD 673. Therefore, information must be submitted in a manner that enables this office to determine whether the information comes within the scope of an exception to disclosure. In this instance, we can discern the nature of the redacted information; thus, being deprived of this information does not inhibit our ability to make a ruling. In the future, however, the sheriff's office should refrain from redacting any information it is not authorized to withhold in seeking an open records ruling. Failure to do so may result in the presumption the redacted information is public. *See* Gov't Code § 552.302.

Next, we note the submitted information contains peace officers' Texas Commission on Law Enforcement ("TCOLE") identification numbers.<sup>5</sup> Section 552.002(a) of the Government Code defines "public information" as information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

- (1) by a governmental body;
- (2) for a governmental body and the governmental body:
  - (A) owns the information;

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<sup>3</sup>Open Records Decision No. 670 authorizes all governmental bodies to withhold the current and former home addresses and telephone numbers, personal cellular telephone and pager numbers, social security numbers, and family member information of peace officers under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision. ORD 670 at 6.

<sup>4</sup>Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in section 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e). Section 552.136(c) of the Government Code permits a governmental body to withhold the information described in section 552.136(b) without the necessity of seeking a decision from this office. *See id.* § 552.136(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.136(e). *See id.* § 552.136(d), (e).

<sup>5</sup>The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education was renamed the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement by the 83rd Legislature. *See* Act of May 6, 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., ch. 93, § 1.01, 2013 Tex. Gen. Laws 174, 174.

(B) has a right of access to the information; or

(C) spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information; or

(3) by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in the officer's or employee's official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body.

*Id.* § 552.002(a). In Open Records Decision No. 581 (1990), this office determined certain computer information, such as source codes, documentation information, and other computer programming, that has no significance other than its use as a tool for the maintenance, manipulation, or protection of public property is not the kind of information made public under section 552.021 of the Government Code. We understand an officer's TCOLE identification number is a unique computer-generated number assigned to peace officers for identification in the TCOLE's electronic database and may be used as an access device number on the TCOLE website. Accordingly, we find the officers' TCOLE identification numbers in the submitted information do not constitute public information under section 552.002 of the Government Code. Therefore, the TCOLE identification numbers are not subject to the Act and need not be released to the requestor.<sup>6</sup>

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. This exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential, such as section 560.003 of the Government Code, which provides, "[a] biometric identifier in the possession of a governmental body is exempt from disclosure under [the Act]." *Id.* § 560.003; *see id.* § 560.001(1) ("biometric identifier" means retina or iris scan, fingerprint, voiceprint, or record of hand or face geometry). However, section 560.002 of the Government Code provides, "[a] governmental body that possesses a biometric identifier of an individual . . . may not sell, lease, or otherwise disclose the biometric identifier to another person unless . . . the individual consents to the disclosure[.]" *Id.* § 560.002(1)(A). We have marked the fingerprints in Exhibit C. You do not inform us, and the submitted information does not indicate, section 560.002 permits disclosure of the fingerprint information. Therefore, the sheriff's office must withhold the fingerprints we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code.<sup>7</sup>

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses laws that make criminal history record information ("CHRI") confidential. CHRI generated by the National Crime

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<sup>6</sup>As we are able to make this determination, we do not address your arguments against the disclosure of this information.

<sup>7</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

Information Center or by the Texas Crime Information Center is confidential under federal and state law. Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI states obtain from the federal government or other states. Open Records Decision No. 565 at 7 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual law with respect to CHRI it generates. *Id.* at 10-12. Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) maintains, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F or subchapter E-1 of the Government Code. *See Gov’t Code* § 411.083(a). Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) of the Government Code authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for criminal justice purposes. *See id.* § 411.089(b)(1). We note section 411.083 does not apply to active warrant information or other information relating to one’s current involvement in the criminal justice system. *See id.* § 411.081(b) (police department allowed to disclose information pertaining to person’s current involvement in the criminal justice system). Further, CHRI does not include driving record information. *See id.* § 411.082(2)(B). Upon review, we find the information we have marked constitutes confidential CHRI. This information must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.<sup>8</sup> However, the remaining information does not constitute confidential CHRI; thus, the sheriff’s office may not withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 411.192 of the Government Code, which governs the release of information maintained by DPS concerning the licensure of an individual to carry a concealed handgun. Section 411.192 provides, in relevant part:

(a) [DPS] shall disclose to a criminal justice agency information contained in its files and records regarding whether a named individual or any individual named in a specified list is licensed under this subchapter. Information on an individual subject to disclosure under this section includes the individual’s name, date of birth, gender, race, zip code, telephone number, e-mail address, and Internet website address. Except as otherwise provided by this section and by Section 411.193, all other records maintained under this subchapter are confidential and are not subject to mandatory disclosure under the [Act].

(b) An applicant or license holder may be furnished a copy of disclosable records regarding the applicant or license holder on request and the payment of a reasonable fee.

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<sup>8</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

*Id.* § 411.192(a)-(b). The information we have marked consists of concealed handgun license information obtained from DPS. In this instance, the requestor is neither the license holder nor a criminal justice agency. Thus, the sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.192 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code, which governs the public availability of information submitted to TCOLE under subchapter J of chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Section 1701.454 provides as follows:

(a) All information submitted to the [TCOLE] under this subchapter is confidential and is not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, unless the person resigned or was terminated due to substantiated incidents of excessive force or violations of the law other than traffic offenses.

(b) Except as provided by this subchapter, a [TCOLE] member or other person may not release information submitted under this subchapter.

Occ. Code § 1701.454. You seek to withhold the F-5 History Reports and F5R Form in the submitted information under section 1701.454. Upon review, we find the information at issue was not submitted to TCOLE under subchapter J of chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Accordingly, we conclude the sheriff's office may not withhold the F-5 History Reports and F5R Form under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.454 of the Occupations Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the Family and Medical Leave Act (the "FMLA"). *See* 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601 *et seq.* Section 825.500 of chapter V of title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations identifies the record-keeping requirements for employers that are subject to the FMLA. Section 825.500(g) reads as follows:

[r]ecords and documents relating to medical certifications, recertifications or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of FMLA, shall be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files/records from the usual personnel files. If the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) is applicable, records and documents created for purposes of FMLA containing family medical history or genetic information as defined in GINA shall be maintained in accordance with the confidentiality requirements of Title II of GINA (*see* 29 C.F.R. 1635.9), which permit such information to be disclosed consistent with the requirements of FMLA. If the [Americans with Disabilities Act (the "ADA")], as amended, is also applicable, such records shall be maintained in conformance with ADA confidentiality requirements . . . , except that:

- (1) Supervisors and managers may be informed regarding necessary restrictions on the work or duties of an employee and necessary accommodations;
- (2) First aid and safety personnel may be informed (when appropriate) if the employee's physical or medical condition might require emergency treatment; and
- (3) Government officials investigating compliance with FMLA (or other pertinent law) shall be provided relevant information upon request.

29 C.F.R. § 825.500(g). You assert some of the remaining information is confidential under the FMLA. However, you have not established any of this information relates to medical certifications, recertifications, or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of the FMLA. Consequently, we find this information is not confidential under the FMLA, and the sheriff's office may not withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

Section 552.102(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy[.]"<sup>9</sup> Gov't Code § 552.102(a). The Texas Supreme Court held section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure the dates of birth of state employees in the payroll database of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. *Tex. Comptroller of Pub. Accounts v. Attorney Gen. of Tex.*, 354 S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). Upon review, we find the sheriff's office must withhold the dates of birth, a representative sample of which we have marked, under section 552.102(a) of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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 highly intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. This office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). We note the doctrine of common-law privacy generally protects the identifying information of juvenile victims of abuse and neglect. *See* Open Records Decision No. 394 (1983); *cf.* Fam. Code § 261.201. This office has also found personal financial information not relating to the financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body is generally highly

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<sup>9</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body. Open Records Decision No. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992), 545 (1990) (deferred compensation information, participation in voluntary investment program, election of optional insurance coverage, mortgage payments, assets, bills, and credit history). Additionally, 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. However, this office has found the public has a legitimate interest in information relating to applicants and employees of governmental bodies and their employment qualifications and job performance, especially where the applicant was seeking a position in law enforcement. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 562 at 10 (1990), 470 at 4 (1987) (public has legitimate interest in job qualifications and performance of public employees), 444 (1986), 423 at 2 (1984) (scope of public employee privacy is narrow). Upon review, we find the information we have marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas 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.<sup>10</sup> However, the sheriff's office has failed to demonstrate the remaining information is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.108(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706, 710 (Tex. 1977). The sheriff's office states Exhibit D relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of Exhibit D would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177, 186-87 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Therefore, the sheriff's office may withhold Exhibit D under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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<sup>10</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

Section 552.115 excepts from disclosure “[a] birth or death record maintained by the bureau of vital statistics unit of the Department of State Health Services or a local registration official[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.115(a). Section 552.115 is applicable only to information maintained by the bureau of vital statistics unit or local registration official. *See* Open Records Decision No. 338 (1982). Therefore, because it is maintained by the sheriff’s office, the submitted birth certificate may not be withheld under section 552.115 of the Government Code.

Section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure the home address, home telephone number, emergency contact information, and social security number of a peace officer, as well as information that reveals whether the peace officer has family members, regardless of whether the peace officer complies with sections 552.024 and 552.1175 of the Government Code. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.117(a)(2). Section 552.117(a)(2) applies to peace officers as defined by article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. As noted above, the sheriff’s office has redacted information under sections 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 670. Upon review, the sheriff’s office must withhold the information you have redacted, and the additional information we have marked, under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code.

As noted above, you have redacted some information pursuant to section 552.130(c) of the Government Code. We note the remaining information contains additional information subject to section 552.130. 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 id.* § 552.130. Accordingly, the sheriff’s office must withhold the motor vehicle record information you redacted, and the additional motor vehicle record information we have marked, under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the TCOLE identification numbers are not subject to the Act and need not be released to the requestor. The sheriff’s office must withhold the fingerprints we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code. The sheriff’s office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.083 of the Government Code. The sheriff’s office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.192 of the Government Code. The sheriff’s office must withhold the dates of birth, a representative sample of which we have marked, under section 552.102(a) of the Government Code. 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 may withhold Exhibit D under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The sheriff’s office must withhold the information you have redacted, and the additional information we have marked, under section 552.117(a)(2) of the Government Code. The sheriff’s office must withhold the motor vehicle record information you redacted, and the additional motor

vehicle record 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](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,



Cristian Rosas-Grillet  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CRG/bw

Ref: ID# 613921

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)