

November 25, 2003

Sheriff Gary Vowell
Tift County Sheriff's Department
P.O. Box 46
Tifton, GA 31793

Dear Sheriff Vowell:

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. We are an organization that seeks to advance the cause of open government and monitors freedom of information issues throughout this state.

It has been brought to our attention that the Tift County Sheriff's Department has refused to release mug shots. We are concerned that this practice is contrary to the state's public policy and open records law. Georgia's Open Records Act provides that arrest and booking records along with mugs shots of an individual are subject to the Act's disclosure requirements. *See* O.C.G.A. § 50-18-72(a)(4); O.C.G.A. § 17-4-27; *Lebis v. State*, 212 Ga. App. 481, 442 S.E.2d 786 (1994).

I have enclosed a copy of *Georgia Law Enforcement And the Open Records Act*, which discusses this issue and well as other similar ones.

We would appreciate an explanation as to what will be done to remedy this violation that toes against the interest of the public, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience in this regard. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hollie Manheimer
Executive Director