OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL • STATE OF TEXAS
JOHN CORNYN

September 18, 2000

Ms. Regina Grimes
Office of the General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P. O. Box 13401, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2000-3588

Dear Ms. Grimes:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 139246.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for the department parole division violation review form used by halfway houses to report late arrivals of a named individual, any other record submitted as part of the request for warrant, and the recommendation for warrant withdrawal. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with Government Code section 508.313. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 excepts from required public disclosure information that is considered confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 508.313 of the Government Code provides:

> (a) All information obtained and maintained, including a victim protest letter or other correspondence, a victim impact statement, a list of inmates eligible for release on parole, and an arrest record of an inmate, is confidential and privileged if the information relates to:

(1) an inmate of the institutional division subject to release on parole, release to mandatory supervision, or executive clemency;

(2) a releasee; or

(3) a person directly identified in any proposed plan of release for an inmate.

You assert that the submitted information consist of pages included in release plan records obtained and maintained by the Board of Pardons and Paroles. You state that the documents relate to "an inmate of the institutional division subject to release on parole, release to mandatory supervision, or executive clemency." After reviewing your arguments and the submitted documents, we conclude that the requested information is made confidential in its entirety by section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 508.313(a)(1) of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

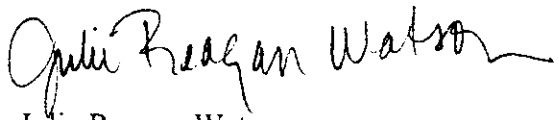
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Julie Reagan Watson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JRW/pr

Ref: ID# 139246

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Bob Mahlburg
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
400 West 7th Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102
(w/o enclosures)