OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL · STATE OF TEXAS
JOHN CORNYN

July 23, 2001

Mr. G. Chadwick Weaver
First Assistant City Attorney
City of Midland
300 North Loraine, Room 320
Midland, Texas 79702-1152

OR2001-3188

Dear Mr. Weaver:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 151537.

The City of Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for a certain criminal investigation. You have released the requested information except for the driver's license number, which you claim is excepted from disclosure.

Initially, we note that federal law may prohibit disclosure of the social security number located in the document. A social security number is excepted from required public disclosure under section 552.101 of the act in conjunction with the 1990 amendments to the federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 405(c)(2)(C)(viii)(I), if it was obtained or is maintained by a governmental body pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990. *See* Open Records Decision No. 622 (1994). Based on the information you have provided, we are unable to determine whether the social security number is confidential under this federal statute. We note, however, that section 552.352 of the Public Information Act imposes criminal penalties for the release of confidential information.

As for the driver's license number, section 552.130 of the Government Code requires that Texas driver's license numbers must be withheld. Section 552.130 excepts from disclosure information related to a driver's license issued by an agency of this state.

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).

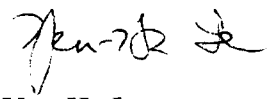
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following 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 Hadassah Schloss at 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,



Yen-Ha Le
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

YHL/dam/sdk

Ref: ID# 151537

Enc: Submitted document

c: Ms. Kristine A. Burdette
Whiteman, Burdette, and Radman
P.O. Box 2798
Fairmont, West Virginia 26555-2798
(w/o enclosures)