



OFFICE of the ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

July 29, 2003

Mr. Mark E. Dempsey
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

OR2003-5196

Dear Mr. Dempsey:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 184941.

The City of Garland Police Department (the "department") received a request for all information related to a specified police report. You indicate that you have released some information, including basic, front page information, to the requestor. However, you claim that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108, the "law enforcement exception," provides in relevant part as follows:

(a) [i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from the requirements of 552.021 if:

- (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation or prosecution of crime; [or]
- (2) it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1), (a)(2). You contend that some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under subsections 552.108(a)(1) and 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code. We note, however, that the protections offered by subsections

552.108(a)(1) and 552.108(a)(2) are, generally speaking, mutually exclusive. Section 552.108(a)(1) generally applies to information held by law-enforcement agencies that pertains to pending criminal investigations or prosecutions. Section 552.108(a)(2) protects law enforcement records that pertain to criminal investigations and prosecutions that have concluded in a result other than a criminal conviction or deferred adjudication. However, based on our review of the submitted information and your arguments, we understand you to assert that the information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Therefore, we conclude that you have met your burden of demonstrating the applicability of section 552.108(a)(1) in this instance. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(a)(1), (b)(1), .301(e)(1)(a); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). Therefore, you may withhold the portions of the submitted information that you have designated pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We now turn to your argument that some of the submitted information is confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code. Section 552.101 excepts "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Industrial Found. v. Texas Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The type of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. 540 S.W.2d at 683.

This office has found that the following types of information are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy: some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses, *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps), personal financial information not relating to the financial transaction between an individual and a governmental body, *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 (1992), 545 (1990), information concerning the intimate relations between individuals and their family members, *see* Open Records Decision No. 470 (1987), and identities of victims of sexual abuse, *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 440 (1986), 393 (1983), 339 (1982). Upon review of the information, we conclude that portions of it are highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public interest. Therefore, you must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 and common-law privacy.

The submitted documents contain social security numbers. Social security numbers may be withheld in some circumstances under section 552.101 of the Government Code. A social security number or "related record" may be excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 in conjunction with the 1990 amendments to the federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 405(c)(2)(C)(viii)(I). *See* Open Records Decision No. 622 (1994). These amendments make confidential social security numbers and related records that are obtained and

maintained by a state agency or political subdivision of the state pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990. *See id.* We have no basis for concluding that the social security numbers in the documents are confidential under section 405(c)(2)(C)(viii)(I), and therefore excepted from public disclosure under section 552.101 on the basis of that federal provision. We caution, however, that section 552.352 of the Public Information Act imposes criminal penalties for the release of confidential information. Prior to releasing any social security number, you should ensure that no such information was obtained or is maintained by the department pursuant to any provision of law, enacted on or after October 1, 1990.

Finally, you contend that some of the submitted information is confidential under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Section 552.130 provides in relevant part:

(a) Information is excepted from the requirement of Section 552.021 if the information relates to:

- (1) a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state; [or]
- (2) a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state[.]

You must withhold the Texas driver's license information that we have marked under section 552.130. We note that you have marked some identification numbers under section 552.130. These numbers do not appear to be driver's license numbers or any other type of identification number that is excepted by section 552.130. Therefore, you may not withhold those numbers under section 552.130.

In summary, you may withhold the portions of the submitted information that you have designated under section 552.108. You must withhold the information that we have marked under section 552.101 and common-law privacy. Social security numbers may be confidential under federal law. You must withhold the driver's license information that we have marked under section 552.130. You must release the remaining information to the requestor.

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 Dep't of Pub. 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 Texas Building and Procurement 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. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. 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,



Jennifer E. Berry
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JEB/sdk

Ref: ID# 184941

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Ms. Jodi Kopaniky
626 Perdido Drive
Garland, Texas 75043
(w/o enclosures)