



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 8, 2003

Mr. Miles K. Risley  
Senior Assistant City Attorney  
City of Victoria  
P. O. Box 1758  
Victoria, Texas 77902-1758

OR2003-5536

Dear Mr. Risley:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 185617.

The City of Victoria (the "city") received a request for a variety of information related to the city's "continued successful implementation of SB 1074, the racial profiling law." You state that some responsive information will be released to the requestor. You claim, however, that portions of the remaining requested information are exempted from disclosure pursuant to sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the submitted information.

You claim that a social security number that is contained within the submitted information is exempted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.101 in conjunction with federal law.<sup>1</sup> We note that the 1990 amendments to the federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 405(c)(2)(C)(viii)(I), make confidential social security numbers and related records that are obtained or 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* Open Records Decision No. 622 (1994). The city has cited no law, nor are we aware of any law, enacted on or after October 1, 1990, that authorizes it to obtain or maintain social security numbers. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Section 552.101 of the Government Code exempts from disclosure information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information that is protected from disclosure by other statutes.

we have no basis for concluding that this social security number is confidential under section 405(c)(2)(C)(viii)(I) of title 42 of the United States Code. We caution the city, however, that section 552.352 of the Government Code imposes criminal penalties for the release of confidential information. Prior to releasing this social security number, the city should ensure that it was not obtained and is not maintained by the city pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990.

You also claim that Texas motor vehicle information that is contained within the submitted information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to section 552.130 of the Government Code. Section 552.130 excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state or a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state. See Gov't Code § 552.130. Accordingly, we conclude that the city must withhold the Texas motor vehicle information that we have marked within the submitted information pursuant to section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, a social security number that is contained within the submitted information may be confidential under federal law. The city must withhold the Texas motor vehicle information that we have marked within the submitted information pursuant to section 552.130 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining submitted 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,



Ronald J. Bounds  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RJB/lmt

Ref: ID# 185617

Enc. Marked documents

c: Mr. Will Harrell  
Executive Director  
ACLU of Texas  
P.O. Box 3629  
Austin, Texas 78764  
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Eva Owens  
c/o Miles K. Risley  
City of Victoria  
P. O. Box 1758  
Victoria, Texas 77902-1758  
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Joyce E. Stevens  
Manager  
Driver Records Bureau  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001  
(w/o enclosures)