



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

June 28, 2005

Mr. J. David Dodd, III  
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager, & Smith, L.L.P.  
1800 Lincoln Plaza  
500 North Akard  
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2005-05722

Dear Mr. Dodd:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 227154.

The Allen Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information regarding the arrest of a named individual, including the interview statements of two other named individuals. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that the submitted information includes an arrest warrant and supporting affidavit. Article 15.26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states "[t]he arrest warrant, and any affidavit presented to the magistrate in support of the issuance of the warrant, is public information." Crim. Proc. Code art. 15.26. Provided the submitted arrest warrant was executed, it must be released to the requestor without redactions pursuant to article 15.26. To the extent that the submitted affidavit was presented to the magistrate in support of the issuance of the warrant, it also must be released without redactions pursuant to article 15.26.

We now turn to your arguments regarding the remaining submitted information. Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201(a) of the Family Code provides as follows:

The following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Because report number 04053761 consists of files, reports, records, communications, or working papers used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261, it is within the scope of section 261.201. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 as “person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes”), 261.001(1)(E) (definition of child abuse includes sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault under Penal Code sections 22.011 and 22.021). You do not indicate that the department has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Based on this assumption, we conclude that report number 04053761 is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code, and the department must withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).*

Next, we address your claim of section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining information. Section 552.108(a)(1) excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime [if] release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime.” Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See Gov’t Code §§ 552.108(a)(1), (b)(1), 552.301(e)(1)(A); see also Ex parte Pruitt, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977).* You indicate that the remaining information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based on this representation, we conclude that the release of the remaining information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), writ ref’d n.r.e., 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).*

However, section 552.108 does not except basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *See Gov’t Code § 552.108(c); Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).* We believe such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See 531 S.W.2d at 186-87.*

We note that section 552.147 of the Government Code<sup>1</sup> provides that “[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from” required public disclosure under the Act. Therefore, you must withhold the social security number of the arrestee pursuant to section 552.147.<sup>2</sup>

In summary, if the submitted arrest warrant was executed, it must be released to the requestor without redactions pursuant to article 15.26. To the extent that the submitted affidavit was presented to the magistrate in support of the issuance of the warrant, it also must be released without redactions pursuant to article 15.26. Report number 0453761 must be withheld in its entirety pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. Except for basic information, the remaining information may be withheld under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The arrestee’s social security number must be withheld under section 552.147 of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup>

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the

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<sup>1</sup>Added by Act of May 23, 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., S.B. 1485, § 1, sec. 552.147(a) (to be codified at Tex. Gov’t Code § 552.147).

<sup>2</sup>We note that section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person’s social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act.

<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining claim against disclosure, except to note that section 552.103 does not except basic information from public disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).

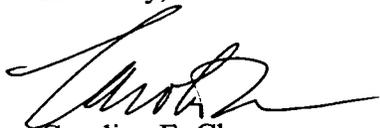
requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

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); *Tex. 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,



Caroline E. Cho  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CEC/sdk

Ref: ID# 227154

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Jeff Epling  
626 Stretford Lane  
Allen, Texas 75002  
(w/o enclosures)