



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 22, 2005

Ms. Michele Austin
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P. O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2005-07563

Dear Ms. Austin:

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# 233442.

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for incident reports, location inquiries, and service calls for a specified address. You state that you have provided the requestor with a portion of the request. You claim, however, that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision," and encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 58.007(c) of the Family Code provides in pertinent part as follows:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

¹We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. See Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and
- (3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapter B.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). The information in Exhibit 2 involves juvenile conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply. Thus, we agree that the information in Exhibit 2 is confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides in pertinent part:

- (a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:
 - (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation or prosecution of crime;
 - (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). 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), (a)(2), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the information in Exhibit 3 relates to an active criminal investigation, and that the information in Exhibit 6 relates to an active criminal prosecution. You further state that although the information in Exhibits 4 and 5 relate to "inactive criminal investigations," the statute of limitations has not run in these cases, and the investigations will be reactivated "in the event that additional information is obtained." Based upon these representations and our review, we determine that the release of Exhibits 3 through 6 would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime, and we therefore agree that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to this information. *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. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). You also advise that the information in Exhibit 7 pertains to a case that concluded in a final result

other than conviction or deferred adjudication. We therefore agree that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to Exhibit 7.

We note, however that basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*, 531 S.W.2d 177. See Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). We note that basic information includes a detailed description of the offense and the social security number of an arrestee. See *Houston Chronicle*, 531 S.W.2d at 186-187.

Although not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code, an arrestee's social security number is confidential pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code,² which provides that "[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from" required public disclosure under the Act. Accordingly, the city must withhold the arrestees' social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code.³

In summary, we conclude that the city (1) must withhold the information in Exhibit 2 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code; (2) the arrestees' social security numbers must be withheld under section 552.147 of the Government Code; and (3) with the exception of basic information, the city may withhold the remaining submitted information pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code. As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

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

²Added 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).

³We 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.

general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

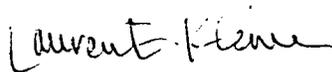
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records 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 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,



Lauren E. Kleine
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LEK/krl

Ref: ID# 233442

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Ronald A. Monshaugen
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(w/o enclosures)