



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 18, 2005

Ms. Loren B. Smith
Olson & Olson L.L.P.
Wortham Tower, Suite 600
2727 Allen Parkway
Houston, Texas 77019

OR2005-10474

Dear Ms. Smith:

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# 236838.

The City of Friendswood (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. 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.

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007. Section 58.007(c) reads as follows:

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:

- (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). A child, for purposes of section 58.007, is defined as person ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. *See id.* § 51.02(2)(A). Section 58.007 also is not applicable to information that relates to a juvenile as a complainant, victim, witness, or other involved party and not as a suspect or offender. We have reviewed the submitted information and find that no portion of it involves any identified suspect or offender who is a child as defined by section 51.02 of the Family Code. As such, none of the submitted information may be withheld under 552.101 of the Government Code on the basis of section 58.007 of the Family Code.

You also assert that the submitted information is excepted under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a)(2) excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate that the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. The city asserts that the submitted information pertains to a case that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Therefore, we agree that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to this information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing 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). Thus, with the exception of the basic front-page offense and arrest information, you may withhold the requested information under section 552.108(a)(2).

The social security number of an arrestee, although not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108, is excepted under section 552.147 of the Government Code. Section 552.147 provides that “[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from” required public disclosure under the Act. But section 552.147 also protects privacy interests, and the requestor thus has a right of access to her own social security number under section 552.023. Therefore, the department must withhold the remaining social security numbers contained in the basic information under section 552.147.

To conclude, with the exception of the basic front-page offense and arrest information, you may withhold the requested information under section 552.108(a)(2). However, the city must withhold the social security numbers, other than the requestor's, in the basic information under section 552.147. As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining claims, other than to note that basic information may not be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.103. Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).

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).

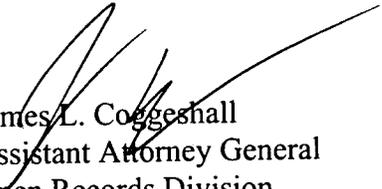
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records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



James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/jpa

Ref: ID# 236838

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Kimberly King
1402 Kent Way
Friendswood, Texas 77546
(w/o enclosures)