ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 14, 2006

Mr. Charles H. Weir
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2006-06291

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 251455.

The San Antonio Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified traffic accident. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception 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. Therefore, these documents are made public under article 15.26. The exceptions to disclosure found in the Act do not apply to information that is made public by other statutes. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 623 at 3 (1994), 525 at 3 (1989). Therefore, the department must release the submitted arrest warrant and supporting affidavit to the requestor.

We also note that the submitted information includes ST-3 accident report forms completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (Texas Peace Officer's Accident Report form). Section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and

confidential. Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, the Department of Public Safety or another governmental body is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides the governmental body with two or more pieces of information specified by the statute. *Id.* In the present request, the requestor has provided the required information; thus, the department must release the accident reports under this section. Although you contend that this information excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code, as noted above, the exceptions found in the Act generally do not apply to information that is made public by other statutes. *See* ORD 525 (statutory predecessor). Accordingly, the department must release the accident reports, which we have marked, to the requestor.

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 made confidential by other statutes. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007(c) provides 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:
>
> > (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 remaining submitted information involves juvenile delinquent conduct occurring after September 1, 1997. It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply. Therefore, the remaining submitted information is confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c) of the Family Code, and the department must withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis. As our ruling on this issue is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments.

In summary, the arrest warrant and supporting affidavit, which we have marked, must be released to the requestor in accordance with article 15.26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The submitted ST-3 form must be released to the requestor pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. The remaining submitted information is confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

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,

L. Joseph James
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LJJ/sdk

Ref: ID# 254455

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Dennis D. Dement
Dennis D. Dement and Associates
101 Hays Street, Suite 408
Dripping Springs, Texas 78620
(w/o enclosures)