



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 28, 2006

Mr. Stephen L. Enders  
Director  
West Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department  
800 East Overland, Suite 100  
El Paso, Texas 79901

OR2006-11310

Dear Mr. Enders:

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# 265299.

The West Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department (the "department") received a request for the probation file of a named individual. You claim that the information at issue is not subject to the Act. We have considered your arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

The Act generally requires the disclosure of information maintained by a "governmental body." However, while the Act's definition of a "governmental body" is broad, it specifically excludes "the judiciary." See Gov't Code § 552.003(1)(A), (B). In determining whether information falls within the judiciary exclusion to the Act, this office looks to whether the governmental entity at issue maintains the relevant records as an agent of the judiciary in regard to judicial, as opposed to administrative, functions. See Open Records Decision No. 646 at 2-3 (1996); see also *Benavides v. Lee*, 665 S.W.2d 151 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 1983, no writ). In Open Records Decision No. 646 (1996), this office determined that specific records regarding individuals on probation and subject to the direct supervision of a court that are held by a community supervision and corrections department fall within the Act's judiciary exclusion because such records are held on behalf of the judiciary. Thus, because the department maintains the submitted information on behalf of the judiciary, the

Act is inapplicable to the submitted information. We therefore conclude that the submitted information is not subject to public release under the Act.

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).

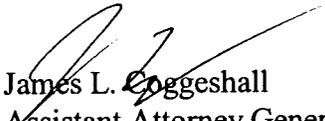
If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

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. 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,

  
James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/vh

Ref: ID# 265299

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Datascope Marquis Litigation Service, L.L.C.  
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(w/o enclosures)