



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 5, 2007

Mr. Rashaad V. Gambrell
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2007-03850

Dear Mr. Gambrell:

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# 275084.

The Houston Police Department (the "department") received a request for the front page information for eleven specified police reports and the uniform crime report for a specified address. You state that you will release most of the information to the requestor, but claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the 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. Section 552.101 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. For purposes of section 58.007, "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2). The relevant language of section 58.007(c) reads 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). We have reviewed the submitted information and find that Exhibit 2 involves allegations of juvenile conduct in violation of penal statutes that occurred after September 1, 1997. Thus, this information is subject to section 58.007. Since none of the exceptions in section 58.007 appear to apply, Exhibit 2 is confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and must be withheld pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 also encompasses information protected by section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

- (a) 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). Exhibit 3 consists of files, reports, records, communications, or working papers used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261; therefore, this information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *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”). You inform us that the department has not adopted any rules that govern

the release of this type of information. Thus, Exhibit 3 is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). Accordingly, the department must withhold Exhibit 3 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.

In summary, the department must withhold Exhibit 2 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. The department must also withhold Exhibit 3 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining argument 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 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,



Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/sdk

Ref: ID# 275084

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Devereaux Macy
2121 Allen Parkway #3014
Houston, Texas 77019
(w/o enclosures)