



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 29, 2008

Ms. Sylvia McClellan
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Section
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2008-01359

Dear Ms. McClellan:

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# 300810.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information regarding a specified address from April 2007 through the date of the request. You claim that portions of the requested information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.108(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). 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 id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), 301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You

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.

state that some of the submitted reports pertain to pending criminal investigations. Based on this representation, we conclude that the release of the reports you have marked would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *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).

Section 552.108 does not, however, except from required public disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Thus, the department must release the types of basic information listed in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Company 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). We note that the department has the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov’t Code § 552.007.

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 protected by other statutes. Section 261.201(a) of the Family Code 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 [chapter 261 of the Family Code] and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). You state that some of the submitted information was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse. Thus, this information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. You have not indicated that the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. We therefore assume no such rule exists. Given this assumption, we conclude that the submitted information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked, is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute)*. Accordingly, the department must withhold this information under section 552.101 of the Government Code as information confidential by law.

Section 552.101 also encompasses Family Code section 58.007. 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 at the time of the reported conduct. *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.

Some of the information at issue involves juvenile conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply; therefore, we agree that the information you have marked is confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. You must withhold the information you have marked from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

You raise section 552.101 in conjunction with chapter 772 of the Health and Safety Code. Section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code applies to an emergency 9-1-1 district for a county with a population over twenty thousand and established in accordance with chapter 772. Section 772.318 makes confidential the originating telephone numbers and addresses of 9-1-1 callers that are furnished by a service supplier. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 (1996). We understand the City of Dallas to be part of an emergency communication district that was established under section 772.318 and that the telephone numbers at issue were provided by a service provider. Thus, based on your representations and our review, we determine that the telephone numbers you have marked are confidential under section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 552.101 also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The type of information considered intimate and

embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. This office has found that some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy, *see* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps).

In addition, this office has found that a compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find that a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. We agree that the information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked, is protected by common-law privacy and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that "relates to . . . a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state [or] a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state." Gov't Code § 552.130. In accordance with section 552.130 of the Government Code, the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked.

In summary, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the reports that you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1). The department must withhold the information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. The department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. The department must withhold the marked phone numbers under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code. The department must withhold the information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information you have marked, and the additional information we have marked, pursuant to

section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released to the requestor.²

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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, 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).

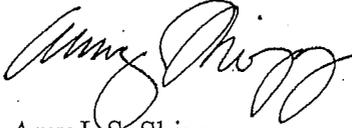
If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can challenge that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

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.

²We note that the submitted information contains social security numbers. 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.

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/mcf

Ref: ID# 300810

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. William Hoover
9900 Adleta Boulevard
Dallas, Texas 75243
(w/o enclosures)