



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

April 8, 2010

Mr. Reg Hargrove
Assistant Attorney General
Public Information Coordinator
General Counsel Division
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

OR2010-04948

Dear Mr. Hargrove:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 379997 (PIR No. 10-27391).

The Office of the Attorney General (the "OAG") received a request for information concerning former Jim Wells County District Attorney, Joe Frank Garza. The OAG has released some information and asserts the remainder is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the OAG's claimed exceptions to disclosure and have reviewed the submitted sample of information.¹

Section 552.108(a) 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(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why 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).

¹We assume 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.

The OAG argues section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable because the information relates to a pending criminal case conducted by its Criminal Investigations and Prosecution Divisions. Based upon this representation, we conclude release of the information 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).

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). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the OAG may withhold the rest of the information from disclosure based on section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Yen-Ha Le
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

YHL/sdk

Ref: ID# 379997

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²Because section 552.108 is dispositive, we do not address the OAG's other arguments for this information.