



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 22, 2010

Mr. Mark G. Mann
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

OR2010-09154

Dear Mr. Mann:

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# 383673 (GCA 10-0293).

The City of Garland (the "city") received a request for information relating to the arrest of a named individual. You state the city has released basic information with redactions pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code and Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).¹ You claim that some of the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code exempts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section 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

¹Section 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. Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009) is a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including Texas driver's license numbers under section 552.130 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

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 or 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). Upon review, we find that the information you have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Therefore, the city must withhold the marked information pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.²

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). 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 state that the information you have marked relates to a pending criminal case. Based upon this representation, we conclude that release of the marked 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). Accordingly, we conclude that the city may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the city must withhold the marked information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city may withhold the marked information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. As you raise no further exceptions, the remaining information must be released.

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

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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,



Tamara Wilcox
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TW/dls

Ref: ID# 383673

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)