



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 16, 2010

Mr. Daniel Bradford
Assistant County Attorney
Travis County
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2010-14067

Dear Mr. Bradford:

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# 393913.

The Travis County Attorney's Office (the "county") received a request for "all documents, video tapes, and telephone recordings" relating to a specified incident, including witness statements, affidavits, audio recordings or transcriptions, investigation records, video recordings, officers' field notes, and sobriety test results. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides in part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

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.

...

(4) it is information that:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) represents the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(4). A governmental body must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). In *Curry v. Walker*, 873 S.W.2d 379 (Tex. 1994), the Texas Supreme Court held that a request for a district attorney's "entire litigation file" was "too broad" and, quoting *National Union Fire Insurance Co. v. Valdez*, 863 S.W.2d 458 (Tex. 1993, orig. proceeding), held "the decision as to what to include in [the file] necessarily reveals the attorney's thought processes concerning the prosecution or defense of the case." *Curry*, 873 S.W.2d at 380. The present request is for "all documents, video tapes, and telephone recordings" relating to an investigation and prosecution. You contend the instant request is for the entire prosecution file. You assert release of the requested information would reveal the mental impressions or legal reasoning of prosecutors in the county attorney's office. Based on your representation, we conclude section 552.108(a)(4) is generally applicable to the submitted information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from required public disclosure "basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Thus, the district attorney 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). With the exception of basic information, the county may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(4) of the Government Code and the court's ruling in *Curry*. We note the county has the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov't Code § 552.007.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mack T. Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mack T. Harrison
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MTH/em

Ref: ID# 393913

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)