



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 4, 2011

Mr. Gary A. Scott
Assistant City Attorney
City of Conroe
P.O. Box 3066
Conroe, Texas 77305

OR2011-03128

Dear Mr. Scott:

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# 415628.

The City of Conroe (the "city") received a request for a specified police report. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 52.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

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 exception encompasses information that other statutes make confidential. Section 58.007 of the Family Code provides in part:

(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 Subchapters B, D, and E.

...

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e), (j); *see id.* § 51.03(a)-(b) (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating need for supervision" for purposes of Fam. Code tit. 3). Section 58.007(c) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997. *See* Act of June 2, 1997, 75th Leg., R.S., ch. 1086, §§ 20, 55(a), 1997 Tex. Gen. Laws 4179, 4187, 4199; Open Records Decision No. 644 (1996). Section 58.007(c) is not applicable to information that relates to a juvenile as a complainant, victim, witness, or other involved party and not as a suspect or offender.

We find the submitted information involves two juvenile offenders and is therefore generally confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. In this instance, however, the requestor may be a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two. In that event, the requestor would have a right to inspect law enforcement records concerning juvenile offender number two pursuant to section 58.007(e). *See id.* § 58.007(e). As we are unable to determine whether the requestor is a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two, we will rule conditionally. Thus, if the requestor is not a parent or guardian of juvenile offender

number two, then the city must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. But if the requestor is a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two, the city may not withhold the submitted information on that basis. In that event, however, any personally identifiable information concerning juvenile offender number one must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). For purposes of section 58.007(j), a juvenile suspect or offender is a child as defined by section 51.02 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 51.02(2) (“child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). Section 58.007(j) further provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Therefore, in the event the requestor is a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two, we will address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108 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 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). You state release of the submitted information would interfere with an active criminal case. Based on your representations, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable in this instance. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

We note 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). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The city must release basic offense and arrest information, including a detailed description of the offense, even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. However, any information that identifies or tends to identify juvenile offender number one may not be released as basic information. *See* Fam. Code § 58.007(j)(1). Except for basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

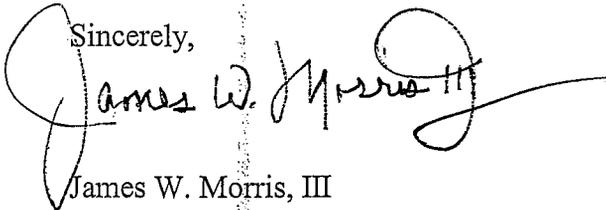
In summary, if the requestor is not a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two, the city must withhold the submitted information from the requestor in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. If the requestor is a parent or guardian of juvenile offender number two, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, except for the basic information that must be released under section 552.108(c). Pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code, any information that identifies or tends to identify

juvenile offender number one may not be released as basic information. As we are able to make these determinations, we need not address the other exception you claim.

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 that reads "James W. Morris, III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/em

Ref: ID# 415628

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)