



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 24, 2011

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Section
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2011-04064

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

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# 416914 (DPD ORR #2011-1419).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to service numbers 187375-X and 187328-X. You have redacted a social security number pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code.¹ You claim some of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We also understand you to raise sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code based on the information you have marked. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

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. *See* Gov't Code § 552.147(b).

²We 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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 the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is highly intimate or embarrassing, such that its release would be highly objectionable to a person of ordinary sensibilities, and of no legitimate public interest. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both elements of the test must be established. *See id.* at 681-82. 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. United States 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, a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. In this instance, however, we find the public has a legitimate interest in the marked information you contend is private. We therefore conclude the department may not withhold the information in question under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.108 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 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 have marked the information the department seeks to withhold under section 552.108. You state the marked information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude the department may withhold the marked information under section 552.108(a)(1). *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 that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit or a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state. *See Gov't Code* § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). Accordingly, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.130.

In summary, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the

information you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.³ The remaining information must be released.⁴

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,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/eeg

Ref: ID# 416914

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

³We note this office issued Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination authorizing all governmental bodies to withhold ten categories of information, including Texas driver's license and license plate numbers under section 552.130, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

⁴We note the information being released contains confidential information to which the requestor has a right of access. See Gov't Code § 552.023. Thus, if the department receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, then the department should again seek a decision from this office.