



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 16, 2011

Mr. Randall Miller
Assistant Criminal District Attorney
Navarro County
300 West 3rd Avenue, Suite 203
Corsicana, Texas 75110

OR2011-08600

Dear Mr. Miller:

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# 425806.

The Navarro County Sheriff's Department (the "sheriff") received a request for information pertaining to the booking of the requestor's client. You claim the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

We note the submitted information includes the fingerprints of the requestor's client. Section 560.003 of the Government Code provides "[a] biometric identifier in the possession of a governmental body is exempt from disclosure under [the Act]." Gov't Code § 560.003; *see id.* § 560.001(1) ("biometric identifier" means retina or iris scan, fingerprint, voiceprint, or record of hand or face geometry). Section 560.002 of the Government Code provides, however, "[a] governmental body that possesses a biometric identifier of an individual. . . may not sell, lease, or otherwise disclose the biometric identifier to another person unless . . . the individual consents to the disclosure[.]" *Id.* § 560.002(1)(A). Although you seek to withhold the marked fingerprints under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code, we note the exceptions to disclosure found in the Act are generally not applicable to information other statutes make public. *See* Open Records Decision

Nos. 623 at 3 (1994), 525 at 3 (1989). Thus, the fingerprints we marked must be released to this requestor pursuant to section 560.002(1)(A). *See* Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself).

You claim the remaining information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a)(1) 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). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) 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 the remaining information relates to a pending criminal case. Based upon your representation and our review, we conclude the release of the remaining 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) (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). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information.

However, basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Such basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-8; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the sheriff may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1).¹

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.

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining argument against release of the remaining information, except to note basic information may not be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Open Records Decision No. 597 at 2-3 (1991). We also note the basic information includes social security numbers. Section 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. The requestor has a right, however, to his client’s social security number. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.023(a) (“a person or a person’s authorized representative has a special right of access, beyond the right of the general public, to information held by a governmental body that relates to the person and that is protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect that person’s privacy interests.”); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves).

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/bs

Ref: ID# 425806

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)