



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 8, 2011

Ms. Tiffany N. Evans
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
Legal Department
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2011-16452

Dear Ms. Evans:

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# 435563 (GC No. 18897).

The Houston Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified offense report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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 section encompasses former section 51.14(d) of the Family Code. Prior to its repeal by the Seventy-fourth Legislature, section 51.14(d) provided for the confidentiality of juvenile law enforcement records. *See* Open Records Decision No. 181 (1977) (concluding former section 51.14(d) of the Family Code excepts police reports which identify juvenile suspects or furnish basis for their identification). Law enforcement records pertaining to juvenile criminal conduct occurring before January 1, 1996, are governed by

¹Although you also raise section 552.103 of the Government Code, you have not presented any arguments supporting this exception. Therefore, we presume you have withdrawn this exception. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

former section 51.14, which was continued in effect for that purpose.² Former section 51.14 provided in relevant part as follows:

(d) Except as provided by Article 15.27, Code of Criminal Procedure, and except for files and records relating to a charge for which a child is transferred under Section 54.02 of this code to a criminal court for prosecution, the law-enforcement files and records are not open to public inspection nor may their contents be disclosed to the public, but inspection of the files and records is permitted by:

- (1) a juvenile court having the child before it in any proceeding;
- (2) an attorney for a party to the proceeding; and
- (3) law-enforcement officers when necessary for the discharge of their official duties.

Act of May 22, 1993, 73d Leg., R.S., ch. 461, § 3, 1993 Tex. Gen. Laws 1850, 1852, *repealed by* Act of May 27, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 262, § 100, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 2517, 2590. In this instance, the submitted information pertains to an incident that occurred in 1993, and lists five suspects. Out of the five suspects, two suspects qualified as a “child” at the time of the offense. *See* Fam. Code § 52.01 (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code as individual who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age). Further, the requestor does not fall within one of the categories in section 51.14(d) under which inspection of the records would be permitted. Therefore, we agree former section 51.14(d) is applicable to the submitted information. *See id.* § 51.04(a) (Title 3 covers cases involving delinquent conduct engaged in by child). Thus, the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety pursuant to section 52.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with former section 51.14 of the Family Code.³

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

²Act of May 27, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 262, § 100, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 2517, 2591.

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of the submitted 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,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/agn

Ref: ID# 435563

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)