



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 20, 2011

Mr. Mark G. Mann
Assistant City Attorney
City of Garland
P.O. Box 469002
Garland, Texas 75046-9002

OR2011-18746

Dear Mr. Mann:

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# 444942 (GCA11-0943).

The Garland Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified report. You state some of the requested information has been released. You claim the rest of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

We note, and you acknowledge, the submitted information is generally confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.¹ Section 58.007 provides in part:

¹Section 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 other statutes make confidential.

(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.

The submitted information involves two juvenile offenders, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.007(c). In this instance, however, the requestor identifies herself as a parent of juvenile offender number one. As such, the requestor has a right to inspect law enforcement records concerning her child pursuant to section 58.007(e). *See id.* § 58.007(e). Section 58.007(j) provides, however, that any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the requestor's child must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). For purposes of section 58.007(j)(1), 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). However, we conclude a juvenile victim or witness, for purposes of section 58.007(j)(1), is a person who is under eighteen years of age. We therefore agree the department must withhold the identifying information you have marked regarding juvenile offender number two and the juvenile witnesses under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. Section 58.007(j) further provides that any information excepted from disclosure under the Act or other law must be redacted. Accordingly, we will address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

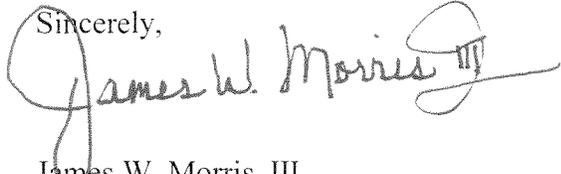
Section 552.108 excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 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 the release of the information you have marked in red would interfere with an ongoing criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude the department may withhold the marked information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. *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).

In summary, the department (1) must withhold the information you have marked in blue under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code and (2) may withhold the information you have marked in red under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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,


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

JWM/bs

Ref: ID# 444942

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)