



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 8, 2013

Mr. J.D. Lambright
County Attorney
Montgomery County
207 West Phillips, Suite 100
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2013-07614

Dear Mr. Lambright:

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# 491743 (County ORR# 2013-2045).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for all information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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 state the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representations, we conclude release of most of the information at issue would interfere with

¹Although you raise section 552.101 of the Government Code, you make no arguments to support this exception. Therefore, we assume you have withdrawn your claim this section applies to the submitted information. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

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).

We note, however, the submitted information includes citations. Because copies of the citations are provided to the persons who are the subject of the citations, we find release of the citations will not interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Therefore, the sheriff's office may not withhold the citations, which we have marked for release, under section 552.108.

We also note section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” *Id.* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page offense and arrest information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). We note basic information does not include motor vehicle record information encompassed by section 552.130 of the Government Code. *See* ORD 127 at 3-4. Therefore, with the exception of the citations and basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license issued by a Texas agency, or an agency of another state or country, is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). The sheriff's office must withhold the driver's license information we have marked in the citations under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, with the exception of the citations and basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the driver's license information we have marked in the citations under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

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,



Sean Nottingham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

SN/tch

Ref: ID# 491743

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)