



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 24, 2013

Ms. Miriam Rodrigues
Administrative Assistant
City of Harker Heights Police Department
402 Indian Trail
Harker Heights, Texas 76548

OR2013-08657

Dear Ms. Rodrigues:

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# 488298.

The Harker Heights Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified police report. You claim the submitted 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 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 the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *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. U.S. 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, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public.

You assert the present request requires the department to compile unspecified law enforcement records concerning an individual. We note, however, the request is for a specified police report. Thus, we find this request does not require the department to compile an individual's criminal history and does not implicate the privacy interests of any individual. Accordingly, the department may not withhold the submitted information as a criminal history compilation under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

You also raise section 552.108 of the Government Code, which provides, in part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime; [or]

(2) it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

...

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution; [or]

(2) the internal record or notation relates to law enforcement only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1)-(2), (b)(1)-(2). Subsections 552.108(a)(1) and 552.108(b)(1) are mutually exclusive of subsections 552.108(a)(2) and 552.108(b)(2). Subsection 552.108(a)(1) protects information, the release of which would interfere with a particular pending criminal investigation or prosecution, while subsection 552.108(b)(1) encompasses internal law enforcement and prosecution records, the release of which would interfere with

law enforcement and prosecution efforts in general. In contrast, subsections 552.108(a)(2) and 552.108(b)(2) protect information that relates to a concluded criminal investigation or prosecution that did not result in a conviction or deferred adjudication. A governmental body claiming an exception under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the exception it claims is applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt* 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). Although you raise section 552.108 of the Government Code, you do not specify which subsection you are raising. Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate any aspect of section 552.108 is applicable to any of the information at issue. Accordingly, the department may not withhold the submitted information under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

We note portions of the submitted information are subject to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and section 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ As noted above, common-law privacy protects highly intimate or embarrassing information that is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found.*, 540 S.W.2d at 685. The types of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* includes information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. In addition, this office has found some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy. *See Open Records Decision No. 455* (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps). Upon review, we find the information we have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public concern. Thus, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. However, we find the remaining information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the department may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information [that] relates to . . . a motor vehicle operator’s or driver’s license or permit issued by an agency of this state or another state or country[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.130(a)(1). Upon review, we find the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and the

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *Open Records Decision Nos. 481* (1987), *480* (1987), *470* (1987).

information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.²

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,



Jennifer Burnett
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/tch

Ref: ID# 488298

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²We note the information being released contains a social security number. 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. See Gov't Code § 552.147(b).