



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 5, 2013

Mr. Randall Miller
Assistant Criminal District Attorney
Dallas County District Attorney's Office
County of Dallas
411 Elm Street, 5th Floor
Dallas, Texas 75202

OR2013-09291

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# 494926.

The Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office (the "medical examiner's office") received a request for information pertaining to case number 1FS-12-19849. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 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). Section 552.108 may be invoked by the proper custodian of information relating to a pending investigation or prosecution of criminal conduct. *See Open Records Decision No. 474 at 4-5 (1987)*. Where a non-law enforcement agency has custody of information that would otherwise qualify for exception under section 552.108 as information relating to the pending case of a law enforcement agency, the custodian of the records may withhold the information

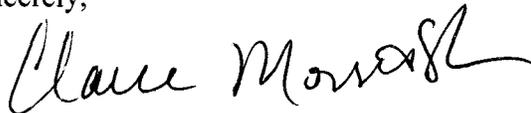
if it provides this office with a demonstration the information relates to the pending case and a representation from the law enforcement agency that it wishes to have the information withheld.

You state, and have provided documentation demonstrating, the Denton County Criminal District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") has advised the medical examiner's office the submitted is related to an active criminal investigation. The district attorney's office objects to disclosure of the information at issue because its release would interfere with the investigation. Based on these representations, we conclude the medical examiner's office may withhold the information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office. *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).

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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 494926

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)