



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 18, 2014

Mr. Daniel Ortiz
Assistant City Attorney
Office of the City Attorney
City of El Paso
P.O. Box 1890
El Paso, Texas 79950-1890

OR2014-04498

Dear Mr. Ortiz:

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# 518270 (El Paso ID# 14-1026-3960, W028149-010914).

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to the requestor. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ 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 exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007. For purposes of section 58.007, "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2). Section 58.007 of the Family Code provides in part:

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 Therefore, we assume you have withdrawn your claim this section applies to the submitted information.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.

(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). We find report number 08-163386 involves allegations of juvenile conduct in violation of a penal statute that occurred after September 1, 1997. Thus, this information is generally confidential under section 58.007(c). We note, however, the requestor is one the juvenile offenders listed in report number 08-163386. Therefore, the requestor has a right to inspect juvenile law enforcement records concerning himself pursuant to section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.007(e). However, personally identifiable information concerning any other juvenile suspects, offenders, victims, or

witnesses must be redacted pursuant to section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1). Section 58.007(j) further provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Accordingly, we will address your claim under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

You claim the remaining information in report number 08-163386 is subject to the doctrine of common-law privacy, which is also encompassed by section 552.101 of the Government Code. Common-law privacy 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). Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate how any of the information at issue satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the remaining information in report number 08-163386 under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

You claim report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142 are excepted from disclosure under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a)(1) 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). Generally, 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). You state report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142 relate to pending criminal investigations and prosecutions. Based upon your representation and our review, we conclude that the release of report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142 would interfere with 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). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142.

Next, you claim report number 13-290196 is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code, which excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate that the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions

raised should apply to information requested). You state report number 13-290196 pertains to a criminal investigation that has concluded and that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on your representation and our review, we find that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to report number 13-290196.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the 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*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code and report number 13-290196 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.²

In summary, in report number 08-163386, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code. The remaining information in report number 08-163386 must be released to this requestor. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold report numbers 12-056223 and 13-335142 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code and report number 13-290196 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government 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.

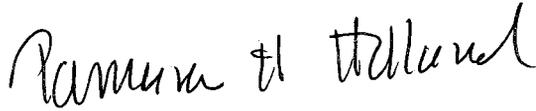
This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for

²As our ruling under section 552.108 is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure, except to note that basic information may generally not be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.103. Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991). Furthermore, we note basic information includes an arrestee's 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 under the Act. Gov't Code § 552.147(b). The requestor, however, has a right of access to his own social security number. See *id.* § 552.023(b). The department may withhold the social security number pertaining to another individual under section 552.147.

³We note that because the requestor has a right of access to some information being released in this instance, the department must again seek a decision from this office if it receives another request for the same information from another requestor.

providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara H. Holland".

Tamara H. Holland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

THH/som

Ref: ID# 518270

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)