



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 17, 2014

Mr. Guillermo Trevino
Assistant City Attorney
Office of the City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Thockmorton Street, Third Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2014-18749

Dear Mr. Trevino:

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# 539688 (PIR No. W035888).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for all information pertaining to a named individual, including a specified report. You state the department released some information. You claim the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim.

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 information protected by other statutes such as section 58.007 of the Family Code, which provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

(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.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). Juvenile law enforcement records relating to delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007(c). *See id.* § 51.03(a), (b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision”). For purposes of section 58.007(c), “child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). The submitted information involves children engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred after September 1, 1997. The exceptions in section 58.007 do not apply in this instance.¹ *See id.* § 58.007(e)-(I). As such, the submitted information constitutes juvenile law enforcement records that are generally confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c).

However, the requestor is a representative of the Probation and Pretrial Services Office of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas (the “probation office”). Thus, this requestor may have a right of access to some of the submitted information. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides that “[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Department of Public Safety] any criminal history record information [(“CHRI”)] maintained by the [Department of Public Safety] about a person.” *See Gov’t Code* § 411.089(a). In addition, section 411.087(a) of the Government Code provides in pertinent part the following:

- (a) [A] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter to obtain from the [Department of Public Safety] [CHRI] maintained by the [Department of Public Safety] that relates to another person is authorized to:

¹We note the requestor is seeking information about an individual who is listed as an adult suspect in the submitted reports. The requestor is not seeking information about the individuals named as juvenile suspects or offenders in the reports, so as to implicate the access provided in section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See Fam. Code* § 58.007(e) (providing “[l]aw enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by . . . a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code[.]”).

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

Id. § 411.087(a)(2). CHRI is defined as “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *Id.* § 411.082(2). Thus, the submitted information contains CHRI. However, a criminal justice agency that receives CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) may only receive such information for a criminal justice purpose. *See id.* §§ 411.083(c), .087(b); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 655 (1997) (discussing limitations on release of criminal history record information). Thus, if the requestor represents a “criminal justice agency,” she is authorized to obtain CHRI from the department pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, but only for a criminal justice purpose. *See* Gov’t Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(b).

A “criminal justice agency” is defined in part as “a federal or state agency that is engaged in the administration of criminal justice under a statute or executive order and that allocates a substantial portion of its annual budget to the administration of criminal justice[.]” *Id.* § 411.082(3)(A). “Administration of criminal justice” has the meaning assigned to it by article 60.01 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See id.* § 411.082(1). Article 60.01 defines “administration of criminal justice” as “the performance of any of the following activities: detection, apprehension, detention, pretrial release, post-trial release, prosecution, adjudication, correctional supervision, or rehabilitation of an offender.” The term includes “criminal identification activities and the collection, storage, and dissemination of criminal history record information.” Crim. Proc. Code art. 60.01(1).

In this instance, it appears the probation office is engaged in the administration of criminal justice for purposes of chapter 411. However, we cannot determine whether the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. Consequently, if the department determines this particular requestor does not intend to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then the requestor does not have a right of access to the CHRI under chapter 411 and the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. If the department determines this particular requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then, pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2), the requestor generally has a right of access to the information that shows the type of allegation made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions, and the remaining information is confidential under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. In that instance, there is a conflict between the confidentiality provided by section 58.007(c) of the

Family Code and the requestor's right of access to the CHRI under section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code.

Where information falls within both a general and a specific statutory provision, the specific provision prevails over the general statute. *See* Gov't Code § 311.026 (where general statutory provision conflicts with specific provision, specific provision prevails as exception to general provision unless the general provision is the later enactment and the manifest intent is that the general provision prevail); *Cuellar v. State*, 521 S.W.2d 277 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) (under well-established rule of statutory construction, specific statutory provisions prevail over general ones). In this instance, although section 58.007(c) generally makes juvenile law enforcement records confidential, section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code gives specific types of requestors, criminal justice agencies, access to particular information, CHRI, for a criminal justice purpose. Thus, the statutory right of access granted to a criminal justice agency by section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code prevails over the more general confidentiality provision of section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. Additionally, in light of the fact the request in this case may implicate the named individual's right to privacy because the requestor seeks all department records pertaining to a named individual, we note a statutory right of access also prevails over a claim under common-law privacy.² *See Collins v. Tex Mall, L.P.*, 297 S.W.3d 409, 415 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2009, no pet.) (statutory provision controls and preempts common law only when statute directly conflicts with common law principle); *CenterPoint Energy Houston Elec. LLC v. Harris County Toll Rd.*, 436 F.3d 541, 544 (5th Cir. 2006) (common law controls only where there is no conflicting or controlling statutory law). Therefore, notwithstanding section 58.007(c), if the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then the department must make available to this requestor information that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code. In that instance, the department must withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.

In summary, if the department determines the requestor does not intend to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then the department must withhold the submitted information in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction

²A request for information, such as the present request for information, that requires a governmental body to compile an individual's criminal history, implicates that individual's common-law right to privacy. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976) (establishing test for violation of right to privacy under common law in Texas); *cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (finding significant privacy interest in compilation of individual's criminal history by recognizing distinction between public records found in courthouse file and local police stations and compiled summary of criminal history information).

with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. If the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then the department must make available to this requestor information that shows the types of allegations made and whether there was an arrest, information, indictment, detention, conviction, or other formal charges and their dispositions pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code and must withhold the remaining information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family 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.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 providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Britni Fabian
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BF/bhf

Ref: ID# 539688

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)