



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 29, 2016

Mr. Jose Hernandez
Records Supervisor
Edinburg Police Department
1702 South Closner Boulevard
Edinburg, Texas 78539

OR2016-17034

Dear Mr. Hernandez:

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# 626148 (Ref. ID# 89632).

The Edinburg Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified report. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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 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 the information you have marked pertains to a pending criminal prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue 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 the remaining information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to

the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). We note basic information includes, among other things, a detailed description of the offense. See ORD 127 at 3-4. In this instance, you seek to withhold the majority of the narrative portion of the submitted report under section 552.108. The remaining portion of the report does not contain information sufficient to satisfy the required release of basic information pursuant to *Houston Chronicle*. Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. In considering whether a public citizen’s date of birth is private, the Third Court of Appeals looked to the supreme court’s rationale in *Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts v. Attorney General of Texas*, 354 S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). *Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). The supreme court concluded public employees’ dates of birth are private under section 552.102 of the Government Code because the employees’ privacy interest substantially outweighed the negligible public interest in disclosure.¹ *Texas Comptroller*, 354 S.W.3d at 347-48. Based on *Texas Comptroller*, the court of appeals concluded the privacy rights of public employees apply equally to public citizens, and thus, public citizens’ dates of birth are also protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *City of Dallas*, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3. Thus, the department must withhold the public citizen’s date of birth you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator’s license, driver’s license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. See Gov’t Code § 552.130(a). Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.147(a) of the Government Code excepts the social security number of a living individual from public disclosure. Gov’t Code § 552.147. Accordingly, the department may withhold the social security number you have marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

¹Section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure “information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” Gov’t Code § 552.102(a).

In summary, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department may withhold the social security number you have marked under section 552.147 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.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,



Nicholas A. Ybarra
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NAY/bw

Ref: ID# 626148

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²We note the requestor has a special right of access to some of the information being released in this instance. See Gov't Code § 552.023(a) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates or person's agent on ground that information is considered confidential by privacy principles); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individuals request information concerning themselves). Therefore, if the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a ruling from this office.