



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 19, 2016

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

OR2016-16256

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# 619131 (ORR# W051539).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified report involving a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.007 of the Family Code, which provides:

(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(b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). For purposes of section 58.007(c), “child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and younger than seventeen 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. Upon review, we find the exceptions in section 58.007 do not apply to the submitted information in this instance.¹ *See id.* § 58.007(e)-(i). Accordingly, the submitted information constitutes a juvenile law enforcement record that is generally confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c).

In this instance, we note the requestor is a representative of the Office of the Solicitor of the first Judicial Circuit State of South Carolina (the “solicitor”) and may have a right of access to some of the information at issue. Section 411.082 of the Government Code defines a “criminal justice agency” as including “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[.]” Gov’t Code § 411.082(3)(A). “Administration of criminal justice” has the meaning assigned by article 60.01 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. *See id.* § 411.082(1). Article 60.01 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 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 [CHRI].” Crim. Proc. Code art. 60.01(1). We understand the solicitor is a criminal justice agency as defined by section 411.082. *See id.* Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides “[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

¹We note the requestor is seeking information about an individual who is listed as an adult suspect. The requestor is not seeking information about the individuals named as juvenile suspects or offenders in this report 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[.]”).

§ 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 or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from the [Department of Public Safety] [CHRI] maintained by the [Department of Public Safety] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(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 related to the named individual. 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, because the requestor represents a “criminal justice agency,” he is authorized to obtain CHRI related to the named individual 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).

In this instance, we cannot determine whether the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. Consequently, if the department determines the 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 the 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 CHRI within the submitted information. 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. 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 remainder of the submitted 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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/bw

Ref: ID# 619131

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)