



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 26, 2016

Mr. Stephen D. Gates
First Assistant City Attorney
City of Midland
P.O. Box 1152
Midland, Texas 79702

OR2016-21681

Dear Mr. Gates:

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# 628221 (City ID# 20038).

The Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for nine specified incident reports involving a named individual. You state the department has released some information to the requestor. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note portions of the submitted information were the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2016-16902 (2016). In that ruling, we determined (1) the department must generally withhold report number 150119025 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code; however, if the department determines release of CHRI is consistent with the Family Code, then the department must make available to the requestor the CHRI from report number 150119025 pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, and (2) with the exception of basic information and CHRI, which must be released to the requestor, the department may withhold report number 151104017 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. We have no indication there has been any change in the law, facts, or circumstances on which the previous ruling was based. Accordingly, the department must continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-16902

as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling.¹ *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

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. This section encompasses section 58.007 of the Family Code. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are subject to section 58.007 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(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.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e). Section 58.007(c) is applicable to records of juvenile delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your arguments against disclosure of this information.

September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a), (b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of section 58.007). 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 reported conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we find Exhibit B involves juvenile delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred after September 1, 1997. Therefore, this information is generally confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.

We note, and you acknowledge, the requestor is a representative of the Probation Office of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas (the “probation office”): Section 58.007(e) of the Family Code gives a “criminal justice agency as . . . defined by Section 411.082, Government Code” a right of access to juvenile law enforcement records. *Id.* § 58.007(e). 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). You state, and we agree, the requestor represents a criminal justice agency. *See id.* Therefore, the requestor has a right of access to the information at issue under section 58.007(e) of the Family Code, and the department may not withhold this information from this requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

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[.]” *Id.* § 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 report number 160318019 pertains to a pending criminal investigation or 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, we conclude section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to report number 160318019.

However, we note 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). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold report number 160318019 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

We note portions of Exhibit B consist of motor vehicle record information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code. Section 552.130 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.³ See Gov't Code § 552.130(a). Accordingly, the motor vehicle record information we marked is generally excepted from disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

However, as previously noted, the requestor has a statutory right to inspect the information at issue. Therefore, we must address the conflict between the access provided under section 58.007(e) of the Family Code and the confidentiality provided under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Where information falls within both a general and a specific provision of law, the specific provision prevails over the general. See *Horizon/CMS Healthcare Corp. v. Auld*, 34 S.W.3d 887, 901 (Tex. 2000) ("more specific statute controls over the more general"); *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, section 58.007(e) generally applies to all juvenile law enforcement records, while section 552.130 specifically protects motor vehicle record information. Although a specific statutory right of access prevails over general exceptions to disclosure under the Act, because section 552.130 has its own access provisions, we conclude section 552.130 is not a general exception under the Act. Thus, we find the confidentiality provided by section 552.130 is more specific than the general right of access provided by section 58.007(e). Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-16902 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold report number 160318019 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing Exhibit B to this requestor pursuant to section 58.007(e) of

²You inform us the department has released any information in report number 160318019 to which the requestor would have a right of access under section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code.

³The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

the Family Code, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.⁴

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,



Ian Lancaster
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

IML/akg

Ref: ID# 628221

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

⁴Because the requestor has a right of access to some of the information being released, if the department receives another request for the same information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a decision from this office. Additionally, we note the information being released contains social security numbers. 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. See Gov't Code § 552.147(b).