



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 19, 2016

Ms. Ann-Marie Sheely
Assistant County Attorney
Travis County
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

OR2016-28022

Dear Ms. Sheely:

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# 638334.

The Travis County Attorney's Office (the "county attorney's office") received a request for all documents, video recordings, and other information related to a specified incident involving named individuals. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime [is excepted from required public disclosure] if:

(4) it is information that:

¹We assume the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

...

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if:

...

(3) the internal record or notation:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(4), (b)(3). Subsection 552.108(a)(4) and subsection 552.108(b)(3) protect information prepared by an attorney representing the state or information that reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state. A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under subsection 552.108(a)(4) and subsection 552.108(b)(3) must explain how and why these exceptions are applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). In *Curry v. Walker*, 873 S.W.2d 379 (Tex. 1994), the Texas Supreme Court held a request for a district attorney's "entire litigation file" was "too broad" and, quoting *National Union Fire Insurance Co. v. Valdez*, 863 S.W.2d 458, 460 (Tex. 1993), held "the decision as to what to include in [the file] necessarily reveals the attorney's thought processes concerning the prosecution or defense of the case." 873 S.W.2d at 380. You state the instant request for information encompasses the entire prosecution file of the county attorney's office. Further, the county attorney's office asserts the information at issue was created or assembled in the course of preparing for criminal litigation. Based on your representations and our review, we agree subsection 552.108(a)(4) and subsection 552.108(b)(3) are applicable to the submitted information.

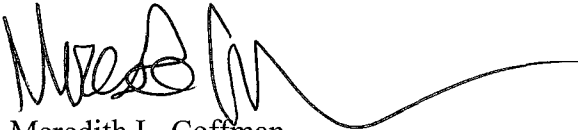
Section 552.108, however, does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of*

Houston, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). See Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information made public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the county attorney's office may withhold the submitted information under subsection 552.108(a)(4) and subsection 552.108(b)(3) of the Government Code and the holding in *Curry*.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,



Meredith L. Coffman
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MLC/bw

Ref: ID# 638344

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.