



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 20, 2016

Ms. Cecilia Gamez
Crime Records Bureau
McAllen Police Department
P.O. Box 220
McAllen, Texas 78501

OR2016-28086

Dear Ms. Gamez:

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# 639970.

The McAllen Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state the department has released some information to the requestor. 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 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). Generally, 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, 710 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information pertains to an open criminal investigation. You inform us the submitted information pertains to an alleged deadly conduct offense involving the discharge of a firearm in the direction of a habitation, building, or vehicle, which is a third degree felony. *See* Penal Code § 22.05(b), (e) (providing that offense under subsection (b) is a felony of the third degree). We note the submitted information pertains to an investigation

of deadly conduct that occurred on January 6, 2013. We further note the statute of limitations for the offense in this instance is three years from the date of the commission of the offense. *See* Crim. Proc. Code art. 12.01(7) (limitations on felony not otherwise listed in article 12.01 of Code of Criminal Procedure is three years from date of offense). Thus, the statute of limitations for the offense at issue has expired. You have not informed this office any criminal charges were filed within this limitations period. Thus, we find you have failed to demonstrate the release of the submitted information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Therefore, the department may not withhold the submitted information 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.”¹ 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). This office has also concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). Additionally, 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.² *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. However, we note the submitted information includes the requestor's date of birth. The requestor has a right of access to this information. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023 (person or person's authorized representative has special right of access to records that contain information relating to the person that are protected from public disclosure by laws intended to protect that person's privacy interests); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). Upon review, we find some of the submitted information, which we have marked, satisfies the standard articulated

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

²Section 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).

by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the department must withhold the information we marked and, with the exception of the requestor's date of birth, all public citizens' dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department must release the remaining information to the requestor.

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,



Kieran Hillis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/akg

Ref: ID# 639970

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)