



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 9, 2017

Mr. Nicholas Toulet  
Assistant City Attorney  
City Attorney's Office  
City of Midland  
P.O. Box 1152  
Midland, Texas 79702-1152

OR2017-00494

Dear Mr. Toulet:

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# 647503 (ORR# M019625).

The Midland Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified incident report. 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 disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Prior to its repeal by the Seventy-Fourth Legislature, former section 51.14 of the Family Code provided for the confidentiality of juvenile law enforcement records. *See* Open Records Decision No. 181 (1977) (concluding that former section 51.14(d) of the Family Code excepts police reports which identify juvenile suspects or furnish basis for their identification). Law enforcement records pertaining to juvenile conduct occurring before January 1, 1996, are governed by former section 51.14(d), which was continued in effect for

that purpose. *See* Act of May 27, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 262, § 100, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 2517, 2591. Former section 51.14 provided in pertinent part:

(d) Except as provided by Article 15.27, Code of Criminal Procedure, and except for files and records relating to a charge for which a child is transferred under Section 54.02 of this code to a criminal court for prosecution, the law-enforcement files and records are not open to public inspection nor may their contents be disclosed to the public, but inspection of the files and records is permitted by:

- (1) a juvenile court having the child before it in any proceeding;
- (2) an attorney for a party to the proceeding; and
- (3) law-enforcement officers when necessary for the discharge of their official duties.

Fam. Code § 51.14(d) (repealed 1995). A “child” is defined as a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we find the information at issue does not pertain to juvenile conduct that occurred prior to January 1, 1996. *See* Act of May 22, 1993, 73d Leg., R.S., ch. 461, § 3, 1993 Tex. Gen. Laws 1850, 1852 (repealed 1995) (formerly Fam. Code § 51.14(d)(1), (2), (3)); *see also* Fam. Code § 51.04(a) (Title 3 covers cases involving delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision engaged in by child). Thus, the submitted information is not subject to section 51.14 of the Family Code, and the department may not withhold it under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, which are confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. Section 58.007(e) reads as follows:

(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). 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). The submitted information involves juvenile delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision" for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). Therefore, the submitted information is generally confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c) of the Family Code.

However, the requestor is a representative of the Probation and Pretrial Service Office of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas (the "probation office") and has a right of access to the requested information. 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). The probation office is a criminal justice agency as defined by section 411.082. *See id.* Therefore, the requestor has a right of access to the submitted information under section 58.007(e) of the Family Code, and the department may not withhold it from this requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. The department must release the submitted information to this requestor.<sup>1</sup>

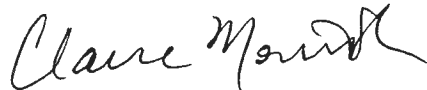
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup>We note the requestor has a right of access to the information at issue pursuant to section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 58.007(e). If the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a ruling from this office. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302; Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001).

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](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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Morris Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 647503

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)