



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 24, 2017

Mr. Thomas M. Gilliland
Public Information Officer
Harris County Sheriff's Office
1200 Baker Street, Second Floor
Houston, Texas 77002-1206

OR2017-08604

Dear Mr. Gilliland:

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# 654324 (HCSO File #17SO6001339).

The Harris County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for the personnel file of a named deputy. 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.

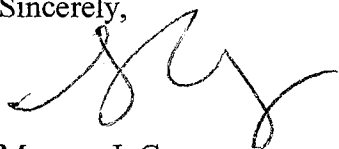
Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). 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). In this instance, the requested information consists of personnel file records pertaining to the named deputy. Section 552.108 is generally not applicable to purely administrative records that do not involve the investigation or prosecution of crime. See *City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320, 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.); *Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d 519, 525-26 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1992, writ denied) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 not applicable to internal investigation that did not result in criminal

investigation or prosecution); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 350 at 3-4 (1982). However, you inform us, and provide documentation demonstrating, the requested information relates to an ongoing criminal case involving the officer whose personnel file records are at issue. Further, you state the release of the information at issue would interfere with the investigation or prosecution of crime. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude 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, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government 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,



Meagan J. Conway
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MJC/sb

Ref: ID# 654324

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)