



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 10, 2017

Ms. Mary E. Miller
Assistant District Attorney
Denton County
127 North Woodrow Lane, Suite 300
Denton, Texas 76205

OR2017-15259

Dear Ms. Miller:

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# 672233.

The Denton County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state the sheriff's office released some information. You claim the submitted information is 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.

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 exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 of the Family Code provides, in 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.

...

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

...

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e), (j)(2). For purposes of section 58.007(c), a "child" is a person 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 the submitted information involves a juvenile engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision on or after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a), (b) (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision"). Thus, the submitted information is subject to section 58.007(c). In this instance, however, the requestor is a parent of the juvenile offender at issue. Thus, the requestor has a right to inspect juvenile law enforcement records concerning his child pursuant to section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.007(e). However, section 58.007(j)(2) provides information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Accordingly, we will consider your argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

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

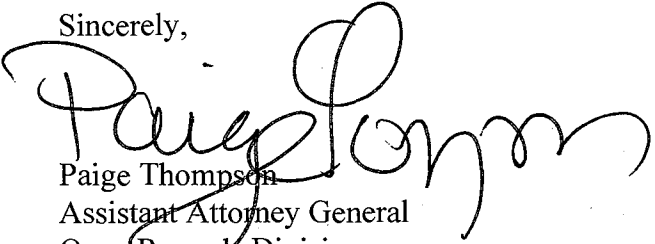
body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information pertains to a pending criminal case. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the submitted information 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, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

However, 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). We note basic information does not include dates of birth. *See* ORD 127. Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.¹

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,



Paige Thompson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PT/eb

¹The requestor has a special right of access to information being released pursuant to section 58.007(e) of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 58.007(e). If the sheriff's office receives another request for this information from a different requestor, then the sheriff's office should again seek a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302; Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001).

Ref: ID# 672233

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)