



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 17, 2017

Ms. Jo Ann Pate
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2017-26348

Dear Ms. Pate:

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# 689999 (City PIR No. W065878).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for three specified police reports involving a named individual. You state you have released some information to the requestor. 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 section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the 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 Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746 § 13, 2017 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 3173 (Vernon) (to be codified at Fam. Code § 58.008(b)); *see also* Fam. Code § 51.03(a) (defining “delinquent conduct” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code); Act of May 19, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 324 § 7.002, Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 841, 848 (Vernon) (to be codified as amendments to Fam. Code § 51.03(b)); Act of May 30, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 685 § 21, 2017 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 3044, 3057 (Vernon) (to be codified as amendments to Fam. Code § 51.03(b)) (defining “conduct indicating a need for supervision”). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746 § 13, 2017 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 3176-77. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). We understand you to assert the submitted information is subject to section 58.008(b). We find the submitted information involves a juvenile offender, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). Thus, the submitted reports constitute juvenile law enforcement records that are generally confidential pursuant to section 58.008(b).

In this instance, we note the requestor is a representative of the Probation and Pretrial Service Office of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas (the “probation office”). Section 58.008(d)(2) 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. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746 § 13, 2017 Tex. Sess. Law Serv. 3177 (to be codified at Fam. Code § 58.008(d)(2)). 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). We understand 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 reports under section 58.008(d)(2) of the Family Code, and the department may not withhold the information from this requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. Accordingly, the department must generally release the submitted information to this requestor.

We note, however, some of the submitted information consists of motor vehicle record information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ Section 552.130 provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a). Accordingly, the motor vehicle record information we have marked is generally confidential under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

However, as previously noted, the requestor has a statutory right of access to the submitted information. Therefore, we must address the conflict between the access provided under section 58.008(d)(2) of the Family Code and the confidentiality provided under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Where information falls within both a general and a specific provision of law, the specific provision prevails over the general. *See Horizon/CMS Healthcare Corp. v. Auld*, 34 S.W.3d 887, 901 (Tex. 2000) ("more specific statute controls over the more general"); *Cuellar v. State*, 521 S.W.2d 277 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) (under well-established rule of statutory construction, specific statutory provisions prevail over general ones). In this instance, section 58.008(d)(2) generally applies to all juvenile law enforcement records, while section 552.130 specifically protects motor vehicle record information. Although a specific statutory right of access prevails over general exceptions to disclosure under the Act, because section 552.130 has its own access provisions, we conclude section 552.130 is not a general exception under the Act. Thus, we find the confidentiality provided by section 552.130 is more specific than the general right of access provided by section 58.008(d)(2). Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must generally release the submitted information to this requestor pursuant to section 58.008(d)(2) of the Family Code; however, in releasing the information, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.²

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

²We note the information being released contains social security numbers. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.147(b). We further note the requestor has a right of access to the information being released. Thus, if the department receives another request for the same information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a decision from this office.

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,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/tdw

Ref: ID# 689999

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)