



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 27, 2017

Mr. Ricardo Vela, Jr.
Assistant District Attorney
Dallas County District Attorney's Office
133 North Riverfront Boulevard, LB-19
Dallas, Texas 75207-4399

OR2017-26862

Dear Mr. Vela:

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# 692190.

The Dallas County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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 reasonably 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 investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable in this instance. *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 curium*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). We note,

however, the information at issue includes a DIC-24 statutory warning and a DIC-25 notice of suspension. Copies of these forms were provided to the arrestee. You have not explained how releasing this information, which has already been seen by the arrestee, would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms may not be withheld under section 552.108.

Additionally, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” *Id.* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic “front-page” information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-187; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the district attorney’s office may 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.” 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). 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.¹ *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. Thus, the district attorney’s office must withhold the public citizen’s date of birth we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides that information relating to a motor vehicle operator’s or driver’s license or permit issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.130(a)(1).

¹Section 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).

Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.130 of the Government Code.²

In summary, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, which must be released, the district attorney's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The district attorney's office must withhold the public citizen's date of birth we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The district attorney's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.130 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,



Jesse Harvey
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JH/gw

Ref: ID# 692190

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

²As our ruling is dispositive for this information, we need not consider your remaining arguments against its disclosure, except to note basic information is generally not excepted from public disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).