



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 4, 2018

Ms. Celeste Baltierra  
Attorney  
City of Corpus Christi  
P.O. Box 9277  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9277

OR2018-00308

Dear Ms. Baltierra:

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# 690116 (CCPD File No. KHoe19).

The Corpus Christi Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified case involving the requestor's client. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108, 552.130, and 552.152 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.152 of the Government Code provides:

Information in the custody of a governmental body that relates to an employee or officer of the governmental body is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if, under the specific circumstances pertaining to the employee or officer, disclosure of the information would subject the employee or officer to a substantial threat of physical harm.

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<sup>1</sup> Although you do not raise section 552.130 in your brief, we understand you to raise this exception based on your markings.

Gov't Code § 552.152. You inform us some of the submitted information identifies undercover police officers. You assert release of their identities would subject the officers to a substantial threat of physical harm. Therefore, we find section 552.152 is applicable to the identity of the undercover officers within the information at issue. Accordingly, the department must withhold the identifying information of the undercover officers we have marked under section 552.152 of the Government Code.<sup>2</sup> However, we find you have failed to demonstrate the applicability of section 552.152 to the remaining information at issue. Consequently, the department may not withhold this information under section 552.152.

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[a]n internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution . . . if . . . release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution[.]” *Id.* § 552.108(b)(1). Section 552.108(b)(1) is intended to protect “information which, if released, would permit private citizens to anticipate weaknesses in a police department, avoid detection, jeopardize officer safety, and generally undermine police efforts to effectuate the laws of this State.” *City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320, 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). To prevail on its claim that section 552.108(b)(1) excepts information from disclosure, a governmental body must do more than merely make a conclusory assertion that releasing the information would interfere with law enforcement. Instead, the governmental body must meet its burden of explaining how and why release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. *See* Open Records Decision No. 562 at 10 (1990) (construing statutory predecessor). This office has concluded section 552.108(b) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (1989) (release of detailed use of force guidelines would unduly interfere with law enforcement), 252 (1980) (section 552.108 of the Government Code is designed to protect investigative techniques and procedures used in law enforcement), 143 (1976) (disclosure of specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime may be excepted). Section 552.108(b)(1) is not applicable, however, to generally known policies and procedures. *See, e.g.*, ORDs 531 at 2-3 (Penal Code provisions, common law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force not protected), 252 at 3 (governmental body failed to indicate why investigative procedures and techniques requested were any different from those commonly known). Upon review, we find you have failed to demonstrate release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. Consequently, the department may not withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(b)(1).

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

You inform us the department will redact a date of birth pursuant to the previous determination issued to the department in Open Records Letter No. 2016-00831 (2016).<sup>3</sup> 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. The Third Court of Appeals has concluded public citizens’ dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *See 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.). We note the information at issue consists of the date of birth pertaining to the requestor’s client. The requestor has a right of access to his client’s date of birth and the department may not withhold it from him on the basis of common-law privacy. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.023(a) (governmental body may not deny access to person or person’s representative to whom information relates on grounds that information is considered confidential under privacy principles); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning herself).

Section 552.130 of the Government Code 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. Accordingly, the department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. However, we find the remaining information at issue is not confidential under section 552.130, and the department may not withhold it on that basis.

In summary, the department must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.152 of the Government Code. The department must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department must release the remaining information.<sup>4</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>3</sup>Open Records Letter No. 2016-00831 authorizes the department to withhold public citizens’ dates of birth under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without requesting a ruling from this office.

<sup>4</sup>We note the requestor has a right of access beyond that of the general public to some of the information being released. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.023(a); ORD 481 at 4.

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 "Cole Hutchison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "C" and "H".

Cole Hutchison  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CH/sb

Ref: ID# 690116

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)