



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 29, 2018

Ms. Kristen Lee
Assistant County Attorney
Harris County
1019 Congress, 15th Floor
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2018-01869

Dear Ms. Lee:

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# 693319 (C.A. File No. 17PIA0705).

The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (the "department") received a request for sixteen categories of information relating to juvenile detainees.¹ You state you are releasing some of the information. 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 representative sample of information.²

¹We note the department sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222 (providing if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding that when a governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification or narrowing of an unclear or over-broad request for public information, the ten-day period to request an attorney general ruling is measured from the date the request is clarified or narrowed).

²We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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 section 58.007 of the Family Code, which makes confidential juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997. Section 58.007 provides in relevant part the following:

(b) Except as provided by Section 54.051 (d-1) and by Article 15.27, Code of Criminal Procedure, the records, whether physical or electronic, of a juvenile court, a clerk of court, a juvenile probation department, or a prosecuting attorney relating to a child who is a party to a proceeding under [Title 3 of the Family Code] may be inspected or copied only by:

(1) the judge, probation officers, and professional staff or consultants of the juvenile court;

(2) a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101;

(3) an attorney representing a party in a proceeding under this title;

(4) a person or entity to whom the child is referred for treatment or services, if the agency or institution disclosing the information has entered into a written confidentiality agreement with the person or entity regarding the protection of the disclosed information;

(5) a public or private agency or institution providing supervision of the child by arrangement of the juvenile court, or having custody of the child under juvenile court order; or

(6) with permission from the juvenile court, any other person, agency, or institution having a legitimate interest in the proceeding or in the work of the court.

...

(i) In addition to the authority to release information under Subsection (b)(6), a juvenile probation department may release information contained in its records without leave of the juvenile court pursuant to guidelines adopted by the juvenile board.


Fam. Code § 58.007(b), (i). We note the submitted information consists of records maintained by the department concerning juvenile offenders. We understand the information at issue relates to juveniles who are parties to proceedings under the Juvenile Justice Code, title 3 of the Family Code, and the requestor is not a person or entity authorized to access this

information under section 58.007(b). However, as a juvenile probation department, the department has the discretion to release the requested information pursuant to guidelines adopted by the juvenile board. *See id.* § 58.007(i). You do not inform us the juvenile board has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption and based on our review of the submitted information, we conclude the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(b) of the Family Code.³

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,



Emily Buchanan
Attorney
Open Records Division

EB/som

Ref: ID# 693319

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.