



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 14, 2019

Ms. Allison Falls  
Assistant District Attorney  
County of Harris  
1310 Prairie, 5th Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2019-01027

Dear Ms. Falls:

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# 746078.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for information related to three specified cases.<sup>1</sup> The district attorney's office claims 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 the district attorney's office claims and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>We note the requestor modified her request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (governmental body may communicate with requestor for purposes of clarifying or narrowing request). *See also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S. W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding that when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification or narrowing of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-day period to request attorney general ruling is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

<sup>2</sup>We 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 552.108(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). The district attorney’s office states the information submitted as Appendix B-3 pertains to active criminal investigations or prosecutions. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue 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 Appendix B-3.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). The district attorney’s office states the information submitted as Appendix C-3 pertains to a closed case that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on this representation, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to Appendix C-3.

However, we note section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 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). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, which must be released, the district attorney’s office may withhold Appendix B-3 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code and may withhold Appendix C-3 under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup>

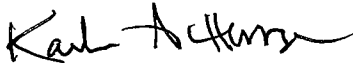
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of the submitted information, except to note basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle* is generally not excepted from public disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).

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,



Kaelan A. Henze  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KAH/mo

Ref: ID# 746078

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)