



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 9, 2019

Ms. Mary E. Miller  
Assistant District Attorney  
Denton County  
127 North Woodrow Lane, Suite 300  
Denton, Texas 76205

OR2019-18530

Dear Ms. Miller:

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# 781778.

The Denton County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff'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, 552.108, 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 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 information you marked pertains to a pending prosecution. You also indicate the information at issue relates to a case that has been disposed of without conviction or deferred adjudication. However, you explain the closed case involves the same information as the case that has not concluded. Thus, we understand the information pertaining to the closed case is so intertwined with the pending prosecution that it cannot be easily separated. Based on your representation and our review,

we find 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, the sheriff's office may withhold the information you marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.<sup>1</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 court of appeals has concluded public citizens' dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *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.). Thus, the sheriff's office must withhold the public citizens' dates of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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 sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the sheriff's office may withhold the information you marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the public citizens' dates of birth you marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information you marked and we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

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/>

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

[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, appearing to read 'Meagan J. Conway', written in a cursive style.

Meagan J. Conway  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MC/eb

Ref: ID# 781778

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)