



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 29, 2019

Ms. Josi Diaz
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar Street, 6th Floor. 6W
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2019-20695

Dear Ms. Diaz:

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# 785208 (ORR No. D015155).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Initially, we note, and you acknowledge, the department failed to meet the statutory deadlines imposed by section 552.301 of the Government Code for the requested information. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). The need of a governmental body, other than the one that failed to timely seek an open records decision, to withhold information

¹We 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 that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

under section 552.108 can provide a compelling reason under section 552.302. Open Records Decision No. 586 (1991). You assert, and provide documentation showing, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") has a law enforcement interest in the submitted information. Therefore, we will consider whether the department may withhold the submitted information on behalf of the district attorney's office under section 552.108.

Section 552.108(a) 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: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 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, and submit documentation demonstrating, the district attorney's office objects to the release of the information you marked because it pertains to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based upon this representation, we conclude section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable, and the release of the information you marked 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 department may withhold the information you marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office.

Section 552.101 also 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. *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.). Thus, the department must withhold the public citizens' dates of birth it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

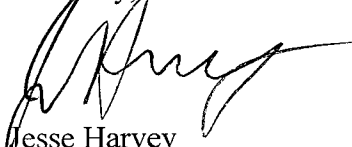
Section 552.147 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the social security number of a living person. *Id.* § 552.147. Upon review, we agree the department may withhold the social security number you have marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department may withhold the information it marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney's office. The department must withhold the date of births it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department may withhold the social security number it marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

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/jxd

Ref: ID# 785208

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)