



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 1, 2019

Ms. Elizabeth Stevens
Assistant General Counsel
Harris County District Attorney's Office
500 Jefferson Street, Suite 600
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2019-21332

Dear Ms. Stevens:

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# 778594.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for information pertaining to any lists or databases maintained by the district attorney's office pertaining to the credibility of police officers. You state the district attorney's office has released some information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.111 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government provides, in part:

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

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(4) it is information that:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

(b) An 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 [is excepted from required public disclosure] if:

(3) the internal record or notation:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(4), (b)(3). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(4) or (b)(3) must explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(4), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the information at issue reflects the mental impressions and legal strategies of attorneys representing the state in anticipation of criminal litigation. Upon review, we agree the submitted information reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of attorneys representing the state. Accordingly, we find the district attorney's office may withhold the submitted information under sections 552.108(a)(4) and 552.108(b)(3) of the Government Code.²

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.

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Garza", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle Garza
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MG/gw

Ref: ID# 778594

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)