



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 30, 2019

Ms. Laura Anne Coates  
Assistant District Attorney  
Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office  
133 North Riverfront Boulevard, LB-19  
Dallas, Texas 75207-4399

OR2019-27295

Dear Ms. Coates:

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# 788259.

The Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office (the "district attorney's office") received a request for specified videos. You claim some of the submitted information was not properly requested under chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. You also claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.103 of the Government Code. We have considered the your arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information includes police officers' body worn camera recordings. Body worn cameras are subject to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Chapter 1701 provides the procedures a requestor must follow when seeking a body worn camera recording. Section 1701.661(a) provides:

A member of the public is required to provide the following information when submitting a written request to a law enforcement agency for information recorded by a body worn camera:

- (1) the date and approximate time of the recording;
- (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and

(3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

Occ. Code § 1701.661(a). In this instance, the requestor does not give the requisite information under section 1701.661(a). As the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings pursuant to chapter 1701, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released.<sup>1</sup> However, pursuant to section 1701.661(b), a “failure to provide all the information required by Subsection (a) to be part of a request for recorded information does not preclude the requestor from making a future request for the same recorded information.” *Id.* § 1701.661(b).

Section 552.103 of the Government Code provides as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person’s office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov’t Code § 552.103(a), (c). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the section 552.103(a) exception is applicable in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing (1) litigation was pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, orig. proceeding); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref’d n.r.e.); Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990). A governmental body must meet both prongs of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a).

You state the information at issue relates to two pending criminal cases styled *State of Texas v. Franklin*, Cause Nos. M17-14571 and M17-14572, that were pending in the Dallas County Criminal Court No. 2, when the district attorney’s office received the instant

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

request for information. You state the remaining information is directly related to the pending litigation. Based on your representations and our review of the submitted information, we find litigation was pending when the district attorney's office received this request for information, and the remaining information is related to the pending litigation for the purposes of section 552.103. Therefore, the district attorney's office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.103(a) of the Government Code.<sup>2</sup>

Generally, however, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). Thus, information that has either been obtained from or provided to the opposing parties in the pending litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a), and it must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

In summary, as the requestor did not properly request the body worn camera recordings pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. The district attorney's office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.

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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Emily Kunst  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EK/be

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<sup>2</sup> As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

Ms. Laura Anne Coates - Page 4

Ref: ID# 788259

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)