



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 7, 2020

Mr. Christopher K. Austria
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2020-10396

Dear Mr. Austria:

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# 821867 (ORR# W097031).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified incident report. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception and reviewed the submitted information.

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). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the information at issue 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, 710 (Tex. 1977). The department states the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of this information 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, 186-87 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 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 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may

generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

However, the requestor is with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Section 411.114 of the Government Code allows, among other things, for DFPS to obtain criminal history record information (“CHRI”) concerning an individual who is the subject of a report of abuse or neglect of a child. *See Gov’t Code* § 411.114(a)(4), (a)(2)(I). CHRI consists of “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *See id.* §411.082(2).

The requestor does not state whether the offender at issue in the submitted information is a suspect in a report of abuse or neglect of a child. Therefore, we must rule conditionally. *See id.* § 411.114; *see also id.* § 411.082(2). If the offender at issue is a suspect in a report of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must release the CHRI pertaining to that individual pursuant to section 411.114 of the Government Code. *See Open Records Decision No. 451 (1986)* (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under the Act). However, if the offender at issue is not a suspect in a report of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department is not required to release the individual’s CHRI pursuant to section 411.114.

In summary, with the exception of basic information, which the department must release, the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. However, if the offender at issue is a suspect in a report of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must release the CHRI pertaining to that individual pursuant to section 411.114 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,

James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/rm

Ref: ID# 821867

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)