



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 11, 2020

Ms. DeAnne Lin
Assistant County Attorney
Harris County
1019 Congress, 15th Floor
Houston, Texas 77002

OR2020-13207

Dear Ms. Lin:

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# 827398 (ORR# 20PIA0153).

The Harris County Constable's Office, Precinct 4 (the "constable's office"), received a request for three specified incident reports. The constable's office states it is releasing some of the requested information. The constable's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the constable's office claims 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). The constable's office states the submitted information pertains to an active criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the 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, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

However, we note 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 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, which must be released to this requestor, the constable's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.¹

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,

Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/mo

Ref: ID# 827398

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹ We note the requestor has a right of access to the information at issue pursuant to sections 58.008(d) and 261.201(k) of the Family Code. See Fam. Code §§ 58.008(d), 261.201(k); *but see id.* §§ 58.008(e)(2), 261.201(l)2). If the constable's office receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the constable's office must again seek a ruling from this office. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302; Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001).