



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 27, 2020

Ms. Judy Hickman
Assistant Supervisor
Beaumont Police Department
P.O. Box 3827
Beaumont, Texas 77704

OR2020-26948

Dear Ms. Hickman:

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# 850602.

The Beaumont Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified police report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.008 of the Family Code, which provides, in part:

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

(1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and

(3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

...

(d) Law enforcement records concerning a child may be inspected or copied by:

(1) a juvenile justice agency, as defined by Section 58.101;

(2) a criminal justice agency, as defined by Section 411.082, Government Code;

(3) the child; [or]

(4) the child's parent or guardian[.]

(e) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record concerning the child under Subsection (d), the custodian of the record shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under [the Act] or any other law.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b), (d), (e); *see id.* § 51.03(a) (defining "delinquent conduct" for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017.¹ *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 22. The juvenile must have been at least 10 years old and less than 17 years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam Code § 51.02(2) (defining "child" for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). The submitted information involves juvenile offenders, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). In this instance, however, the requestor is the parent of one of the juvenile offenders. Thus, the requestor has a right to inspect juvenile law enforcement records concerning this juvenile pursuant to section 58.008(d) of the Family Code. *See id.* § 58.008(d). Accordingly, the department may not withhold the submitted information from this requestor under section 552.101 of the

¹ Although you raise section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code, we note the 85th Legislature repealed this provision effective September 1, 2017. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 21. Thus, we understand you to raise section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.

Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. However, section 58.008(e)(1) provides any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the requestor's client must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.008(e)(1). Accordingly, the department must withhold the personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the requestor's client, which you marked, under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(e)(1) of the Family Code. Further, section 58.008(e)(2) provides that information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must also be redacted. *See id.* § 58.008(e)(2). Thus, we will consider the department's remaining arguments against release of the remaining 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). You state the submitted information relates to a pending investigation and prosecution. Based on your representation and our review, we find release of the submitted 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 (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, 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). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.² As noted above, section 58.008(e)(1) states any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the requestor's child shall be withheld from disclosure. Fam. Code § 58.008(e)(1). Accordingly, in releasing the basic information, the department must withhold the identity of any juvenile arrestee who is not the requestor's child under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(e)(1) of the Family Code.³

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

³ We note the requestor has a right of access to the information at issue pursuant to section 58.008(d) of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 58.008(d). If the department receives another request for this information from a different requestor, the department must again seek a ruling from this office. *See* Gov’t Code §§ 552.301, .302; Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001).

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,

Kelly McWethy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KM/gw

Ref: ID# 850602

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)