



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 13, 2022

Ms. Lauren Azopardi  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2022-20192

Dear Ms. Azopardi:

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# 958745 (PIR No. E002654-042022).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident involving a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim 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 department states the submitted information pertains to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon 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.

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.

We note the requestor is a representative of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") and may have a right of access to some of the information at issue. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides "[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS")] any criminal history record information ["CHRI"] maintained by [DPS] about a person." See Gov't Code § 411.089(a). In addition, section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code provides the following:

(a) [A] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from [DPS] CHRI maintained by [DPS] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

*Id.* § 411.087(a)(2). CHRI is defined as "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). However, a criminal justice agency that is authorized to receive CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) may only receive such information for a criminal justice purpose. See *id.* §§ 411.083(c), .087(b); see also Open Records Decision No. 655 (1997) (discussing limitations on release of criminal history record information). Thus, to the extent the requestor represents a "criminal justice agency," the requestor is authorized to obtain CHRI from the department pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, but only for a criminal justice purpose. See Gov't Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(a)(2). Although it appears ICE is a criminal justice agency for purposes of chapter 411, we cannot determine whether the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose. We note a statutory right of access generally prevails over exceptions to public disclosure under the Act, including section 552.108 of the Government Code. See Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under the Act). Therefore, if the department determines the requestor intends to use the CHRI for a criminal justice purpose, then the department must release the CHRI and basic information, but may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. However, if the department determines the requestor does not intend to use the CHRI for a

criminal justice purpose, then the department must release basic information, but may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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,

Kimbell Kesling  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KK/mo

Ref: ID# 958745

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)