



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 13, 2022

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1400 Botham Jean Boulevard
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2022-27987

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

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# 971970 (D014355).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information regarding a specified case. We understand the department will redact social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147(b) of the Government Code.¹ You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.136 of the Government Code.² We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, you note some of the submitted information was the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2022-14396 (2022). We have no indication the law, facts, or circumstances on which the prior ruling was based have changed. Accordingly, the department may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2022-16396 as a previous determination and withhold or release the

¹ Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act. Gov't Code § 552.147(b).

² We note, and you acknowledge, the department failed to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting a decision from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nonetheless, third party interests can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness caused by failure to comply with section 552.301. *See id.* §§ 552.007, .302; Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Sections 552.101, 552.130, and 552.136 can also provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness. Thus, we will consider whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, notwithstanding the department's violation of section 552.301 in requesting this decision.

information at issue in accordance with that ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 at 6-7 (2001) (discussing criteria for first type of previous determination).

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, and provide documentation demonstrating, the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office (the “district attorney’s office”) objects to release of the remaining information because it relates to its ongoing criminal investigation. 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). Accordingly, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code on behalf of the district attorney’s office.³

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,

Debbie K. Lee
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DKL/mo

Ref: ID# 971970

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

³ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments.