



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 3, 2022

Ms. Heather Silver
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1400 Botham Jean Boulevard
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2022-34296

Dear Ms. Silver:

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# 982280 (Ref. No. D014567-051922).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

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

¹ We note the department did not comply with the requirements of section 552.301 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nevertheless, section 552.101 of the Government Code and the needs of a governmental body, other than the governmental body that failed to timely seek an open records decision, to withhold information under section 552.108 of the Government Code can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness caused by a failure to comply with section 552.301. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 586 (1991). Because you inform us, and provide documentation showing, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office objects to the release of the information at issue, we will consider whether you may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108 on behalf of the Dallas County District Attorney's Office.

² We assume the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 58.008(b) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

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 and 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.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also* Fam. Code § 51.03(a)-(b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” 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. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 22. The juvenile must have been at least ten years old and less than seventeen years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). The department asserts the submitted information involves delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision. However, we are unable to determine the age of the offender at issue. Accordingly, we must rule conditionally. If the offender at issue in the submitted information was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. If the offender was not ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct, then the department may not withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 on that basis.

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 has submitted a representation from the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office (the “district attorney’s office”) objecting to the release of the submitted information because it 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 the *Houston Chronicle* decision. 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* decision). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the submitted information on behalf of the district attorney's office under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, if the offender at issue in the submitted information was ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct at issue, then the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. If the offender was not ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct, then the department must release basic information, but may withhold the remaining information on behalf of the district attorney's office 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,

Chase D. Young
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CDY/pt

Ref: ID# 982280

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)