



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 31, 2006

Mr. Nathan C. Barrow
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2006-01027

Dear Mr. Barrow:

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# 241479.

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for two specified incident reports. You claim that the requested reports are excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted reports.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007(c) reads as follows:

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

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

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from 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 Subchapter B.

Fam. Code § 58.007. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007. For purposes of section 58.007, “child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct in question. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Section 58.007 is not applicable to information that relates to a juvenile as a complainant, victim, witness, or other involved party and not as a suspect or offender. You claim that the submitted reports pertain to two juvenile suspects between the ages of ten and seventeen. However, we note that the submitted reports do not contain the suspects’ names or ages. Therefore, we are unable to conclude that section 58.007 is applicable to the submitted reports, and they must be released to the requestor.

You request that this office issue a previous determination allowing the city to withhold law enforcement records pertaining to juveniles who are alleged to have engaged in delinquent conduct without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office. We decline to issue such a ruling at this time. Therefore, this letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov’t Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general’s Open Government Hotline, toll

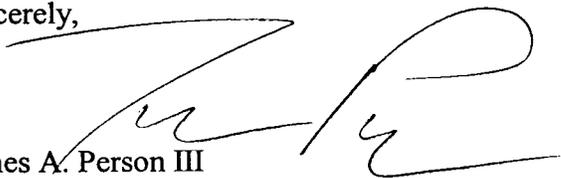
free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



James A. Person III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JAP/sdk

Ref: ID# 241479

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Stacy Elliot
6400 Dorchester Trail
North Richland Hills, Texas 76180
(w/o enclosures)