



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

May 23, 2006

Mr. John T. Patterson  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Waco  
P. O. Box 2570  
Waco, Texas 76702-2570

OR2006-05373

Dear Mr. Patterson:

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# 249842.

The Waco Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified arrest report. You claim that portions of the requested information are exempted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted incident report.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code exempts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes.

Section 371.204 of the Finance Code requires a pawnbroker to allow a peace officer to inspect the pawnbroker's books, accounts, papers, correspondence, or other records that relate to the business of the pawnbroker at any reasonable time without judicial writ or other process. *See* Fin. Code § 371.204. Additionally, section 371.206 of the Finance Code reads as follows:

Information obtained during an examination or inspection authorized by this subchapter is confidential and privileged except for use by the [consumer credit] commissioner or in a criminal investigation or prosecution.

*Id.* § 371.206. You state that the information you have marked was acquired by a peace officer during his inspection of a pawnbroker's business records. Therefore, based on your

representations and our review, we agree that the information you have marked is confidential pursuant to section 371.206 of the Finance Code and must therefore be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that "relates to . . . a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state [or] a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state." Gov't Code § 552.130. In accordance with section 552.130 of the Government Code, the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information it has marked.

We also note that the submitted arrest report contains information protected by common law privacy. Section 552.101 of the Government Code encompasses the doctrine of common law privacy, which protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common law privacy, both prongs of this test must be demonstrated. *Id.* at 681-82. A compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. United States Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's criminal history). Furthermore, we find that a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. The arrest report contains criminal history record information belonging to a member of the public that must be withheld pursuant to section 552.101 in conjunction with common law privacy.

In summary, the department must withhold the following: 1) information it has marked pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 371.206 of the Finance Code; 2) the Texas motor vehicle record information it has marked pursuant to section 552.130 of the Government Code; and 3) the criminal history record information we have marked pursuant to section 552.101 in conjunction with common law privacy. The remaining information must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

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,



Candice M. De La Garza  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CMD/krl

Ref: ID# 249842

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Cleveland Pimpton  
115 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 411  
Fort Worth, Texas 76134  
(w/o enclosures)