



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

February 3, 2009

Mr. C. Patrick Phillips
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3rd Floor
Forth Worth, Texas 76102

OR2009-01377

Dear Mr. Phillips:

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# 334160 (City of Fort Worth Request No. 0620-09).

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

We note that the submitted information concerns an alleged violation of section 32.51 of the Penal Code, which provides that "[a] person commits an offense if the person, with intent to harm or defraud another, obtains, possesses, transfers, or uses identifying information of . . . another person without the other person's consent[.]" Penal Code § 32.51(b)(1). Article 2.29 of the Code of Criminal Procedure pertains to alleged violations of section 32.51 that occurred on or after September 1, 2005 and provides as follows:

(a) A peace officer to whom an alleged violation of Section 32.51, Penal Code, is reported shall make a written report to the law enforcement agency that employs the peace officer that includes the following information:

- (1) the name of the victim;
- (2) the name of the suspect, if known;
- (3) the type of identifying information obtained, possessed, transferred, or used in violation of Section 32.51, Penal Code; and
- (4) the results of any investigation.

(b) On the victim's request, the law enforcement agency shall provide the report created under Subsection (a) to the victim. In providing the report, the law enforcement agency shall redact any otherwise confidential information that is included in the report, other than the information described by Subsection (a).

Crim. Proc. Code art. 2.29. For the purposes of article 2.29, an offense is committed on or after September 1, 2005 if no "element of the offense occurs before that date." Act of Jun. 17, 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., ch. 294, § 1(b), 2005 Tex. Gen. Laws 885.

In this instance, the submitted police report relates to the fraudulent use of a debit card, and the requestor is listed as the victim. Moreover, the report is related to an offense that occurred after September 1, 2005. Therefore, the submitted information is subject to article 2.29 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and must be released to the requestor, except to the extent that the information is confidential. Crim. Pro. Code art. 2.29(b). You assert, however, that the report contains information that is confidential pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. As this exception is a confidentiality provision, we will address its applicability.

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 Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses confidentiality provisions such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007. The relevant language of section 58.007(c) reads as follows:

(c) 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 Subchapters B, D, and E.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). The submitted information pertains to juvenile delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* §§ 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" for

purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007), 51.02 (defining “child” for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). You state that none of the exceptions in section 58.007 of the Family Code apply. Accordingly, we conclude that the submitted report is generally confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code.

As previously noted, however, article 2.29(b) of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides the requestor with a right of access to the report. But article 2.29(b) also provides that “[i]n providing the report, the law enforcement agency shall redact any otherwise confidential information that is included in the report, *other than the information described by Subsection (a).*” Crim. Proc. Code art. 2.29(b) (emphasis added). Accordingly, the city is authorized by article 2.29(b) to withhold most of the submitted report pursuant to section 58.007(c) of the Family Code as confidential information. However, because article 2.29(b) provides the requestor with a right of access to the information described in article 2.29(a), which is also subject to section 58.007(c), there is a conflict between the provisions of section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and article 2.29(b) with regard to the information described by article 2.29(a). Where general and specific statutes are in irreconcilable conflict, the specific provision typically prevails as an exception to the general provision, unless the general provision was enacted later and there is clear evidence that the legislature intended the general provision to prevail. *See Gov’t Code § 311.026(b); City of Lake Dallas v. Lake Cities Mun. Util. Auth.*, 555 S.W.2d 163, 168 (Tex. Civ. App.—Fort Worth 1977, writ ref’d n.r.e.).

In this instance, although section 58.007(c) generally makes juvenile law enforcement records confidential, article 2.29(b) specifically requires release of particular information in a report alleging a violation of section 32.51 of the Penal Code to the victim listed in the report. *See Crim. Proc. Code art. 2.29; Fam. Code § 58.007.* In addition, article 2.29 was enacted in a later legislative session than section 58.007(c). *See Act of Jun. 17, 2005, 79th Leg., R.S., ch. 294, § 1(a), 2005 Tex. Gen. Laws 885* (enacting article 2.29 of the Code of Criminal Procedure); *Act of May 27, 1995, 74th Leg., R.S., ch. 262, §§ 53, 100, 106, 1995 Tex. Gen. Laws 2517* (enacting section 58.007(c) of the Family Code). We therefore conclude that, notwithstanding the provisions of section 58.007(c) of the Family Code, the city must release the information listed in article 2.29(a) of the Code of Criminal Procedure to the requestor pursuant to article 2.29(b) of that statute. The remaining information in the report must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family 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 http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public

information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Entsminger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt Entsminger
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MRE/jb

Ref: ID# 334160

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)