



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 2, 2009

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Division
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2009-17027

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# 362863 (Open Records Request: 2009-7375).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 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. U. S. 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. You indicate that the information you have marked constitutes the criminal history of the individual at issue. However, we note that the information you have marked pertains solely to the incident specified in the request. Therefore, the marked information does not constitute the individual's compiled criminal history. Consequently, the marked information does not implicate the privacy interests of the individual at issue, and it may not be withheld on the basis of common-law privacy.

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 that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the information you have marked relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon this representation and our review, we conclude that the release of the information you have marked 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), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). Accordingly, we agree that the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1).

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a Texas motor vehicle driver's license or a Texas motor vehicle title or registration. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1), (2). Accordingly, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, (1) the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code; and (2) the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released to the requestor.

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, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Christopher D. Sterner
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CDSA/eeg

Ref: ID# 362863

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)