



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 7, 2009

Ms. J. Middlebrooks  
Assistant City Attorney  
Criminal Law and Police Section  
City of Dallas  
1400 South Lamar  
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2009-17223

Dear Ms. Middlebrooks:

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# 363453 (DPD PIR No. 09-7485).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for 160 police reports and supplements. You claim the submitted information is 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 representative sample of information.<sup>1</sup>

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 information protected by other statutes, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 provides in pertinent part:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise,

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<sup>1</sup>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.

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, D, and E.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). Section 58.007 makes confidential juvenile law enforcement records relating to delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997. Report number 0179147-W involves juvenile delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a) (defining “delinquent conduct” for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). You do not inform us, and it does not appear, that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 apply to the information in this report. Therefore, report number 0179147-W is confidential in its entirety under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also 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 satisfied. *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. Therefore, the department must withhold the criminal history record compilation you have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with 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 claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information 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 (Tex. 1977). You indicate the information you have marked under section 552.108 pertains to pending criminal investigations for criminal mischief. Based upon this representation and our review, we conclude the release of the information you have marked under section 552.108 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. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), writ ref’d n.r.e., 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). Thus, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108 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. Upon review, we agree the department must withhold the driver’s license number and class type, license plate number, license plate year, and vehicle identification number you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold report number 0179147-W under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. The department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108 of the Government Code. The department must withhold the driver’s license number and class type, license plate number, license plate year, and vehicle identification number you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.<sup>2</sup>

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](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

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<sup>2</sup>We note you have marked a social security number under section 552.147 of the Government Code. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person’s social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act.

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,



Jessica Eales  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JCE/eeg

Ref: ID# 363453

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)