



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 18, 2011

Mr. Gregory A. Alicie
Open Records Specialist
Baytown Police Department
3200 North Main Street
Baytown, Texas 77521

OR2011-00818

Dear Mr. Alicie:

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# 406432.

The Baytown Police Department (the "department") received two requests from the same requestor for information pertaining to two specified incidents involving a named individual. You state that you will redact social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147(b) of the Government Code.¹ You claim that portions of the requested information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted information.

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 incorporates the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 683-85 (Tex. 1976). The type of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* includes information

¹Section 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.

relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. This office has further found that some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps). We find that the information you have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public interest. Therefore, we agree that the department must withhold the information marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code provides, in relevant part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) 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(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why release of the requested information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested); *see also Ex parte Pruitt* 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the requested records pertain to pending criminal investigations. Based on your representation and our review, we conclude that release of the information you have marked would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (specifying law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, we agree the department may withhold the information marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from required public 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(a)(1), (2). We agree the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information you have marked under section 552.130.²

²We note this office issued Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including a Texas driver’s license number, under section 552.130 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

In summary, the department must withhold the information marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The department may withhold the information marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the information marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

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,



Jennifer Luttrall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JL/dls

Ref: ID# 406432

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)