



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

February 27, 2014

Mr. John K. McKinney, Jr.
Assistant County Attorney
Open Records Division
Montgomery County
501 North Thompson, Suite 102
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2014-03567

Dear Mr. McKinney:

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# 518275 (County ORR# 2014-0151).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to named individuals during a specified time period. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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). We note that the submitted

¹Although you raise section 552.101 of the Government Code, you make no arguments to support this exception. Therefore, we assume you have withdrawn your claim this section applies to the submitted information. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

information includes a citation. Because a copy of the citation has been provided to the individual who was cited, we find that release of the citation will not interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. See Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Therefore, the sheriff's office may not withhold the citation under section 552.108(a)(1). You state the remaining information relates to a pending criminal prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude that the release of this information 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) (court delineates 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, section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable to the remaining information.

Additionally, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure "basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic "front-page" information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-187; see also Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the citation and basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides that information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release.³ Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 in the citation.⁴

In summary, except for the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code, which must be withheld, the citation must be released. Except for basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

²Although basic information includes an arrestee's social security number, 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. Gov't Code § 552.147(b).

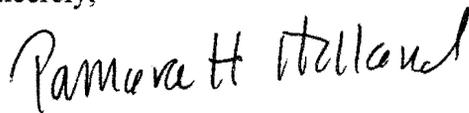
³The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception like section 552.130 on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

⁴We note section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. See Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). See *id.* § 552.130(d), (e).

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Tamara H. Holland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

THH/dls

Ref: ID# 518275

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)