



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 14, 2014

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

OR2014-08195

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# 527598 (ORR File No. 14PIA00169).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information related to a specified incident. You state the sheriff's office has released some of the requested information. You claim the remaining requested 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 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.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977).

We note that the submitted information includes a citation. Because a copy of the citation has been provided to the individual who was cited, we find release of the

¹Although you also raise section 552.101 of the Government Code, you have not submitted arguments explaining how this exception applies to the submitted information. Therefore, we presume the sheriff's office no longer asserts this exception. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

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 pertains to a pending criminal prosecution. Based on your representation and our review of the information at issue, we find the release of the remaining information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of a crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. 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).

However, we note, and you acknowledge, 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). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. 531 S.W.2d at 186-87. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information made public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, which you state has been released, and the citation, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government 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.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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 527598

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)