



February 12, 2015

Mr. Caleb Thornton
Assistant County Attorney
County of Montgomery
501 North Thompson, Suite 300
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2015-02819

Dear Mr. Thornton:

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# 558691 (ORR# 15PIA035).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received two requests from different requestors for case number 15A000533. 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(a)(1) 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 state the submitted information relates to an active investigation or prosecution. Generally, the release of information pertaining to an open case is presumed to interfere with the

¹Although you also raise section 552.101 of the Government Code, you have not provided any 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 Therefore, we assume you have withdrawn your claim this section applies to the submitted information.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.

criminal investigation. 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). We note, however, the information at issue includes a citation. The citation has previously been provided to the arrestee. Because a copy of this document has previously been released to the arrestee, we find you have not shown how release of the document will interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. See Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Because the remaining information at issue has not been previously released, we conclude release of this information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. Thus, we find section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information at issue.

However, we note 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*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note portions of the citation are subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.² Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. See Gov't Code § 552.130. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the sheriff's office must release the citation; however, in releasing this document, the sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. With the exception of the basic information, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the remaining 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.

²The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Morris Sloan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claire" being the most prominent.

Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 558691

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)