KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 6, 2015

Mr. Daniel Ortiz
Assistant City Attorney
Office of the City Attorney
City of El Paso
P.O. Box 1890
El Paso, Texas 79950-1890

OR2015-04286

Dear Mr. Ortiz:

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# 561520 (ORR# 15-1026-5155).

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for case number 15028213. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim 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. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 makes confidential juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997. The relevant language of section 58.007 reads as follows:

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

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 Subchapters B, D, and E.

. . .

(e) Law enforcement records and files concerning a child may be inspected or copied by a juvenile justice agency as that term is defined by Section 58.101, a criminal justice agency as that term is defined by Section 411.082, Government Code, the child, and the child's parent or guardian.

. . .

(j) Before a child or a child's parent or guardian may inspect or copy a record or file concerning the child under Subsection (e), the custodian of the record or file shall redact:

(1) any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child; and

(2) any information that is excepted from required disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other law.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c), (e), (j). For purposes of section 58.007(c), "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the reported conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). The information at issue involves juvenile delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision" for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). Thus, this information is generally confidential under section 58.007(c). In this instance, the requestor is a parent of the juvenile offender at issue. Therefore, this requestor has a right to inspect information concerning her child under section 58.007(e), and it may not be withheld from her under section 552.101 of the

Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. *Id.* § 58.007(e). However, section 58.007(j)(1) provides any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Further, section 58.007(j)(2) provides information subject to any other exception to disclosure under the Act or other law must be redacted. *See id.* § 58.007(j)(2). Thus, we will address your remaining argument under section 552.101 of the Government Code with respect to the remaining information.

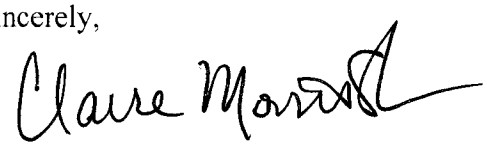
Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution 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 pertains to an active criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue 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. 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). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

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). We note basic information includes the identity of the reporting party. *See* ORD 127 at 3-4. However, the basic information does not include the identity of a victim who is not also the complainant. *See id.* In this instance, the identity of the reporting party consists of personally identifiable information about a juvenile victim who is not the child of the requestor. Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. As noted above, section 58.007(j)(1) states any personally identifiable information about a juvenile suspect, offender, victim, or witness who is not the child shall be withheld from disclosure. Fam. Code § 58.007(j)(1). Accordingly, in releasing the basic information, the department must withhold the identity of the reporting party under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family 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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 561520

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)