



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 30, 2015

Ms. Karla Baugh Hackett
Assistant Criminal District Attorney
Grayson County Criminal District Attorney
200 South Crockett
Sherman, Texas 75090

OR2015-13081

Dear Ms. Hackett:

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# 569330.

The Grayson County Criminal District Attorney (the "district attorney's office") received a request for the file pertaining to a specified case. The district attorney's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions the district attorney's office claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108 of the Government Code states in pertinent part the following:

(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:

...

(4) it is information that:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

...

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted [from required public disclosure] if:

...

(3) the internal record or notation:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation; or

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(4), (b)(3). A governmental body claiming an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706, 710 (Tex. 1977). In *Curry v. Walker*, 873 S.W.2d 379 (Tex. 1994), the Texas Supreme Court held a request for a district attorney's "entire litigation file" was "too broad" and, quoting *National Union Fire Insurance Co. v. Valdez*, 863 S.W.2d 458, 460 (Tex. 1993), held "the decision as to what to include in [the file] necessarily reveals the attorney's thought processes concerning the prosecution or defense of the case." 873 S.W.2d at 380. We note the request for information encompasses the entire prosecution file of the district attorney's office for the specified case. The district attorney's office indicates the submitted information reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state in the case at issue. Thus, upon review, we conclude subsections 552.108(a)(4) and (b)(3) of the Government Code are applicable to the information at issue.

However, 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 Publishing 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). *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Therefore, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the district attorney's office may

withhold the submitted information under subsections 552.108(a)(4) and (b)(3) of the Government Code and the court's ruling in *Curry*.¹

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,



David L. Wheelus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 569330

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the district attorney's office's remaining arguments, including its argument under section 552.103 of the Government Code, except to note that the basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle* is generally not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103. See Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).