



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 23, 2015

Ms. Linda Pemberton
Paralegal
Office of the City Attorney
City of Killeen
P.O. Box 1329
Killeen, Texas 76540

OR2015-24520

Dear Ms. Pemberton:

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# 588197 (Request ID# W017264 & W017262).

The City of Killeen and the Killeen Police Department (collectively, the "city") received two requests from two different requestors for a specified report. The city states it has released some of the requested information. The city claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the city claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a) 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: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, 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). The city states the submitted information relates to a pending criminal prosecution. We note, however, the information at issue includes a DIC-24 statutory warning and a DIC-25 notice of suspension. The city provided copies of these forms to the arrestee. The city has not explained how releasing this information, which has already been seen by the arrestee, would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Gov't Code* § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms may not be withheld under

section 552.108(a)(1). However, based on the city's representation, we conclude release of the remaining information would interfere with the detection, investigation, and 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 remaining 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; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing the types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms contain information subject to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and section 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. In considering whether a public citizen's date of birth is private, the Third Court of Appeals looked to the supreme court's rationale in *Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts v. Attorney General of Texas*, 354 S.W.3d 336 (Tex. 2010). *Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). The supreme court concluded public employees' dates of birth are private under section 552.102 of the Government Code because the employees' privacy interest substantially outweighed the negligible public interest in disclosure.² *Texas Comptroller*, 354 S.W.3d at 347-48. Based on *Texas Comptroller*, the court of appeals concluded the privacy rights of public employees apply equally to public citizens, and thus, public citizens' dates of birth are also protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *City of Dallas*, 2015 WL 3394061, at *3. Thus, the city must withhold the date of birth we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise mandatory exceptions on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

²Section 552.102(a) excepts from disclosure “information in a personnel file, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” Gov't Code § 552.102(a).

Section 552.130 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. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). Accordingly, the city must withhold the information we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

We further note the requestors are representatives from the United States Army (the "Army"). The United States Department of Defense (the "DoD") is authorized to perform background investigations of persons seeking acceptance or retention in the armed services. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 9101(b)(1)(C); *see also id.* § 9101(a)(6)(A) (DoD is a covered agency for purposes of section 9101). The Army has a right to the criminal history record information ("CHRI") of state and local criminal justice agencies when its investigation is conducted with the consent of the individual being investigated. *See id.* § 9101(b)(1), (c); *see also* 10 U.S.C. § 111(b)(6) (DoD includes the Department of the Army). CHRI is defined as "information collected by criminal justice agencies on individuals consisting of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, indictments, informations, or other formal criminal charges, and any disposition arising therefrom, sentencing, correction supervision, and release" but does not include "identification information such as fingerprint records to the extent that such information does not indicate involvement in the criminal justice system" or "records of a State or locality sealed pursuant to law from access by State and local criminal justice agencies of that State or locality." 5 U.S.C. § 9101(a)(2).

Federal law provides the Army's right of access to CHRI preempts state laws. *Id.* § 9101(b)(4) (section 9101 "shall apply notwithstanding any other provision of law . . . of any State"). We conclude the Army's right of access under federal law preempts the state law the city claims. *See English v. General Elec. Co.*, 496 U.S. 72, 79 (1990) (noting that state law is preempted to extent it actually conflicts with federal law); *see also La. Pub. Serv. Comm'n v. FCC*, 476 U.S. 355, 369 (1986) (noting a federal agency acting within scope of its congressionally delegated authority may preempt state regulation). Federal law, however, also provides the Army's right of access is contingent on the request being made for eligibility or retention purposes, and on receiving written consent from the individual under investigation for the release of such CHRI. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 9101(c).

In this instance, it is unclear if the individual under investigation is seeking retention in the armed services and if the requests are for retention purposes. Further, we have no indication the individual under investigation provided the Army with a signed authorization for the release of the information at issue. Therefore, to the extent the instant requests were made for retention purposes, and the requestors provide signed written consents for release from the individual being investigated, the city must release CHRI from the submitted information to the requestors. In that instance, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. However, if the instant requests were not made for retention purposes, or if the requestors do not provide written consents for release, then, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, to the extent the instant requests were made for retention purposes, and the requestors provide signed written consents for release from the individual being investigated, the city must release CHRI from the submitted information to the requestors. In that instance, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. Otherwise, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms, the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and under section 552.130 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,



David L. Wheelus
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 588197

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)