



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 14, 2015

Ms. T. Trisha Dang
Assistant City Attorney
City of Sugar Land
P.O. Box 110
Sugar Land, Texas 77487-0110

OR2015-26180

Dear Ms. Dang:

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# 596668.

The City of Sugar Land (the "city") received a request for a specified report. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 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 that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03(a) (defining "delinquent conduct" for purposes of Fam. Code § 58.007). Thus, this information is generally confidential under section 58.007(c). However, the requestor is a legal guardian of one of the juveniles engaged in delinquent conduct in the information at issue. As such, the first requestor has a right of access under section 58.007(e) to law enforcement records concerning this juvenile. *Id.* § 58.007(e). However, any personally identifiable information concerning other juvenile suspects, offenders, victims, or witnesses must be redacted under section 58.007(j)(1). *See id.* § 58.007(j)(1). Additionally, 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 argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code with respect to 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). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why the release of the information at issue 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, 710 (Tex. 1977). The city states the submitted information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of the submitted information 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, 186-87 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

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*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). We note basic information does not include information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code, but does include the identity of the arrestee. *See* ORD 127 at 3-4. Thus, with the exception of basic information, the city 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 the first requestor is not the legal guardian of shall be withheld from disclosure. Fam. Code § 58.007(j)(1). Accordingly, in releasing basic information, the city must withhold the identity of the juvenile arrestee that the requestor is not the parent of under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(j)(1) of the Family Code.¹

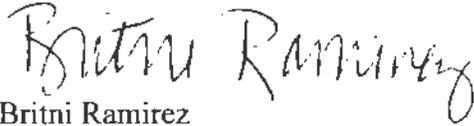
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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/>

¹We note the requestor has a special right of access to the basic information being released in this instance. Because such information is confidential with respect to the general public, if the city receives another request for this information from a different requestor, then the city should again seek a ruling from this office.

[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 "Britni Ramirez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Britni Ramirez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BR/bhf

Ref: ID# 596668

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)