S.B. No. 435

AN ACT

relating to the disclosure under the public information law of certain evidence of a crime that resulted in the death of a person.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 552.108, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsections (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h) to read as follows:

(d)  Notwithstanding other law, a prosecutor may permit a person to view the following evidence of a crime that resulted in the death of a person and that occurred in the prosecutor's jurisdiction:

(1)  a medical examiner's report, if the person viewing the report is a family member of the person who is the subject of the report and the person who is the subject of the report was a victim of the crime; and

(2)  video evidence of the crime, if the person viewing the video is a victim of the crime or a family member of a victim of the crime.

(e)  A person permitted to view a medical examiner's report or video evidence under Subsection (d) may not duplicate, record, capture, or otherwise memorialize the information. A prosecutor may require a person to sign a confidentiality agreement before permitting the person to view the information.

(f)  A permitted viewing of a medical examiner's report or video evidence under Subsection (d) is not a voluntary disclosure of information for purposes of Section 552.007(b). A governmental body, by providing information under Subsection (d) that is confidential or otherwise excepted from required disclosure under law, does not waive or affect the confidentiality of the information for purposes of state or federal law or waive the right to assert exceptions to required disclosure of the information in the future.

(g)  Subsection (d) does not affect:

(1)  the right of a person to obtain a medical examiner's report or video evidence of a crime from a governmental body under other law;

(2)  the procedures under which the information is obtained under other law; or

(3)  the use that may be made of the information obtained under other law.

(h)  In this section:

(1)  "Family member" means a person related to a victim of a crime within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity.

(2)  "Medical examiner's report" means a report and the contents of such a report created by a medical examiner under Article 49.25, Code of Criminal Procedure, including an autopsy report and toxicology report. The term does not include a photograph or medical image contained in a report.

(3)  "Victim" means an individual who suffered personal injury or death as a result of criminal conduct.

SECTION 2.  The change in law made by this Act applies to a crime that occurred before, on, or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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I hereby certify that S.B. No. 435 passed the Senate on April 20, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 0; and that the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 11, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 435 passed the House, with amendment, on May 6, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 133, Nays 1, two present not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_             Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_           Governor