

KS prison plan met with skepticism

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - Kansas legislators in both parties have misgivings about a plan to have the nation's largest private prison operator build a new correctional facility for the state.

The plan outlined Thursday by the state Department of Corrections would replace the state's oldest and largest prison in Lansing.

CoreCivic, which is based in Nashville, Tennessee, would build the \$170 million prison. The state would pay for the project by leasing the new facility over 20 years.

Democratic state Sen. Laura Kelly, of Topeka, questioned whether the arrangement is the most cost-effective for the state.

Republican state Rep. J.R. Claeys, of Salina, questioned why the department didn't consider other potential sites.

Legislative leaders and the governor would have to approve the proposal next month for it to proceed.

The new prison would house the 2,400 inmates in Lansing.

Parts of the existing prison date to the 1860s, and corrections officials contend a modern facility will be safer while operating with 46 percent fewer employees.

CoreCivic owns, controls or manages more than 80 facilities in 20 states and the District of Columbia. It has been the subject of lawsuits and critical audits in six states, including Kansas.

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