Stitt vetoes $1.2 million for private prison employee raises

Gov. Kevin has scrapped pay raises for private prison employees while preserving $2-per-hour salary increases for hundreds of public corrections employees. On Wednesday, Stitt line-item vetoed a bill that would have required the Department of Corrections to equalize employee pay at private corrections facilities under contract with the state. House Bill 4160 would have required the Department of Corrections to cover the nearly $1.2 million in pay raises with funds from the offender management system, the state's inmate look-up system. The measure sought to bring the private corrections employee pay in line with their public counterparts. “The offender management system is a critical component of our correctional operations as it serves as the centralized source of offender information for staff, the public and numerous state and federal agencies,” Stitt wrote in his veto message. He also noted the state is not contractually obligated to increase the pay scales at private corrections facilities. However, another portion of the bill that requires the Department of Corrections to use $1.6 million in the upcoming fiscal year to give pay raises to about 430 corrections employees, became law. The Department of Corrections employees that will receive the pay raises are those that have contact with inmates, but were inadvertently left out of salary increases last year due to a classification error.