Contract Extension for Private Prison in Downtown San Diego Despite President’s Ban: The contract for the Western Region Detention Facility in downtown San Diego was set to expire last September, but the operator received an extension despite an executive order from President Biden barring extensions for private prisons. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit Monday seeking information from the U.S. Marshals Service regarding its contract with private prison operator The GEO Group, which operates the Western Region Detention Facility in downtown San Diego. The contract for the 770-bed facility -- which mostly houses pre-trial detainees charged in federal cases -- was set to expire last September, but The GEO Group received a six-month extension despite an executive order from President Joe Biden barring the U.S. Department of Justice from renewing contracts for privately owned detention facilities. The ACLU alleges The GEO Group has endeavored to circumvent the order through an agreement with the Kern County city of McFarland, through which the city will contract with the Marshals Service, then subcontract detention services back to GEO in exchange for $500,000, which the ACLU described as a “pass-through scheme” that would allow the company to continue operating its San Diego facility. The ACLU claims it previously filed Freedom of Information Act requests seeking records regarding any renewal considerations or communications between the USMS, DOJ, GEO Group and McFarland, but have not received any information. “Our communities have a right to know about and challenge efforts to further mass incarceration,” said Summer Lacey, criminal justice director at the ACLU Foundation of Southern California. “This litigation is a demand for the transparency necessary to collectively push for transformative change.” Monday’s lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia by the ACLU Foundation of San Diego & Imperial Counties, as well as the ACLU Foundation of Southern California. The Western Region Detention Facility contract is now set to expire March 31.