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New hearing ordered over California ban on private prisons

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. -- A federal appeals court on Tuesday agreed to reconsider a ruling that rejected the state's first-in-the-nation ban on for-profit private prisons and immigration detention facilities. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a new hearing before an 11-judge panel, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Last October, a three-judge appellate panel kept in place a key piece of the world's largest detention system for immigrants - despite a 2019 state law aimed at phasing out privately-run immigration jails in California by 2028. The law was passed as one of numerous efforts by California Democrats to limit the state's cooperation with the federal government on immigration enforcement under the Trump administration. However, the appellate panel ruled 2-1 that the state law interferes with the federal government's authority. Tuesday's decision set aside that ruling and ordered a new hearing before a larger panel that will include Chief Judge Mary Murguia. Murguia cast the dissenting vote last year. She said the law was prompted by reports of "substandard conditions, inadequate medical care, sexual assaults and deaths in for-profit facilities." Murguia was appointed by President Barack Obama while the other two members of the appellate panel were appointed by President Donald Trump. The administration of Democratic President Joe Biden also has opposed the law on constitutional grounds, although Biden signed an executive order last year to end the government's use of such prisons in the future.