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**Private prison company execs accused of downplaying detainee lawsuits**

(Reuters) - A GEO Group Inc shareholder sued current and former directors and officers of the private prison company, saying they breached their duties by downplaying the legal risk of paying immigrant detainees in work programs \$1 a day. The lawsuit filed in Florida federal court on Wednesday alleges that GEO founder George Zoley and others falsely told investors in 2018 and 2019 that the company could not estimate the liability stemming from detainee lawsuits. The shareholder wants the defendants to repay the company for their compensation, and to strengthen financial oversight. Zoley was paid \$19.4 million in stock and other compensation between 2019 and 2021, according to public filings. A spokesperson for the company did not immediately reply to a request for comment on Thursday. GEO operates federal prisons and detention centers and faces multiple lawsuits over the treatment of immigrant detainees, including one that resulted in a \$17.3 million jury verdict against the company last year. GEO has disputed the allegations. The company told investors in 2018 and 2019 that it could not reasonably estimate the liability from those cases. The lawsuit alleges those statements were false because the company had told the U.S. government the liabilities could be substantial and asked for financial assistance. GEO also faces an investor lawsuit seeking damages for a decline in share price after the article. The case is Maldonado Jr. v. Zoley, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, No. 22-cv-81310. For shareholders: Leo Desmond of Desmond Law Firm; Benjamin Sachs-Michaels of Glancy Prongay & Murray; and Lesley Portnoy of The Portnoy Law Firm