



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

May 27, 2009

Secretary Kurt S. Browning
Secretary of State
R. A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Secretary Browning:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby withhold my approval of portions of Senate Bill 2600, enacted during the 41st Regular Session of the Legislature convened under the Constitution of 1968, and entitled:

An act making appropriations; providing moneys for the annual period beginning July 1, 2009, and ending June 30, 2010, to pay salaries, and other expenses, capital outlay - buildings, and other improvements, and for other specified purposes of the various agencies of State government; providing an effective date.

Developing Florida's budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 has presented a historical challenge to state government and, most importantly, to the people we serve. Under the leadership of President Jeff Atwater and Speaker Larry Cretul, the Legislature passed a spending plan that keeps in place Florida's core services: assistance for our most vulnerable and needy citizens; protecting the population from the predations of criminals; and maintaining the investment in our future by continuing our commitment to education, strengthening Florida's economy, and preserving and protecting of our fragile environment.

I look forward to negotiating a compact with Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida. Following ratification, this compact, which I have long advocated, will bring in a minimum of \$150 million annually for education. This funding is absolutely critical for our educational system during our current economic crisis. When the economy improves, as it surely will, this funding will provide the foundation for a truly world-class educational system.

SECTION 8 – OTHER SECTIONS

Under the Legislature's mandate to cut the salaries of state employees making more than \$45,000 per year, more than 28,000 employees and their families would be adversely affected. While the salary reduction is a well-intended effort by the Legislature to balance the state budget, the timing is unfortunate for families trying to balance their own budgets. In an effort to minimize the negative impact on the state budget and on the individual state employee, I will leave in place the reductions made to state agencies' budgets; however, I am eliminating the two percent pay reduction.

I will direct my agency heads to manage their salary spending by utilizing the legal means available to them, which may include using their authority under section 216.292, Florida Statutes, transferring funds from other categories. In addition, a variety of options can be applied, such as holding positions vacant, reducing or eliminating all non-essential travel and purchases. I am also encouraging the heads of cabinet agencies and the Judicial Branch to adopt a similar approach. Accordingly, I am vetoing the following section of the General Appropriations Act that mandates a salary cut for employees making more than \$45,000 annually.

Section 8 (1) (a)
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"(a) Effective July 1, 2009, the annual base rate of pay for each employee with an annual base rate of pay in excess of \$45,000 shall be reduced by 2 percent; however, in no instance shall the employee's annual base rate of pay be reduced below \$45,000 solely by implementation of this paragraph. For part-time employees, the full-time equivalent value of the base rate of pay shall be used to determine the reduction."

Applications for gun ownership have risen precipitously in recent years causing unprecedented backlogs. Current permit backlogs continue to exceed Fiscal Year 2007-2008 levels by more than four times. I strongly support protecting gun owner rights for individuals in Florida consistent with the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Florida's Concealed Weapons and Firearms Licensing Program is a self-sustaining trust fund paid for by gun owner fees for the past 22 years. There has never been a need for a General Revenue Fund subsidy for this program. The Legislature has now authorized a \$6 million transfer of funds from the Licensing Trust Fund to General Revenue in order to help balance the state budget. Even though I suggested similar action in my recommendations, revenues now available to fund state expenditures eliminates the need for additional funds from the Licensing Trust Fund. Therefore, I agree with Commissioner Bronson and veto the transfer of \$6 million to the General Revenue Fund.

Section 59
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"DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
Division of Licensing Trust Fund..... 6,000,000"

Secretary Kurt S. Browning
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The portions of Senate Bill 2600 identified above with my objections are vetoed, and all other portions of Senate Bill 2600 are approved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charlie" and the last name "Crist" clearly legible.

Charlie Crist