Gov. Charlie Crist approved a $66.5 billion budget for the coming fiscal year on Wednesday but refused to chop state workers' pay or raid a trust fund for concealed weapons licensing.

The lean 2009-10 budget that lawmakers sent to Crist mixes $1 billion in spending cuts with $5.3 billion in federal aid and nearly $2 billion in tax and fee increases. College and university tuition will increase 8 percent.

Although applauding the economizing efforts of lawmakers to stave off a looming $6 billion deficit, Crist vetoed two of their proposals, including a 2 percent pay cut for state workers making at least $45,000. State agencies, he said, will make the roughly $57 million in cuts elsewhere.

Crist said he preserved workers' pay out of "concern for the economy and the fact that these 28,000 people and their families are consumers, too."

Whether that veto will face - and survive - legal challenges will be determined later. The pay cut appears in a part of the budget that state law normally bars governors from singling out for a veto.

Lawmakers will have to review the governor's action to determine its legality, said Rep. Marcelo Llorente, House budget chief for government and health care.

Crist also refused to shift $6 million from a trust fund that supports the licensing of concealed weapons permits. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which oversees permitting, estimates that would have left only about $2.5 million in the fund as permit requests surge.

Rep. Jim Frishe, R-St. Petersburg, said that although lawmakers proposed raiding the fund, they committed $18 million in other revenue to support weapons permitting.

The National Rifle Association, joined by Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson, urged Crist not to raid the fund.

Wednesday, the governor acknowledged that before the session he had recommended sweeping $8 million from the fund.

"That was the genesis of the idea," said Llorente, R-Miami.

With Crist's budget signature barely dry, Senate President Jeff Atwater said that lawmakers might have to shrink spending or raise revenue again in coming months.

The budget omits some Bay-area priorities, such as funding for the Johnnie B. Byrd Sr. Alzheimer's Center & Research Institute. Rep. Kevin Ambler, R-Tampa, said there may be an opening in June to seek money for the Byrd center as well as the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute and a diabetes research initiative at the University of South Florida.