

Several important bills altered the tax program of the State in order to provide an additional \$10,000,000 to the local subdivisions to help the counties and Baltimore City finance their education and welfare programs. This method of appropriation permits each subdivision to determine its most essential needs for the funds. To implement this, a uniform tax of 6 cents per pack on cigarettes was imposed, and the sales and use tax base was lowered from 50 cents to 25 cents and its application revised.

The 1960 census entitled Maryland to an additional Representative in Congress. An Act was passed to create an Eighth Congressional District, comprising Howard and Prince George's Counties, and to revise the present boundaries of the Third and Fifth Districts. This Act must be submitted by referendum to the voters in 1962.

Another controversial bill which was passed by the General Assembly of 1961 was signed by the Governor revised the unemployment compensation laws. It increased the maximum amount payable to an unemployed individual and, at the same time, tightened requirements for eligibility. This Act must also be submitted to the voters in 1962.

Important revisions were made by the Legislature of 1961 in the organization of certain State agencies. The Patuxent Institution was made independent of the Department of Correction. A Board of Health and Mental Hygiene was created to coordinate the activities of the two original departments. The office of Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles was included within the State Merit System. The Legislature also passed a bill to extend the Department's driver education program to a wider range of high school students.

Important local measures included an Act to establish a Metropolitan Transit Authority for the Baltimore metropolitan area. The Legislature also passed several bills granting authority to counties and municipalities to carry out urban renewal programs.

The budget bill, as proposed by the Governor and enacted by the General Assembly, was the largest in the history of the State. It appropriated \$252,919,174 in general funds, \$178,283,383 in special funds, and \$93,337,282 in federal funds, making a total budget of \$524,539,839. In addition, a State debt of \$18,180,000 was authorized for building construction.

Proposed legislation to enact two of the most thoroughly debated issues of the 1961 Session failed. These were reapportionment of the State Legislative Districts to conform to current population, and referenda on slot machines now operated in four counties of Maryland. A proposal to increase taxes on beer to provide additional State revenue also failed.

CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES, REGULAR SESSION, 1961

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