

In the area of human services and programs affecting the poor and disadvantaged, numerous advances were made in improving foster care, deinstitutionalization of the mentally retarded, and expansion of day care and protective services for children and adults. Public assistance benefits were increased by 10 percent in fiscal 1980 and by 11 percent in fiscal 1981. State housing programs for financing homes for low and moderate income families were tripled during the first two years of the Hughes Administration.

Economic development also received major new impetus through large increases in the budget of the Department of Economic and Community Development, which expanded its programs for attracting new business and industry to the State and retaining those already established. Governor Hughes led a delegation of State businessmen to California in April 1980 in an effort to attract the electronics industry to Maryland and in June of that year led a fourteen-member trade mission to Japan, the Peoples Republic of China, and Hong Kong.

Governor Hughes was born in Easton, Maryland, on November 13, 1926. He lived in Denton and was educated in the public schools of Caroline County. As a young man he explored the possibilities of a career in professional baseball after pitching on high school and college teams. Upon graduation from college he played a summer of professional baseball with the farm team of the New York Yankees in Easton and the Federalsburg independent team.

Enlisting at age seventeen, Governor Hughes served a year-and-a-half with the U.S. Navy Air Corps in World War II, after which he entered the University of Maryland, receiving a B.S. degree in 1949. Prior to entering the University of Maryland he had attended Mercersburg Academy in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and Mount Saint Mary's College in Western Maryland. After receiving his undergraduate degree he entered the George Washington University School of Law, receiving his LL.B. degree in 1952. He was admitted to the practice of law in Maryland the same year and started practicing law in Denton in 1952.

Hughes was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1954 and served one term (1955–1958) in that body representing Caroline County. In 1958 he ran for the Senate and was elected. There he spent twelve years (1959–1970), first representing Caroline County, and after reappointment the Upper Eastern Shore counties.

In 1962 Hughes was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Taxation and Fiscal Matters and in 1965 became majority floor leader of the Senate and chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance.

In various leadership roles, Senator Hughes was closely involved in several reforms in educational funding and in seeking equity in State and local taxation. The first major revision of the State's equalization program for public education funding came in 1964 out of a report from the Committee on Taxation and Fiscal Matters, which he chaired.

From 1966 to 1968, he was chairman first of the Special Legislative Commission on State and Local Taxation and Financial Relations and later headed the Committee on Taxation and Fiscal Reform. Recommendations growing out of the work of these two bodies resulted in the enactment of the graduated income tax, a local income tax (piggyback tax), a sharing with local governments of the revenues from the State property tax, an increase in the aid to education formula, an increase in aid for school construction, and a grant to the counties and municipalities for police protection. Essential provisions of this program were enacted in 1967. Its recommendation for a restructuring of business taxes was enacted in 1968.

In 1970 Senator Hughes was named Chairman of the Commission to Study the State's Role in Financing Public Education. It was in accordance with that Commission's recommendation that the State assumed most of the costs of public school construction, embodied in the present State school construction program. Its recommendation for further increases in State aid to education was subsequently adopted.

In 1971 Mr. Hughes was appointed by Governor Mandel to head the newly created Department of Transportation. His first task in that capacity was to consolidate and coordinate the several quasi-independent air, rail, port, highway, and mass transit agencies. Under his direction the Department created a State program to provide both capital and operating assistance to the Maryland suburbs of Washington and to smaller urban areas for the development of public transit systems. It was under his guidance that design and construction of the subway system in the Baltimore area was initiated. In addition, Baltimore-Washington International Airport was acquired by the Department and major reconstruction programs for both the airport and the Port of Baltimore were initiated.