

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 517 (Senator Ready, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

General Provisions - Standard Time - Year-Round Daylight Saving Time

This bill requires the standard time in the State to be Eastern Daylight Time year round, which would establish year-round daylight saving time (DST) in the State. This change is contingent on the appropriate federal law being amended to allow a state, individually, to observe a year-round standard time that is consistent with Eastern Daylight Time. The Secretary of State must monitor any related changes to federal law and report notice of any change to the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). If DLS receives notice of the change by December 31, 2025, this change takes effect the second Sunday in March or the first Sunday in November after the change takes effect, whichever occurs first. If DLS does not receive notice of any change by December 31, 2025, the bill terminates. **The bill's monitoring and notice requirements take effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Secretary of State can monitor action by the federal government and, if necessary, report to DLS within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Under the federal Uniform Time Act, a state may exempt itself from observing DST by state law. If a state chooses to observe DST, it must begin and end on federally mandated dates. The law does not allow a state to observe DST year round.

Background: The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reports DST is the practice of changing the clocks twice a year, one hour forward in spring and then back one hour to standard time in fall; modern observance of the practice began in 1966. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), 39 states introduced legislation to abolish the practice between 2015 and 2019; many of the states sought to keep their clocks permanently set forward an hour.

Transportation and commerce played heavily into the history of DST. Time zones were introduced by the major railroad companies in 1883 to resolve confusion and avoid train crashes caused by different local times, and the Interstate Commerce Commission oversaw the original nationwide implementation of DST during World War I. The practice was federally abolished after the war, but states were allowed to continue DST if desired. As a result, confusion and collisions caused by different local times once again became a transportation issue. In 1966, DOT was founded to serve as a “focal point of responsibility for transportation safety” and given regulatory power over time zones and DST. DOT implemented DST uniformly across the United States, with dates for the twice-yearly transitions set by law. With the exception of Arizona and Hawaii, every state must continue to observe DST between March and November, unless changes are officially approved by the Secretary of Transportation.

CRS notes that Congress has required several agencies to study the effects of changes in DST observance. In 1974, DOT reported that the potential benefits to energy conservation, traffic safety, and reductions in violent crime were minimal. In 2008, the Department of Energy assessed the potential effects to national energy consumption of an extended DST, and found a reduction in total primary energy consumption of 0.02%. Other studies have examined potential health effects associated with the spring and fall transition to DST and found a cumulative effect of sleep loss and increased risk for incidence of acute myocardial infarction in specific subgroups.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1610 (Delegate Crosby) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

Information Source(s): Secretary of State; Department of General Services; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Energy Administration; Public Service Commission; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; National Conference of State Legislatures; U.S. Department of Transportation; Congressional Research Services; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2020
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