

**Testimony regarding HB1013 - Standard Time – Year–Round Daylight Saving Time  
Before the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
April 6, 2021**

**By Scott C. Yates**

Dear Sen. Pinsky, Sen. Kagan, Members of the Committee, and Del. Crosby,

I'm honored to present this testimony in favor of this great bill to bring some sanity to the clocks.

I've been testifying on this issue for more than seven years now, and the intensity of action this year has been breathtaking at the state and federal level.

Why is that?

The main reason is that it is what the people want. There are so few completely bipartisan issues, and yet this is one.

A new poll shows that preference for permanent Daylight Saving Time has grown to new highs with 68 percent of respondents saying that they support the move and 14 percent opposing.

The poll conducted by Morning Consult and Politico asked nearly 2,000 registered voters if they supported bipartisan legislation to make Daylight Saving Time permanent. Fully 45 percent said that they "strongly support" the legislation, and another 23 percent said that they "somewhat support" it. Seven percent each said they either strongly or somewhat oppose the bill, and another 18 percent said they didn't know or did not have an opinion.

While previous polling has shown a plurality of support for Permanent DST, this is the first national poll from a professional polling company that has shown such a strong majority.

The Politico/Morning Consult poll surveyed 1,993 registered voters and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. A breakdown of the data showed nearly identical results for men and women, as well as Democrats, Republicans and independents. There was also no significant difference based on education, religion, employment, area of the country or if the respondents live in an urban, suburban or rural area.

**Opposition?**

As we saw in that poll, only 14 percent of citizens are opposed to fixing this, but some in those numbers are quite strident and vocal. They typically say that "all scientists" have agreed that permanent Standard Time is better for health, and they trot out the canard that it is safer for school children. Allow me to address both of those points directly:

Health.

It is true that research published by circadian sleep scientists show that more morning light relative to the clock is better for the sleep patterns for many people, especially those who naturally wake up earlier.

It is, as science so often is, complicated. I've talked to a lot of researchers through the years, and they always say that it is unwise to make broad policy decisions from any one study, or even one niche like circadian sleep science.

Outside of circadian sleep, the science is decidedly mixed. Research in the fields of adolescent exercise, mental health, traffic safety, crime and workplace productivity say that Permanent DST would be better.

The one thing they all agree on, and why this bill is such a good idea, is that it helps with what all science agrees on: that the twice-yearly clock changes—especially the one in the Spring—are deadly. The research on that is unassailable. I will write more about that below.

Safety of school children

The research is extremely clear here: Pedestrians (including school children) are six times less likely to be injured in the mornings than they are in the afternoons.

We have mountains of data about this, dating back to the early 1970s. Anyone claiming that permanent DST is dangerous for school children is using emotionally charged language that simply has no basis in fact.

The most recent helpful research was conducted by Washington State before they enacted a law very similar to the one you are considering today. In short, permanent DST would save the lives of hundreds of pedestrians.

But the question of school start times relative to the clock is a legitimate one. In the past school advocates have said that changing what time schools start is just too hard. Well, if we've learned anything this last year, it's that schools can indeed be flexible in scheduling to protect students and do what is best for them academically. Changing start times for school will be a modest change indeed compared to all the other changes made recently.

Now to the larger issues of why this bill is such a good idea.

I'd like to address three general areas: **research, good government, and politics.**

Before I get to that, a very short bit of history.

I've been a leader on this issue for a couple of years now, having appeared on CNN, a bunch of radio stations and newspapers, and I've talked to legislators and citizens all over the country.

If you ask someone why we change the clocks twice per year, most will say it has something to do with agriculture. Let me just clear that up here and now.

The farmers were always against clock-changing. Always. The Boston Chamber of Commerce issued press releases saying that farmers liked it, but farmers never liked it, and that bit of "fake news" has endured for about 100 years now.

When I testified recently in Wyoming, I was joined in my proponent testimony by a representative of the Wyoming Farm Bureau. It's hard to think of a more conservative group in the country, and the said their members don't really care what time zone they lock into, they just want to end the changing of the clocks twice per year. That bill passed, and was the last one signed before the Covid restrictions kicked in last year.

Why we have Daylight Saving Time now is really something of a mystery, as it was actually just the U.S. following the example set by the Germans in World War I. They thought it would help them save fuel oil, but there's a theory that it was just a distraction to take people's minds off the facts that they only had turnips to eat one winter during the war.

Anyway, Great Britain followed suit, and the U.S. after that, and now we're stuck with showing up to work all bleary-eyed and figure out the damn DVD player settings twice a year.

## Research

The clock change provides a golden chance for academics to study external factors on human behavior, so there are literally hundreds of fully vetted research papers available.

I have links to all of the following findings on my website, [sco.tt/time](http://sco.tt/time) and for those getting a printed version of this testimony I've attached summaries to the end of this document. Here's a very short summary of the most important findings:

- Heart attacks go up because of the clock change.  
([New England Journal of Medicine](#), [Sleep Medicine Journal](#))
- There's NO increased risk to children in rural areas.  
([American Journal of Public Health](#))
- Traffic accidents spike on the Monday after "Spring Forward."  
([American Economic Association](#), [New England Journal of Medicine](#))
- Workplace injuries go up.  
([Journal of Applied Psychology](#))

- Staying in DST will improve traffic safety in the winter months, and there is no increased risk to students waiting for school buses.  
([Journal of Safety Research](#))
- Permanent DST saves energy.  
([U.S. Department of Energy](#))
- Permanent DST helps in the fight against childhood obesity.  
([Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity](#) and [Journal of Physical Activity and Health](#))
- Workplace productivity goes down because of the clock changes.  
([Journal of Applied Psychology](#), story [here](#))
- Permanent DST will help decrease air pollution.  
([Journal of the Air & Waste Management Assn.](#) and [Steve Spangler Science](#))
- Getting rid of clock changing will make the stock market perform better.  
([Journal of Psychological Reports](#))
- Clock-changing brings harsher sentences from judges.  
([Psychological Science](#))
- Staying in DST all year can save wildlife.  
([The Royal Society Biology Letters](#))

In short, while it's easy to trivialize this issue, to do so is a slap in the face to those families who have lost loved ones simply because politicians couldn't get rid of something that didn't make that much sense in the first place.

That brings me to the next section of my remarks: **Good Government**.

I think the way we treat the clocks should follow something like the Hippocratic Oath: First, do no harm.

If you'll allow me to get slightly philosophical for a moment... What is time? I've thought a lot about this, and essentially "time" is just an agreement among people. We've all agreed on the idea of time being marked in a particular way, and it's very handy in a modern society.

Imagine if you bought an airplane ticket and the departure time was listed as "When the sun is three hands away from the horizon."?

So, given that "time" is just an agreement among people, shouldn't it be that the agreement itself doesn't kill people? That it doesn't make our children more obese, our skies more full of pollution?

The government controls the time. Our citizens are looking at what our government does, and when it imposes an absolutely indefensible glitch into time itself, how can the citizens trust that the government will get anything else right?

I know you have many weighty issues before you in this General Assembly this year in Nebraska, but can you name one that will have a more direct impact on regular citizens?

## **Politics**

This issue is in no way partisan.

One small political note about Arizona. In 2015 a legislator in Arizona proposed having that state switch to the clock-changing system that the rest of us use, saying that it was confusing for interstate commerce to have Arizona change relative to other states twice per year. Indeed it is, and it's a valid idea.

However, this legislator was so overwhelmed with negative feedback that he held a press conference to publicly, positively and unequivocally say that he was withdrawing the bill. He got more praise for withdrawing a bill than perhaps any legislator in U.S. history for withdrawing a bill.

Arizonans know that it's a hassle coordinating the time with the rest of the clock-changing world, but they don't have to change so they are fine with that.

The biggest political issue here is one of state's rights vs. federal control.

Here's where state's rights vs. federal control comes in. The act is the Uniform Time Act. It calls for uniform time zones throughout the U.S.

I have two very specific suggestions for you today:

The first is that you should pass this bill. You should say to your weary constituents that you had a chance to vote on something you knew they cared about, and you voted yes.

The second is that I would urge each of you to reach out to the members of Maryland's congressional delegation, Republicans and Democrats, and let them know that you voted for this bill, and that you hope that they will sign on as cosponsors of the Sunshine Protection Act. The only one you don't need to contact is Rep. Jamie Raskin, who has already signed on as a cosponsor.

Thank you very much for your time and attention, and maybe this will be the year that we, at long last, #LockTheClock