

Dear Senators:

I am a musician who lives in Virginia and sometimes plays in Maryland. While most of us would like to stop changing clocks, there is a right way and a wrong way to do it. Standard time is better for our health and safety than year-round daylight saving time (DST) would be. Therefore I oppose SB 268 unless it is amended for standard time.

In order to clarify this inherently confusing issue, I also submit one fact sheet I wrote as a volunteer with the nonprofit Save Standard Time, and another from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

Before we started changing clocks, the time of day was not subject to debate; midday was 12 o'clock. AM and PM originally refer to solar noon, midway between sunrise and sunset, when the Sun is highest. In renaming that moment 1 o'clock, DST disregards centuries of tradition.

Sleep medicine professionals and chronobiologists find not only that seasonal clock changes are disruptive, but also that DST imposes a chronic circadian misalignment. In short, morning light helps us wake up and evening darkness helps us go to sleep, but DST puts both of those an hour later on the clock. This tends to reduce the length and quality of sleep and increase the likelihood of other mental and physical health problems.

The United States tried year-round DST in 1974 to mitigate an energy crisis. Some members of this committee may remember going to school on those dark winter mornings; others may have seen photos. The public found it unsafe and demanded that the experiment be cut short. We need not repeat that mistake to learn from it. If some students today go to school before sunrise for part of the year, let's not make it worse. If school should start later, let's not counteract that.

Although a few businesses may benefit from DST, public health and safety should be given priority. I ask that the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee either amend SB 268 for standard time or lay it on the table.

Respectfully,
Michael Garrahan