



Save Standard Time

A Guide to Timekeeping for Maryland Legislators

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savestandardtime.com

Save Standard Time opposes SB 268 because the evidence shows that year-round daylight saving time would be detrimental to the health, safety, and well-being of Marylanders. The best way to end clock changes is year-round *standard* time. For details see savestandardtime.com/concerns.

Eastern Standard Time (EST) is the mean solar time of 75°W longitude, 5 hours behind Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). It was adopted by the railroad industry in 1883 and codified in the Standard Time Act of 1918. The US keeps standard time nationwide from early November to mid March.

Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) is one hour ahead of EST and 4 hours behind UTC. Daylight saving time (DST) was first used in 1918 as a wartime measure. Before the Uniform Time Act of 1966, some cities observed DST while many rural areas did not. Most of the US observes DST from mid March to early November.

Nature gives Maryland 14 hours or more daylight in summer and 10 hours or less daylight in winter regardless of clock setting. Standard time puts nearly equal shares in AM and PM; DST shifts an hour from AM to PM.

Doctors say that aside from the disruptive clock changes, DST produces a chronic circadian misalignment which degrades sleep and increases the risk of various health problems. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) opposes year-round DST; others concurring with AASM include the Maryland Sleep Society, the American College of Chest Physicians, the American Academy of Neurology, and the American Medical Association. For details see the AASM fact sheet.

Seasonal affective disorder is treated with bright light in the morning. DST shifts daylight away from the morning.

Darker winter mornings were problematic in 1974, when the US tried year-round DST in response to an energy crisis. Members of Congress received numerous complaints about safety, including a letter from the governor of Florida about increased fatalities there. The House voted 383-16, and the Senate agreed, to revert to standard time as usual that October.

Claims of saving energy today should be viewed with skepticism, as efficient lighting and widespread air conditioning have changed the situation. When Indiana began observing DST in 2006, total energy usage there increased slightly.

Under US law, states may either observe DST seasonally on the national schedule or keep standard time year round (15 USC §260a). Arizona, Hawaii, and US territories exercise the latter option. Year-round DST would require a change in US law.

The Sunshine Protection Act expired with no House action in the previous Congress and was recently reintroduced. It would impose year-round DST on states which have not already chosen year-round standard time.

If SB 268 passes but Congress does not act, Marylanders may wonder why they still change clocks. If Congress does act, winter sunrises and sunsets would both occur an hour later on the clock than usual, and complaints about darker mornings as in 1974 are likely.

Other opponents of year-round DST include the National Safety Council, the National PTA, Start School Later, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Rabbinical Council of America, and Agudath Israel of Maryland; see also savestandardtime.com/endorsements.