

HB 229 | Expert Testimony

Medical Consensus Supports Permanent Standard Time

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*Representing Alaska's physicians
since territorial days.*

Supporting the health and wellbeing of all Alaskans —
the Alaska State Medical Association formally supports
HB 229 and permanent standard time.

Why Standard Time?

The human circadian clock is set by sunlight — not the clock on the wall.

DST shifts the social clock but NOT the biological clock.

Circadian timing stays locked to solar time — even after the entire summer.

Circadian misalignment increases risk of:

Cardiovascular disease • Metabolic syndrome • Obesity & Type 2 Diabetes

Depression & mood disorders • Reduced immune function

Why Alaska Is Especially Vulnerable

Alaska already sits at the western edge of its time zone
— the worst position for circadian health.

- ~19 min less sleep per night vs. eastern edge of time zone
- Extreme seasonal light variation (5.5–19.5 hrs) found nowhere else in the US
- Alaska leads the nation in youth suicide rate — 3× the US average
- 9–19% of Alaskans meet full criteria for SAD (vs. ~1–3% nationally)

3×

Youth suicide rate vs.
US national average

10×

More likely to be
affected by SAD

~19 min

Less sleep — western
vs. eastern edge

DST Transitions Cause Measurable Harm

Every spring-forward transition is associated with:

+24%

Heart attacks

Monday after spring-forward
(Sandhu et al., Open Heart 2014;
Michigan)

+6.25%

Suicide rate

Post-spring transition
(Osborne-Christenson, Health Econ
2022; US data)

+6%

Fatal crashes

First workweek after spring-forward
(Fritz et al., Curr Biol 2020)

Note: CV evidence is mixed at population level (Rymer et al., JAMA Netw Open 2025). Effect stronger in northern latitudes and populations with limited cardiac access — both characteristics of Alaska.

The Medical Consensus Is Clear

Multiple major medical organizations have adopted formal positions supporting permanent standard time:

AASM American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Updated position statement, J Clin Sleep Med 2024 — endorsed by 20 organizations

AMA American Medical Association

House of Delegates policy H-440.802, 2022 — formal national policy

ASMA Alaska State Medical Association

Board of Directors vote, 2026 — Alaska's own medical society

SRS Sleep Research Society

Position statement, Sleep 2022 — co-signatory to AASM endorsement

Expert Opinion: Support HB 229

The Evidence Supports Permanent Standard Time

- The AASM, AMA, ASMA, Sleep Research Society, and multiple national bodies formally support permanent standard time
- Alaska's western time zone position, 1983 compression, and extreme seasonal light make circadian misalignment under DST uniquely severe here
- HB 229 aligns Alaska law with the current medical and scientific consensus

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