



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Anna MacKinnon – Senate District G

Sponsor Statement

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 6 (FIN)

"An Act exempting the state from daylight saving time; petitioning the United States Department of Transportation to change the time zones of Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

This bill is in direct response to a number of concerns raised by my constituents, fellow Alaskans, and various groups that would like to repeal daylight saving time in Alaska.

The idea for daylight saving time originated in Europe and was introduced to the United States in 1918 when Congress placed the nation on daylight saving time for seven months in order to conserve resources for World War I. Since then the United States has had multiple iterations of federal policy for daylight saving time and we currently operate under the Uniform Time Act of 1966. Later, daylight saving time was extended by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 so we now observe daylight saving time between the second Sunday in March and the first Sunday in November. Under the Uniform Time Act, Alaska has the authority to exempt ourselves from daylight saving time and stay on standard time year-round.

Studies have shown that there are adverse effects on our health, sleep cycles, work productivity, safety, and overall wellbeing during the time that we go on and off daylight saving time. According to a study completed in 2012, daylight saving time led to a decrease in productivity at work. Two different studies conducted in 2012 found the rate of heart attacks increases, and multiple studies completed in the past 20 years have found that the rate of traffic accidents increase during the first days and weeks of daylight saving time in March. However, the effects of daylight saving time have been and currently are extensively studied showing positive, negative and neutral outcomes.

Many Alaskans have expressed the desire to have less time separating them with the Lower 48, for reasons ranging from commerce to personal interactions. To accomplish this, they believe it is beneficial for Alaska to be on to Daylight Saving Time and stay there. The State of Alaska cannot make that change on its own; that determination belongs to the United States Department of Transportation. The provision to petition the United States Department of Transportation was added to the bill as the first step in the process to change the time zone in which Alaska operates.

Daylight saving time does not achieve what it was intended to do and I urge your support for this piece of legislation.