

From: John Cain III <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 10:51 AM
To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>; Rep. James Kaufman <Rep.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov>; Rep. DeLena Johnson <Rep.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>; House State Affairs <HouseState.Affairs@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 31 OBSERVE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ALL YEAR (oppose)

Hello,

I am writing to draw your attention to the Sunshine Protection Act and its impact on Alaska, in particular the military. If Daylight Saving Time becomes permanent in Alaska there will be extreme sunrise and sunset times in the winter.

The problem with Daylight saving time in Alaska is that the Alaska Time zone is currently set at UTC -9 which is the correct time for Juneau in the winter. UTC -9 is one hour fast for the Rail Belt which is the most populated area in Alaska consisting of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, and Kenai and where the majority of military personnel are. When we spring forward the result is that Juneau is one hour ahead of solar time in the summer while the Rail Belt is two hours ahead of solar time resulting in what some call "Double Daylight Saving Time." The impact is even more extreme the further west you go. Nome has "Triple Daylight Saving Time" in the summer. Permanent Daylight Saving Time would extend these impacts into the winter when we have scant daylight resulting in a sunrise after 1:00pm in Nome.

Sample Sunrise Sunset Times Winter Solstice with permanent DST using UTC-9:

Juneau	9:44am	4:06pm
Anchorage	11:15am	4:44pm
Fairbanks	11:58am	3:39pm
Nome	1:02pm	4:56pm

My concern is that Day Light Saving time may be an overlooked part of the suicide issue in Alaska, both civilian and military. The issue is that our current time zone pushes time in the Rail Belt one hour fast year round, and two hours fast for almost 9 months of the year March - October when Daylight Saving Time is observed. This is an issue for the military since our Service Members do not have the option to set their clock the "correct" time. Based on Solar Time and circadian rhythm the Army Physical Training time of 6:30am is really 4:30am and when a person tries to get the appropriate amount of sleep their bed time of 10:00pm is really 8:00pm. This impact is amplified here since most military barracks and housing don't have air conditioning and are still hot. This would be less of a problem if they were not trying to go to bed so early in relation to solar time. While skipping a night of sleep or getting up early for several days in a row is not an issue it begins to wear people down over time reducing their resiliency.

I feel there are a few potential changes that could be implemented to help:

1. The military could adjust its schedule to line up better with the circadian rhythm. Duty Day or PT is scheduled at 8:00am when we are on Daylight Savings Time. (this would be 6:00am if the Rail Belt was on the correct time for its longitude) However, this will put the military community out of synch with the civilian population.

2. The State of Alaska could stop observing Daylight Saving Time. This could be done at the state level. This would still leave us one hour fast in the Rail Belt which is more reasonable.

3. Adjust the Alaska Time zone to UTC -10 instead of UTC -9 and stop observing DayLight Saving Time. This would create the most equitable distribution of solar time for all Alaskans, with the population center of Alaska on the correct time. However, this would require change to federal law.

Sample Sunrise Sunset Times on Winter Solstice using UTC -10 Standard Time

Juneau	7:44am	2:07pm
Anchorage	9:13am	2:41pm
Fairbanks	9:58am	1:39pm
Nome	11:02am	2:57pm

I'd also like to counter some of the common arguments against setting Alaska's time correctly:

1. In the 1980s Alaska's time was set to be 4 hours behind eastern to facilitate business and put the state government and population center on one time zone.

With modern telecommunications and telework a business or individual can adjust their hours and come in early or attend the meeting from home before work. The majority of Alaska's population does not conduct business with the East Coast on a regular basis. Why should the majority of Alaskans have to be on the wrong time for a minority? This also applies to frequent travelers. The majority of Alaska's population does not travel to other time zones on a regular basis.

2. Tourists enjoy having the sunset after midnight.

Tourists are not residents and do not experience the long term health impacts.

3. Studies show commerce increases on summer evenings with the implementation of Daylight Saving Time.

Were these studies conducted at high latitudes? As pointed out in the DOT response letter the studies involving crashes were in Texas and the UK, and may not be applicable to Alaska based on the obvious differences in location and climate. Any study in the mid to lower latitudes is not really applicable here. We will have enough sun in the evenings even in the correct time zone on standard time. Currently, in the summer most businesses close well before sunset.

4. Time is just a human construct and doesn't matter. You can set the clock for whatever time you want.

Time is a human construct. However, it does have meaning. Our bodies expect even amounts of light before and after 1200pm and even amounts of darkness before and after 1200am. Our bodies also expect the coolest part of the day to be between midnight and sunrise as well as the warmest part of the day to be in the late afternoon. Even if I set my home clock to time I want state, local, and federal institutions such as schools, hospitals, police, post offices, and the military will follow the official time. Therefore that really is not an option, especially for our Service Members. Please keep in mind that no other state in the United States is considering moving their clock two to three hours ahead of solar time for any of its citizens.

Thank You for Your Time,

John Cain

Palmer, AK