

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 5, 2024

1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Forrest Dunbar, Chair
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Cathy Giessel

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donald Olson, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 184

"An Act exempting the state from daylight saving time; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 184

SHORT TITLE: ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

SPONSOR(S): STATE AFFAIRS BY REQUEST

01/16/24 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

01/16/24 (S) CRA

03/05/24 (S) CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

GRIFFEN SUKKAEW, Staff
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sponsor statement and sectional analysis for SB 184 on behalf of the sponsor.

JAY PEA, Founder
Save Standard Time
Phoenix, Arizona

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of SB 184.

TOM WILLIAMS, Financial Officer
Ward Air
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of part of SB 184.

LYNN WILLIS, representing self
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 184.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:30:28 PM](#)

CHAIR FORREST DUNBAR called the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Bjorkman, Giessel, and Chair Dunbar

SB 184-ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

[1:30:56 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 184 "An Act exempting the state from daylight saving time; and providing for an effective date."

[1:31:50 PM](#)

GRIFFEN SUKKAEW, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the sponsor statement and sectional analysis for SB 184 on behalf of the sponsor:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 184 would exempt the State of Alaska from the practice of Daylight-Saving Time every year. Daylight-Saving Time traditionally is observed between the second Sunday of March and the first Sunday of November.

While Daylight-Saving Time has been observed in Alaska since 1966, this bill aims to switch Alaska to an observation of permanent Standard Time. This would benefit Alaskans mental and physical health, the Alaskan economy, no longer require a clock change twice a year.

Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands have exempted themselves from Daylight-Saving Time. Many other states including Washington and Oregon introduced similar legislation this session.

I look forward to discussing this issue with the committee.

[1:33:20 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW presented the sectional analysis for SB 184:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Section 1: AS 44.12 is amended by adding a section exempting the State of Alaska from observing "advanced time" also known as daylight saving time.

Section 2: Adds an effective date of July 31, 2024.

[1:34:11 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slides 1-2 and began a presentation on SB 184 Permanent Standard Time. He stated that Germany was the first country to implement Daylight Saving Time (DST) in 1916 to conserve energy during wartime. The United States adopted DST in 1918 after entering World War I but repealed it a year later. The US then reinstated DST during World War II. Following the war, localities independently decided when to switch between DST and standard time, leading to varying practices across states. For example, by 1965, 18 states observed DST six months a year while cities and town in 18 other states observed DST for four to six months a year. Twelve states chose to observe standard time. He explained that the Uniform Time Act of 1966 standardized DST start and end dates nationwide, establishing six months each of DST and standard time, while Arizona and Hawaii chose to maintain standard time year-round. After a failed experiment under the Nixon administration, Congress extended DST in 1986 and 2007 that resulted in the current system of eight months of DST and four months of standard time.

[1:35:36 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 3 and stated that changing clocks twice a year negatively affects circadian rhythms, disrupting internal clocks and metabolisms for days or weeks after the shift. He highlighted a 2020 study from the PLOS Computational Biology Journal, which identified elevated risks of

cardiovascular disease, injuries, mental and behavioral health issues, and immune-related diseases linked to DST shifts in the United States and Sweden. He emphasized that aligning work, school, and other activities with daylight becomes misaligned during these transitions, compounding health risks. He cited a 2020 study by the American Economic Association, which estimated a \$275 million annual social cost due to DST policy changes from 2002 to 2011.

[1:36:49 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 4 and stated that the negative effects of changing clocks on Alaskans are clear, shifting the debate to whether Alaska should stick with permanent Daylight-Saving Time (DST) or Standard Time. He explained that SB 184 would keep Alaska on permanent Standard Time and emphasized that there are compelling reasons to support this choice.

[1:37:05 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 5 and outlined several drawbacks of permanent Daylight-Saving Time (DST), referencing the 1970s energy crisis when President Nixon and Congress implemented it for two years. Public support for permanent DST dropped from 79 percent in December 1973 to 42 percent three months later, leading to its repeal, largely due to concerns over schoolchildren's safety in dark mornings. He noted that the historical claim of energy savings from DST is outdated due to the efficiency of LED lighting. He added that darker mornings increase heating demand, while brighter evenings raise air conditioning use, with most studies finding minimal or no significant energy savings from DST, and some even showing higher household energy costs. He explained that current federal law permits states to opt out of observing Daylight Saving Time (DST), as seen in Hawaii, Arizona, and five U.S. territories, but prohibits states from adopting permanent DST without congressional action to amend the Uniform Time Act.

[1:38:28 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 6 and emphasized the importance of morning light for synchronizing biological clocks and maintaining physical and mental health. He noted that morning sunlight can reduce the risk of metabolic disorders, depression, and cardiovascular disease. He added that Alaska's northern latitude means short winter days are inevitable, making the benefits of morning light especially critical.

[1:38:55 PM](#)

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 7 and referenced a chart comparing morning light across Alaska under permanent Standard Time and permanent Daylight-Saving Time (DST). He highlighted the benefits of earlier sunrises with Standard Time. He stated that nearly 25 percent of Alaskans experience seasonal affective disorder during the long winter months. He emphasized that adopting permanent Standard Time would promote earlier sunrises, improving health and productivity for Alaskans.

1:39:20 PM

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slide 8 and provided a photographic example illustrating the difference in morning light between Daylight Saving Time (DST) and Standard Time in Fairbanks. He also provided a graphic illustrating that DST misaligns clocks with the natural sun cycle, causing noon to no longer correspond to the sun's peak. He stated that permanent Standard Time is supported by the American Academy of Sleep, European Sleep Research Society, Center for Economic Policy Research, and many Alaskans statewide. He referenced testimony included in the SB 184 bill packets showing recent support for the measure. He concluded by noting that adopting year-round Standard Time does not require a congressional amendment, making it a quick and effective solution to enhance the well-being of Alaskans statewide.

1:40:11 PM

MR. SUKKAEW moved to slides 9 - 10 and provided a list of the works cited in the presentation:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Works Used

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Entergy Corporate Editorial Team. (2020, February 26). Does Daylight Saving Time Really Save Energy? By: Corporate Editorial Team. Entergy Newsroom. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from <https://www.energynewsroom.com/article/does-daylight-saving-time-really-save-energy/>

Herf, M. (2019, March 20). Why Standard Time is better. We have to stop changing the clocks.. | by Michael Herf | Medium. Michael Herf. <https://herf.medium.com/why-standard-time-is-better-e586b500923>

Kotchen, M. J., & Grant, L. E. (2011, November 1). Does Daylight Saving Time Save Energy? Evidence From A Natural Experiment In Indiana. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 93(4), 1174. <https://resources.environment.yale.edu/kotchen/pubs/revDSTpaper.pdf>

Manfredini, R., Fabbian, F., Cappadona, R., Giorgi, A. D., Bravi, F., Carradori, T., Flacco, M. E., & Manzoli, L. (2019). Daylight Saving Time and Acute Myocardial Infarction: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 8(3). <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-0383/8/3/404>

McMillan, A. (2022, November 7). The History of Daylight Saving Time | Alumni Association. University of Colorado Boulder. <https://www.colorado.edu/coloradan/2022/11/07/history-daylight-saving-time>

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Rishi, M. A., Cheng, J. Y., Strang, A. R., Sexton-Radek, K., Ganguly, G., Licis, A., Flynn-Evans, E. E., Berneking, M. W., Bhui, R., Creamer, J., Kundel, V., Namen, A. M., Spector, A. R., Olaoye, O., Hashmi, S. D., Abbasi-Feinberg, F., Abreu, A. R., Gurubhagavatula, I., Kapur, V. K., ... Sullivan, S. S.

(2024). Permanent standard time is the optimal choice for Health and Safety: An American Academy of Sleep Medicine Position statement. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 20(1), 121-125.
<https://doi.org/10.5664/jcsm.10898>

Silver, L., & Hatfield, J. (2023, October 26). Daylight saving time and time zones in countries around the world: Key facts. Pew Research Center. Retrieved March 4, 2024, from
<https://pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/26/most-countries-dont-observe-daylight-saving-time/>

Smith, A. C. (2016, April). Spring Forward at Your Own Risk: Daylight Saving Time and Fatal Vehicle Crashes. *American Economic Association*, 8(2), 65- 91.
<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.2014010>

Solly, M. (2022, March 16). The History of Daylight Saving Time | Smart News. *Smithsonian Magazine*.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smartnews/what-happened-the-last-time-the-us-tried-to-make-daylight-saving-time-permanent-180979742/>

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Zhang, H., Dahlen, T., Khan, A., Edgren, G., & Rzhetsky, A. (2020). Measurable health effects associated with the daylight saving time shift. *PLoS computational biology*, 16(6), e1007927.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1007927>

1:40:23 PM

CHAIR DUNBAR observed that most research on Daylight Saving Time (DST) focuses on the Lower 48 states due to their larger population centers. He questioned whether any studies have specifically examined the effects of DST in Arctic areas, where extended periods of darkness, such as in Utqiagvik, make arguments about light and dark less relevant. He noted that the clock change still causes harmful health effects regardless of daylight conditions and asked whether any research has addressed the impact of DST in northern regions.

MR. SUKKAEW said he would look into it and deferred to Mr. Pea.

[1:41:56 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR announced invited testimony for SB 184.

[1:42:04 PM](#)

JAY PEA, Founder, Save Standard Time, Phoenix, Arizona, provided invited testimony in support of SB 184. He said he is also a co-chair of the Coalition for Permanent Standard Time, which is a collaboration with the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms, the Sleep Research Society, and the National Sleep Foundation. He explained that Standard Time reflects natural time, aligning 12 p.m. with the sun's peak and balancing light between morning and evening. He emphasized that morning light is vital for health, particularly for children, farmers, commuters, and outdoor workers, as it improves alertness, stimulates wake-up hormones like cortisol, and helps regulate sleep. He noted broad support for permanent Standard Time from organizations like the American Medical Association, the National Safety Council, Bloomberg, and international groups, including Canadian sleep societies. He added that the Uniform Time Act allows states to adopt permanent Standard Time without federal amendments. He recommended delayed effective dates for states nervous about making the change. He said nationwide there are more bills than ever before in favor of permanent Standard Time and opined that once a state passes a bill in the 21st Century any other states will follow. He noted that Arizona, Hawaii, and five territories are already exempt from DST. He mentioned Mexico's recent switch to permanent Standard Time and noted that most nations follow this policy. Highlighting the failure of permanent DST, he recounted issues in the 1970s and Russia's 2011-2014 experiment, both of which led to significant public safety concerns and health problems like depression and increased accidents. He advised those who prefer DST to adjust their own schedules rather than imposing it universally, particularly since permanent DST worsens depression rates in northern latitudes by reducing morning light.

[1:45:57 PM](#)

MR. PEA addressed the question of northern latitudes, citing studies that show higher depression rates in these regions due to a lack of morning light. He emphasized that SB 184 would alleviate this issue by increasing morning light, whereas permanent Daylight-Saving Time (DST) would exacerbate it by reducing morning light. He also highlighted Russia's experiment with permanent DST from 2011 to 2014, which was abandoned after significant increases in depression and automobile accidents prompted a return to permanent Standard Time.

[1:47:04 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR noted that Alaska's unique position with two time zones raises concerns about decoupling from regions like the East Coast or California, where business interactions are frequent. He highlighted that many Alaskans work remotely or maintain business relationships with the East Coast. He asked how Hawaii, as a state similarly uncoupled from the contiguous United States, manages this issue.

[1:47:47 PM](#)

MR PEA responded that he has not observed or heard reports of disruptions, confusion, or inconvenience to commerce stemming from Hawaii's exemption from Daylight Saving Time (DST), suggesting no news is good news. Drawing from his experience living in Arizona, he acknowledged minor challenges in tracking time differences, such as whether New York is two or three hours ahead, but described this as manageable. He expressed confidence that a state in the 21st century exempts itself from DST, other states will follow, noting that many legislators are unaware this option is already federally approved. He suggested that Alaska could consider delaying the effective date by a year or two or make it contingent upon another state, such as New York, Illinois, or California, adopting a similar law. This approach could address concerns about business alignment and encourage other states with strong economic ties to Alaska to follow suit.

[1:49:21 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR acknowledged a critique from Alaskans who prioritize outdoor activities, noting that morning light is often irrelevant during much of the winter since the sun rises late, often after work begins. He expressed concerns that leaving Daylight Saving Time (DST) could reduce evening daylight, limiting time for beloved activities like hiking, ice climbing, or other outdoor pursuits. He asked how proponents of permanent Standard Time would address these concerns, particularly for those who value the daylight around 3 or 4 p.m., which many Alaskans find precious for recreation.

[1:50:04 PM](#)

MR. PEA acknowledged Alaska's unique position, with very early winter sunsets and very late summer sunsets due to its distance from the equator. He noted that concerns about losing evening daylight are common across states, regardless of whether sunsets shift earlier by an hour. Referring to Anchorage, he observed that June sunsets currently occur close to midnight under Alaska Daylight Time and would shift to around 10:40 p.m. under

Standard Time, which he argued still allows ample evening daylight for outdoor activities. He added that slightly earlier sunsets could benefit children and adolescents by making it easier to maintain healthy sleep schedules in summer.

[1:51:35 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL pointed out that Alaska's use of Daylight-Saving Time (DST) in the spring, summer, and early fall is misaligned with the desire for more evening light, suggesting it would be more logical to apply it in winter if evening light were the priority. She also reminded the committee that Alaska historically had four time zones and noted that the current single time zone does not accurately reflect natural light patterns across the state.

[1:52:09 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR stated he grew up in Alaska's interior and does not suffer from seasonal affective disorder, enjoying both darkness in winter and light in summer. However, he stated he dislikes the practice of changing his clocks and suggested the committee consider taking action to address this issue.

[1:52:31 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR opened public testimony on SB 184.

[1:53:01 PM](#)

TOM WILLIAMS, Financial Officer, Ward Air, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of part of SB 184. He said he is a 47-year resident of Juneau, financial officer at Ward Air, and co-operator of Alaska Northern Sands. He urged the committee to eliminate the biannual time change. He stated that numerous reports, including testimony on Senate Bill 6 in 2015, show no benefit to switching between Standard Time and Daylight-Saving Time (DST). However, he opposed moving to year-round Standard Time, expressing strong support for year-round DST instead. He explained that year-round Standard Time would negatively impact Alaska's economy, particularly in Southeast Alaska during summer months, where tourism is vital. He emphasized that visitors and vacation rental guests prefer longer evening hours to enjoy activities. He encouraged the committee to consider a substitute making DST permanent, citing its economic and practical advantages, and urged them not to advance SB 184 if it mandates year-round Standard Time.

[1:55:47 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON agreed with maintaining Daylight Savings Time; regardless, she would like to see something change.

[1:56:21 PM](#)

MR. WILLIAMS recapped his position by urging the committee to adopt a substitute making Daylight Saving Time (DST) permanent, emphasizing the importance of preserving existing daylight hours in the summer. He highlighted the critical role of extended evening light for Alaska's tourism industry, allowing tourists to maximize excursions and Alaskans to enjoy evenings after work. He noted that year-round DST would benefit year-round businesses, particularly flight charter operations, by accommodating later evening flights, which align better with customer preferences. He added that permanent DST would reduce the time zone difference between Alaska and East Coast financial markets, which benefits business interactions. He referenced testimony on Senate Bill 6 in 2015, noting that California, Oregon, and Washington had adopted provisions to move to year-round DST if federally approved, with British Columbia considering similar action. He cautioned against creating a two-hour difference from West Coast business partners and stressed the importance of maintaining alignment with those states. He strongly encouraged the committee to adopt a substitute ensuring Alaska remains on DST year-round.

[1:59:14 PM](#)

LYNN WILLIS, representing self, Eagle River, Alaska, testified in support of SB 184. He expressed strong support for SB 184, emphasizing his long-standing interest in this issue and its unique complexity in Alaska. He noted that similar legislation, including House Bill 4, House Bill 409, House Bill 176, and Senate Bill 120, has been introduced since 1991, and argued that most of the points have already been thoroughly debated. He highlighted the 1983 time zone change, which was intended to align Juneau and the Railbelt within the same time zone, and acknowledged the reasons for Southeast Alaska, particularly Juneau, wanting to remain in the same time zone as Seattle. He passionately argued against continuing the practice of switching between Standard Time and DST, calling it an unnecessary disruption to circadian rhythms, and outdated given modern energy practices like sensor-controlled lighting and computer-managed HVAC systems. Recalling his time in the airline industry, he explained how DST created complications with schedules tied to Greenwich Mean Time. He expressed frustration, stating he was "flabbergasted" that the state still engages in this "ridiculous practice." He urged the committee to pass SB 184 without delays, rejecting suggestions for further studies or postponements, and described ending the practice as removing "one less rock in the public shoe."

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CHAIR DUNBAR closed public testimony on SB 184.

[2:04:01 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR stated his intention to hear SB 184 on March 8th.

[2:04:39 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN expressed strong opposition to SB 184 and support for Mr. Williams' points, emphasizing the value of evening daylight for Alaskans who enjoy outdoor recreation after school and work. Drawing on his upbringing in Upper Michigan, he highlighted how the extra hour of daylight allows families to engage in activities like fishing or bear hunting. He argued that these opportunities are essential for those with structured schedules and who value outdoor time as part of their daily lives. He stated that permanent Standard Time would take away critical opportunities for outdoor activities and everyday tasks, such as yard work or kids' sports practices, which would often occur in the dark under Standard Time. He pointed out that Alaskans are accustomed to dark mornings and continue to live, work, and thrive despite limited winter daylight. He said he adamantly opposes SB 184, asserting that the extra hour of daylight after work and school is vital to the Alaskan way of life and the well-being of blue-collar families.

[SB 184 was held in committee.]

[2:07:32 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Dunbar adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 2:07 p.m.