

HB

176



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Community and Regional Affairs
committee name

Committee on HB 176
bill # / subject

, dated Thursday, April 7, 2005
public hearing date

I am fervently opposed to Daylight Savings Time in Alaska as well as the rest of the country. I have never seen a need for DST, especially in Alaska where we are blessed with 24 hours of daylight during the summer months and less than 6 hours of daylight during the winter. In both cases, trying to "save" an hour here or there proves useless and only becomes an inconvenience to the public, trying to adjust their biological clocks to accommodate this needless bi-annual ritual.

Signed: Ruth M. Ranson
Testifier

Representing (optional)

PO Box 522 Sterling AK 99672
Address

907-260-5952
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Community and Regional Affairs
committee name

Committee on HB 176, dated Thursday, April 7, 2005
bill # / subject public hearing date

I am passionately opposed to daylight savings time for the reasons listed below:

1. Because the Yukon Time Zone was removed, Alaskans are already one hour ahead of sun time. When we are on daylight savings time, our clocks are two hours off the natural rhythm of the light/dark cycle.
2. Studies have shown that more auto accidents occur during daylight savings time months, and more sickness occurs, as a result of the body's defenses being diminished by disrupted sleep patterns.
3. I have never been given an explanation for DST that justifies the inconvenience and hardship of manipulating our clocks.
4. There is not a realistic connection between our society and the world into which DST was introduced.
5. Technology makes communication between time zones seamless.
6. DST is a hardship on families with small children who need regular bedtimes, but are forced to fit into a schedule that doesn't match their internal clock.
7. Everyone I know is adamantly opposed to DST. It is a practice imposed by government regulation that is not supported by the general public.

Signed: Teresa M. Danielson
Testifier

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa M. Danielson".

PO Box 1322, Sterling, AK 99672
Address

907 282-7761
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Community & Regional Affairs
committee name

Committee on HB 176 (Eliminate DST), dated Thursday, April 7
bill # / subject public hearing date

I urge the defeat of this bill. Daylight Savings Time is as logical for Alaska as it is for the continental US. DST was established to accomplish the following purposes: 1) To save energy by lessening our need for artificial lighting; 2) To allow more people to travel during daylight hours, thus improving safety; and 3) To lower crime rates since most crime takes place during dusk and dark hours.

All these reasons apply in Alaska. Here on the Kenai Peninsula, were we to eliminate DST, during the longest days of the year the sun would rise around 3:00 am and set around 10:30 pm. Most people's waking habits are a poor fit for this schedule. That "extra" hour of light is much more useful, and saves more energy, if it falls in the late evening when people are up and about rather than the wee hours of the morning when most people are asleep (or trying to sleep... having the sun blaze in the window even earlier than it already does surely won't help).

Folks who are less law-abiding than we might desire them to be are also more likely to be out and about in the late evening than in the early morning. Giving them fewer hours of evening dusk and dark by which to hide to hide their activities is a benefit to society.

As a bicyclist, kayaker and hiker, I appreciate having long evenings so I can have more hours to experience our all-too-brief Alaskan summers. I'm at work during the day; having daylight until 10:00 pm or 11:00 pm greatly enhances my ability to actually enjoy this glorious state in which I live.

Summer is also the time when our youngest drivers are behind the wheel the most, often unsupervised, often with a group of teenagers. They tend to be out late into the evening and they often are overconfident in their driving abilities. They have not had the time or experience necessary to become truly safe drivers. Why compound the problem with added darkness? We lose too many of our young people to summertime evening car accidents. Reducing the amount of light available to these young drivers will add to the toll.

Finally, there is the important issue of our ability to communicate with the rest of the country. If we abandon DST, each fall and spring we will be struggling to remember what time it is in the rest of the country. This makes for difficulties in both personal and business relations when time-sensitive communications fall through because we forgot that although Chicago was three hours ahead of Alaska time last week, this week it's four hours ahead.

As it is, if I need to call someone working in an office in Virginia, I have to call before noon if I want to catch them before they leave for the day. They can't call me until after lunch their time because I am not yet in the office. I can only call family in the Midwest on weekends. Separating us by yet another hour for half the year will only add to these difficulties.

And of course there's that wonderful Sunday each fall when we all get an "extra" hour in our day to spend however we wish. It may be just an hour a year, but what a wonderful gift it is!

For all these reasons, I urge the defeat of the bill to repeal Daylight Savings Time in Alaska. The benefits we reap are far to great to give up just because a few people don't like getting up one hour earlier one day a year.

Signed:

Janet Gager (Janet Gager)
Testifier

Representing (optional)

115 Leibrock Circle, Soldotna, AK 99669

Address

(907) 252-1388

Phone number



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
REPRESENTATIVE WOODIE SALMON

Memorandum

Date: March 30, 2005

To: Representative Kurt Olson
Co-Chair, House Community & Regional Affairs Committee

From: Representative Woodie Salmon

A circular stamp containing a handwritten signature, likely of Representative Woodie Salmon.

Re: Hearing Request

I respectfully request you to schedule a hearing on HB 176 at your earliest possible convenience.

HB 176 is a bill to exempt Alaska from daylight saving time. Attached please find the required back-up information on this bill.

Please feel free to contact Moira Smith at 465-4527 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Thank you.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
REPRESENTATIVE WOODIE SALMON

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**HB 176: An act exempting the state and its political subdivisions
from daylight saving time**

House Bill 176, an act to exempt the state from daylight saving time, will rid Alaskans of a frustrating and pointless biannual obligation and will help to prevent the disruption of Alaskans' circadian rhythms.

Daylight saving time is a frustrating and pointless biannual disturbance of Alaskans' lives. Each April and October, Alaskans must go through the tedious chore of changing all timepieces in their homes and offices in order to conform to the time change. If this time change were particularly helpful to Alaskans, this expenditure of time and effort might be worth the energy involved. However, daylight saving time serves no purpose for the vast majority of Alaskans. The original rationale for daylight saving time was to maximize daylight; given the northern latitudes in which Alaskans live and the resulting darkness that persists in most of Alaska from late fall to early spring, daylight saving time is a senseless interference in Alaskans' lives.

Furthermore, cognitive and human environmental researchers have shown that there is an objectively verifiable disruption to humans' circadian rhythms when they adjust to daylight saving time in the fall and again when they adjust to standard time in the spring. The human body's clock is governed by "circadian rhythms" that oversee daily patterns of sleeping and waking activities including alertness and tiredness, as well as virtually every other human biological function. Circadian rhythms are part of our hardwired physiology, and cannot be easily reset like the hands of a clock.

Several other U.S. states and territories have chosen exemption from daylight saving time. These include Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, most of the Eastern Time Zone portion of the State of Indiana, and the state of Arizona (not the Navajo Indian Reservation, which does observe daylight saving time.) Alaska will certainly not be alone in choosing to exempt itself from observance of daylight saving time.

I respectfully urge your support for House Bill 176.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
REPRESENTATIVE WOODIE SALMON

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

An act exempting the state and its political subdivisions from daylight saving time

Section One exempts the state from adherence to the federal law establishing daylight saving time.

Johns Hopkins Focus: See the Light

The amount and timing of daylight can have a major impact on everyday life.

We are, all of us, slaves to the daylight. Sunlight is, after all, the "spark of life," without which there would be no plant growth, no photosynthesis, no oxygen. On a more personal level, light causes normal physiological fluctuations that can affect the way we feel, think and sleep. Depending on personal sensitivity and the extent of light changes, the effects can range from mild fatigue to severe depression.

Getting into the rhythm

What keeps us tied to the light is a cleverly balanced internal clock, known as circadian rhythm, that synchronizes a variety of physiological systems including heart rate, body temperature and, most importantly, sleep cycles. The clock is set by light; it can be reset by changes in the timing or duration of light exposure.

"Most of us don't think twice about our circadian rhythms," says David N. Neubauer, M.D., assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and associate director of the Sleep Disorders Center. "We take for granted that we become tired and sleepy at night, awake and alert during the day. We notice the effects only if our internal clock is 'out of sync.' For example, in my sleep disorders research, I see people with circadian rhythm disorders who cannot follow a normal sleep-wake cycle. Instead, they experience 'delayed sleep phase syndrome' or 'advanced sleep phase syndrome'; in other words, they're night owls and early birds." Night owls may be unable to fall asleep until 3 or 4 a.m. — and then they sleep too late. Early birds fall asleep easily but often awaken during those wee hours.

Most people notice the effects of circadian rhythms when they gain or lose time or during seasonal changes in light. Even small changes can cause dramatic symptoms in some people. Many travelers have experienced the lethargy, sleep disruption, difficulty concentrating and general "fuzziness" that occur with jet lag. Depending on the individual, those symptoms can persist for up to a week. And although one hour seems almost inconsequential, the semiannual change to and from daylight-saving time is enough to nudge some people into the same set of symptoms. Studies have found an increased rate of driving accidents the day after the spring time shift — more than may be explained by the simple loss of an hour's sleep.

According to Dr. Neubauer, no one knows exactly how light produces such strong effects. One theory is that light affects production of the hormone melatonin, which in turn influences the sleep-wake cycle. We know that melatonin levels vary throughout a 24-hour period, with large amounts produced at night and nearly none during the day. If you turn on a bright light in the middle of the night, when melatonin production is usually highest, that production temporarily stops.

Scientists are currently studying the use of melatonin supplements to correct circadian rhythm disorders. "In the meantime," Dr. Neubauer warns, "don't take the hormone without first consulting a doctor. Taken at the wrong time or in high doses, melatonin can cause sleepiness, sleep disturbance and impaired work or driving performance — and it may actually shift circadian rhythms in the wrong direction." Moreover, since the Food and Drug Administration doesn't regulate melatonin and

other "dietary supplements" for safety and efficacy, there are no standards for purity or dosages.

Why so SAD?

It's not unusual to be tuned to the seasonal shift in daybreak. Many people tend to sleep slightly later in the wintertime, when it's dark in the morning, and wake up somewhat earlier in the summertime, when dawn comes early. People with Seasonal Affective Disorder, however, have a much stronger, sometimes overwhelming response to that seasonal fluctuation in daylight.

"SAD sufferers regularly experience mood changes that emerge in the autumn, peak in the winter, then vanish in the spring," says Dr. Neubauer. "Along with being tired and depressed, people with SAD also tend to overeat and oversleep in winter, almost as if their bodies were preparing for hibernation. Most sufferers never seek help for the disorder or receive treatment."

Studies have shown that the prevalence of SAD varies with latitude. The farther north you go, the more likely you are to have the disorder. If northerners with SAD travel south in winter when they are depressed, they usually feel back to normal within three or four days. When they return home, their symptoms also return in a few days.

In the early 1980s, researchers discovered that simulating summer daylight — with extra light exposure in the early morning and late evening — often eased symptoms of SAD. Today, the best treatment for SAD is phototherapy, also called bright-light therapy.

Resetting the clock

For people with SAD, says Dr. Neubauer, 30 minutes to two hours of treatment with bright light is as effective as anti-depressant drugs. For jet lag, time changes and circadian rhythm disorders, the internal clock can be reset in either direction — shifted forward or backward, depending upon when light is used. Morning light is best for jump-starting the day for those who need to advance their internal clock, while evening light lengthens the day, delaying the internal clock.

Phototherapy requires high-intensity light boxes designed to provide 2,500 to 10,000 lux (a unit of illumination) at a distance of one to two feet. Banks of fluorescent bulbs provide intense but diffused light without ultraviolet radiation. You can find light box manufacturers listed on the Web site of the Society for Light Treatment and Biological Rhythms (www.sltr.org). Be sure to talk to your doctor about your symptoms before attempting any self-treatment on your own.

Other bright ideas

For people who just want to smooth out their sleep-wake cycle and who don't have a serious circadian rhythm problem, Dr. Neubauer suggests these simple measures to manipulate exposure to light:

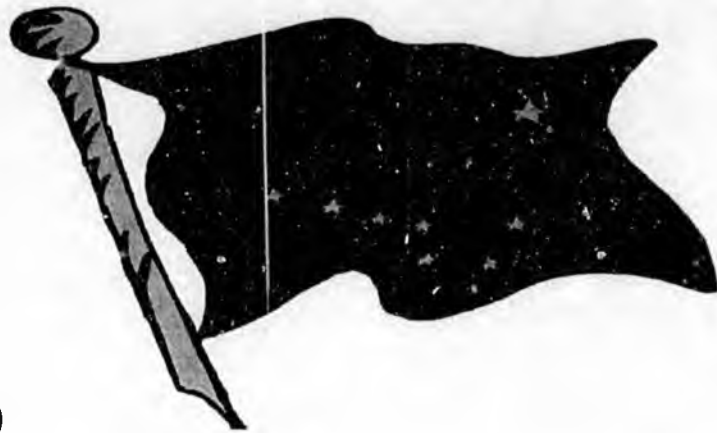
- If you get up in the middle of the night, avoid turning on bright lights. Light suppresses melatonin production and may make it more difficult to fall back to sleep. Put dimmer switches or nightlights in bathrooms and hallways.
- If you have trouble arising in the morning, maximize the amount of light in your bedroom as soon as you wake up.
- If you wake up too early in the morning, minimize the amount of dawn light. Wear a sleep mask or put blackout curtains on your windows. When you awake, keep lights dim to help gradually shift your usual pattern.
- Get plenty of sleep during the days and weeks before traveling across time zones, or when daylight-saving time begins (the first Sunday in April) and ends (the last Sunday in October). Starting fully rested will ease the transition.
- When traveling, get into the day/night cycle of the time zone you're going to as quickly as possible after you arrive. Don't hide in dark museums or hotel rooms upon arrival at your destination — stay out in the daylight.

Updated March 2004

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(UPDATED MARCH 2005)

ABOLISH DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME IN ALASKA

**SUPPORT ALASKA HOUSE BILL (HB) 176
AND SENATE BILL (SB) 120
"ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME"
INTRODUCED IN FEBRUARY 2005**

**BY LEGISLATION OR BY CITIZEN INITIATIVE,
ALASKANS CAN REPEAL DAYLIGHT SAVING
TIME IN ALASKA**

THE LAW: "Under the Uniform Time Act, moving an area on or off DST (Daylight Saving Time) is accomplished through legal action at the state level." (Daylight Saving Time, Heidi G. Yacker, Congressional Reference Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, No. 98-99C, Feb. 1998. <http://webexhibits.org/daylightsaving/congressionalResearchService.html>)

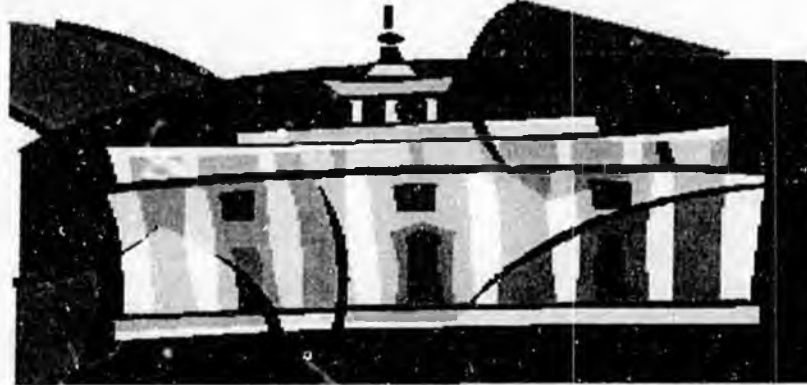
A MAJORITY OF ALASKANS FAVOR REPEAL.



**A STATEWIDE POLL CONDUCTED BY DITTMAN
RESEARCH IN APRIL 2004 SHOWS THAT 58% OF
ALASKANS FAVOR REPEAL OF DAYLIGHT**

SAVING TIME (see appendix for poll data)

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME IMPACTS ON EVERY ALASKAN TWICE A YEAR AND ITS CONTINUED USE IS WORTHY OF A FULL DEBATE AND VOTE BY THE ENTIRE STATE LEGISLATURE



Legislation has again been introduced to end the use of Daylight Saving Time in Alaska. House Bill 176 and SB 120 (both titled "ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME") were introduced in February 2005. This is the third attempt in six years to rid Alaskans of this public nuisance. Only public pressure will assure success. Past efforts have been stymied by House Legislative Committee Chairmen who either refused to hold hearings, or refused to allow the bill to advance. Legislation to repeal Daylight Saving Time was introduced in 1999 (House Bill 4) and 2002 (House Bill 409). Both bills died in committee. (1999 Bill History) (2002 Bill History).

A simple telephone call, letter, Public Opinion Message (POM) or email will let the Alaska State Government know how you feel. Contact your State Representative, Senator, and the Office of the Governor and ask them to support HB 176 and SB 120 (ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME) the current legislation to repeal Daylight Saving Time in Alaska. The Division of Election publishes a list of Alaska's elected officials . During the Legislative Session (January - May) you may call your Legislative Information Office for help to contact a politician.

AN ARGUMENT TO REPEAL DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME IN ALASKA

"THAT GOVERNMENT IS BEST WHICH GOVERNS LEAST"

(THOMAS PAINE)

FIRST, WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH TIME ZONE CHANGING AND DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME MAKES A BAD SITUATION EVEN WORSE:



Prior to 1983 the great state of Alaska spanned four time zones. The continental United States spans four time zones. Use of four time zones allowed the noon hour to coincide with the highest position of the Sun in the sky across Alaska.

In 1983, the Bering, Yukon, and Alaska Time Zones were combined into a single time zone and our politicians forced all Alaskans (except for those in the far western Aleutians) to share a time zone with the Capital in Juneau. Prior to 1983, using four time zones allowed "sun time" and "clock time" to be synchronized. "Political Time" was created in 1983.

"Political Time" has no regard for the position of the sun in the sky.

To create "Political time", clocks were permanently advanced in the time zones west of Juneau. Advancing clocks is using Daylight Saving Time. In 1983 Alaska went on permanent Daylight Saving Time.

But forcing all of us into a common time zone did not satisfy a few special interests. Even though we have already changed time zones to please these people, we are still required to change our clocks (and every other time keeping device we own) twice yearly.

From April to October Alaska is actually on double Daylight Saving Time in Alaska. The situation is so bizarre that during periods when Daylight Saving Time is in use, the Sun is highest in the Sky at 2:00 PM in Anchorage and 3:00 PM in Nome. An interesting discussion of this subject is in Ned Rozell's Alaska Science Forum Article #1278 "Alaskans Double Their Daylight Savings".

SECOND, ALASKA'S ECONOMY IS NOT HELPED BY DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME:

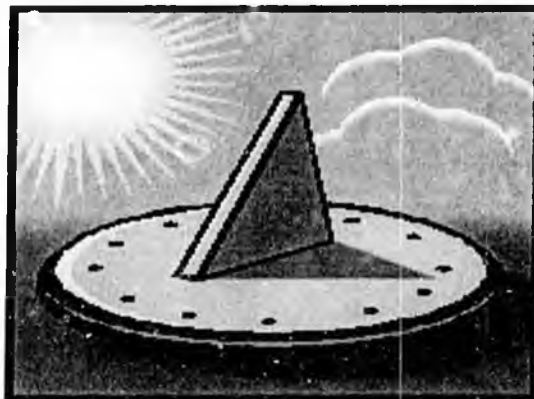


Did the 1983 time zone change in Alaska, and did our subsequent use of Daylight Saving Time, result in any measurable positive economic benefit to Alaska? If our economy benefits from using Daylight Saving Time then we must have by now gained a significant advantage over economies of Hawaii and Arizona; the territories of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and American Samoa; the Canadian Province of Saskatchewan; and the Nations of China and Japan. None of these locations, among many others, use Daylight Saving Time. In

fact, Alaska can exploit its time zone differences to provide services during what would be non business hours in other locations.

The "it benefits commerce" rationale for keeping Daylight Saving Time is in fact a canard used by a few people who want every Alaskan to support their lifestyle. Business hours cannot be the same everywhere unless we all move into the same time zone. Maybe in the past, when business communications were limited to the rotary dial office telephone and the western union telegram, being close to Seattle time or New York time was helpful. However, now we have e-mail, faxes, pagers, voice mail, internet contact, and cell phones which allow you to reach any person or business location at any time of the day.

THIRD, WE ARE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE "LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN":



According to the US Naval Observatory, the Sun rose in Anchorage on April 3, 2004 at 6:14 AM and set at 7:52 PM. The next day, a Sunday morning, saw the return of Daylight Saving Time, and the time of daylight and sunset was instantly an hour different than it was on

Saturday, April 3rd. On Sunday those who forget to "spring forward" were an hour late for church, missed airplane flights, and were late for any other function if they showed up on Sunday using the previous day's time. Of course, by advancing our clocks we didn't really gain a thing, and the length of the day on Sunday April 4th was really only 6 minutes longer than it was the day before.

On June 21, 2004 (the longest day of the year), in Anchorage, the sun rose at 4:20AM and set at 11:42PM for a total of 19 Hours 22 Minutes of daylight, with not a second of daylight added by use of Daylight Saving Time.

This clock changing is seen as "progress" to some. To please the minority, every Alaskan has to go through the clock changing drill twice a year. Our biological clocks which control our rhythms of sleep, hunger and other life patterns will have once more been assaulted by state sponsored jet lag. Overall public safety and job performance is impacted by sleep deprivation. With regard to public safety, delaying sunset also delays sunrise the next morning. What benefit you may gain by more light in the evening may be lost in the extended darkness of the next morning.

This summer of 2004 saw several days of record breaking high temperatures in Alaska. The heat of the day lasted long into the evening partly because Daylight Saving Time has caused the sun to be at its highest in the mid afternoon. In Anchorage, when you arrived home from work at 5:00 PM Alaska Daylight Saving Time you were arriving at 3:00 PM "sun time" and the heat of the day was just beginning to subside.

Some contend that Daylight Saving Time provides daylight for

recreation. This may be true in the lower 48 where day length is about the same year round. That certainly shouldn't be a concern in the "land of the midnight sun". One of the greatest natural resources we have are our long summer days that nature provides, and in this case, nature does not need the assistance of the Alaska State Legislature. At the time of year when we began Daylight Saving Time, we are gaining approximately 6 minutes of real daylight each day. If you want an extra hour of daylight in April, wait 10 days.

FORTH, THERE ARE NO ENERGY SAVINGS FOR ALASKANS BY USING DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME:



If the sun is shining you won't need to turn on the lights and you save energy. Saving energy is the official government reason for using Daylight Saving Time. Time zones may have been adopted for the benefit of commerce, but Daylight Saving time was enacted to save energy. As far as the Federal Government is concerned, Daylight Saving Time was adopted to save energy, not to benefit commerce, not to insure that Alaska is no more than one hour from Seattle, and not to

allow you to play sports late in the evening.

I contacted ENSTAR Natural Gas Company, Matanuska Electric Association, and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, asking if use of Daylight Saving Time had any impact on energy consumption. None of these agencies has any historical data relating to energy saving and the use of Daylight Saving Time. The consensus was that because of our rapidly changing length of day, Daylight Saving Time can have little impact on energy consumption. Temperature and extended periods of darkness impact energy useage - fiddling with the clock does not. Has any government agency or business in Alaska praised the use of Daylight Saving Time for saving energy?

LASTLY, THE MAJORITY OF ALASKANS ARE NOT ALONE IN THEIR DESIRE TO END THE USE OF DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME.



Alaska is not the only place where Daylight Saving Time causes problems for its Citizens. This web site has been linked to a web site in Australia <http://www.lightofday.primetap.com/Index.html> where the use of Daylight Saving Time is being contested. Many of the same issues that cause contention in Alaska cause similar contention in Australia, Mexico and other locations. Daylight Saving Time is not the great

benefactor that some would like you to believe and its continued use needs to be justified.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME IS A WASTE OF TIME
FOR ALASKANS.
CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR
REPEAL DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME IN ALASKA
NOW!
THANK YOU.

LYNN WILLIS, EAGLE RIVER

APPENDIX
THE DITTMAN RESEARCH POLL DATA

THE SURVEY QUESTION: In early April, Alaska switched to Daylight Saving Time. In October, we will adjust our clocks and switch back again. What is your opinion about that- do you support Alaska switching to Daylight Saving Time for the summer and then switching back in the fall, or should we leave our clocks the same throughout the year?
n=550

	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
TOTAL	5%	37%	58%	100%

LOCATION	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
RURAL	0%	30%	70%	11.1%
CENTRAL	7%	37%	56%	13.9%
SOUTH-CENTRAL	8%	26%	67%	23.0%
ANCHORAGE	4%	41%	55%	39.9%
SOUTHEAST	5%	55%	40%	12.1%

TIME IN	UNSURE	SWITCH	KEEP SAME	BASE
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ALASKA		CLOCKS	ALL YEAR	
0-4 YEARS	0%	26%	74%	2.4%
5-9 YEARS	9%	46%	45%	5.0%
10-14 YEARS	9%	46%	45%	4.5%
15+ YEARS	5%	37%	59%	88.0%

AGE	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
18-29 YEARS	4%	63%	33%	6.4%
30-44 YEARS	4%	42%	54%	22.3%
45-59 YEARS	5%	34%	61%	50.4%
60 PLUS	7%	32%	60%	20.9%

REGISTRATION	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
DEMOCRAT	7%	40%	52%	15.0%
REPUBLICAN	4%	37%	60%	25.6%
NON-PARTISAN	5%	38%	57%	51.8%
OTHER	9%	24%	67%	7.6%

GENDER	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
MALE	7%	35%	58%	52.5%
FEMALE	3%	40%	57%	47.8%

EMPLOYER	UNSURE	SWITCH CLOCKS	KEEP SAME ALL YEAR	BASE
FEDERAL	7%	25%	68%	7.5%
STATE	2%	36%	62%	9.7%
LOCAL	1%	41%	58%	11.2%
PRIVATE	5%	39%	56%	45%
NOT IN WORKFORCE	9%	36%	56%	26.6%

Springing ahead can make us feel like falling behind

Spring forward, fall back. It's a catchy phrase that helps us remember how to change our clocks in the transition to daylight-saving time in the spring and back to standard time in the fall.

And while the switch to daylight-saving time April 7 will mean most of the nation will enjoy longer evenings, a University researcher says the change can have quite an impact on our "biological clocks."

James S. Ferraro, an associate professor of physiology, studies circadian rhythms, the internal clocks that regulate sleep and other activities in everything from amoebas to humans. "All organisms have an internal clock," said Ferraro. "That clock basically establishes a pattern, or daily rhythm, that controls how we function. It works all by itself; it is not controlled by environmental factors."



Unfortunately for humans, that clock doesn't run on a 24-hour cycle. "It's more like 25 hours," Ferraro said. "And while we use environmental stimuli, such as alarm clocks, to keep things under control, time does catch up with us."

For instance, most people will stay up late on Friday and Saturday nights and get up later on Saturday and Sunday mornings. "If we go to bed an hour later than normal on those nights, we're looking at a two-hour difference come Monday morning, hence the term 'Monday blahs.'"

"Most of the time, it's not a big deal, and we recover fairly quickly," Ferraro said. But factor in another hour lost in the switch to daylight-saving time and the problem is compounded.

"Most of the time, the effects are not readily apparent," Ferraro noted. "But when you look at a larger population base, you start to notice certain trends." For example, traffic accidents and on-the-job injuries tend to increase in the days following the time changes.

"It's not a matter of losing sleep, it's a matter of adjusting the body's internal clock," he said. "It generally takes three or four days for us to get back on track."

While most people may not notice any change or inconvenience, Ferraro notes that some of us may not feel well for a few days. "We have to re-adjust our body clocks to the social cues that are on a 24-hour cycle," he said.

James S. Ferraro, an associate professor of physiology, studies circadian rhythms, the internal clock that controls sleep and other activities.

Ferraro, who earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, in 1980 and a doctorate in physiology from The Chicago Medical School in 1984, has conducted research to determine how light affects the circadian clock of various organisms. "Light is an environmental factor and controls daily activities to a certain degree," said Ferraro. "But what happens in the absence of light? How does an organism function when environmental stimuli aren't present?"

"Light is a correctional cue -- most living things reset their clocks every day to fit with solar time."

So what is it that controls our internal clock and gives us problems with the standard 24-hour daily time frame?

"The supra-chiasmatic nuclei, cells located in the base of the brain, are what makes human beings tick," said Ferraro. "If left to our own devices, without any social cues, we would probably get up later by the day and have our daily meals on a different cycle." So while getting back on track in the days following the switch to daylight-saving time may not be easy for some, take heart. The next time change isn't until Oct. 27.

- Rod Sievers
April 3, 2002

Supporters of HB 176

Alaska State Public Opinion Message System:

On 3/30/2005 Robert Weber of Wasilla (Dist 14) wrote:

My 11 daughter has to get up at 530 in the morning to go to school and I would like to have some one explain to me why she has to get up an hour early starting next Monday April 4th. Alaska's the only state in the that time zone.

On 3/26/2005 Jackie Bowling of Anchorage (Dist 21) wrote:

Please vote to repeal Daylight Savings Time in Alaska. I haven't seen any good reason to keep it. The whining businessmen don't make a good case for it. How do businessmen conduct business with companies halfway around the world? Please get rid of Daylight Savings Time in Alaska. Thank you.

On 3/22/2005 Martin Spargo of Wasilla (Dist 14) wrote:

SB120/HB176. This may seem small but I could support the idea of not having to reset my clock a couple times per year I mention it only because it is currently on your agenda. Thanks!

On 3/18/2005 Michael Hansen of Chugiak (Dist 16) wrote:

and SB 120. Please support any action to eliminate daylight savings time. It's a senseless waste of time.

On 3/16/2005 Jerney Beshaw of Glennallen (Dist 12) wrote:

Time to act! Time to stop thining about it! Time to go to work!

On 3/10/2005 Susan Novak of Kenai (Dist 33) wrote:

I want to express my support for eliminating daylight savings time. As a long-time Alaskan, I know that there is no reason to have this time change in Alaska. It serves no practical purpose.

On 3/9/2005 Sara Fann of Kenai (Dist 33) wrote:

Please vote to eliminate daylight savings time. With the short winter days in Alaska, I see no benefit for the inconvenience caused by the change in time.

On 3/9/2005 Rose Scaggs of Sterling (Dist 34) wrote:

Eliminate daylight savings time. It is a nuisance trying to adjust to the change, especially when you drive a significant distance to work, you want the daylight to avoid moose. It is always worse in the morning.

On 3/9/2005 Henry Novak of Kenai (Dist 33) wrote:

Please eliminate daylight savings time as it is ridiculous in Alaska with our seasonal variations in light.

On 3/9/2005 Barbara Parker of Anchorage (Dist 23) wrote:

I urge your support of HB 176 and SB 120 that will eliminate the ludicrous daylight savings time.

On 3/7/2005 James Jordan of Anchorage (Dist 23) wrote:

and SB 120. I support these bills.

On 3/11/2005 Patricia Curtis of Anchorage (Dist 21) wrote:

I strongly urge you to eliminate Daylight Savings Time. Thanks

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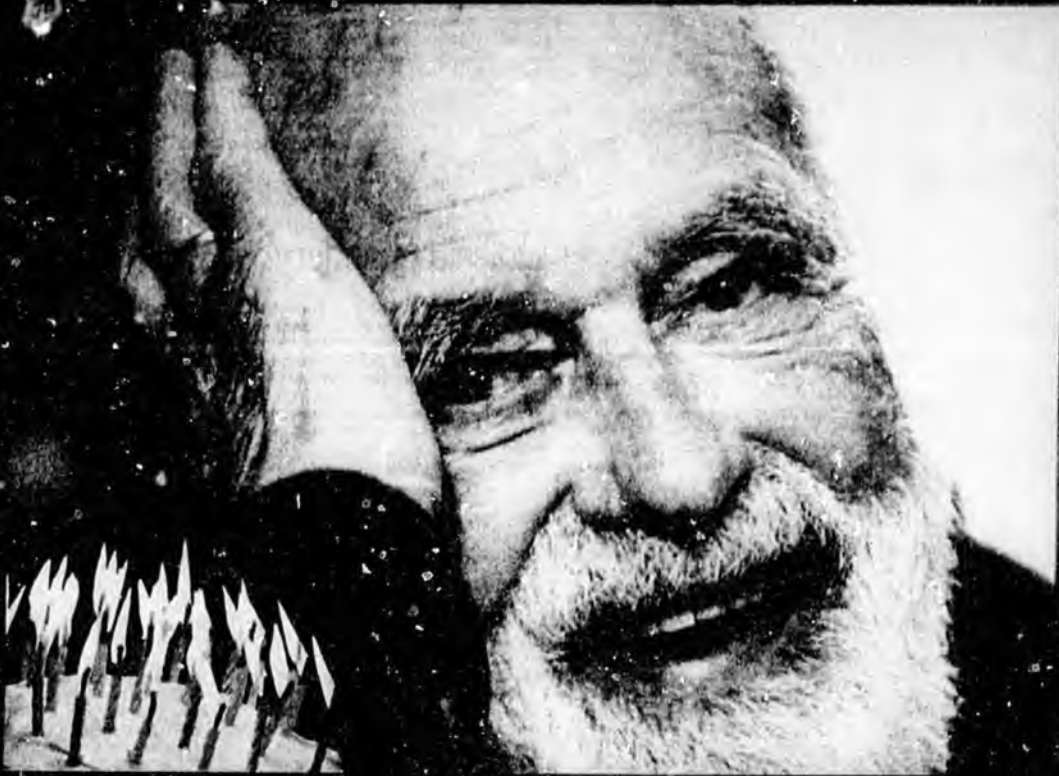
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TO CELEBRATE AN ALASKAN LEGEND.



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- 2 TRANSMISSION PROTOCOLS
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