

1083 Bunker Hill Rd
Watertown, CT 06795
Telephone: (860) 921-8570

State Senator Eric Berthel
Legislative Office Building
Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106

March 11, 2018

Dear Senator Berthel,

I am contacting you to provide my written testimony for any hearings that the Connecticut General Assembly holds to review the issue of semiannual time changes associated with Daylight Savings Time.

I am providing my testimony as a Connecticut teacher with thirteen years of experience in middle and high schools in three different school districts. I am writing to argue that semiannual time changes associated with Daylight Savings Time are detrimental to children's health and to student performance in school, so they should be ended and Connecticut should remain on one permanent time year-round.

Middle and high school students are teenagers who are growing and changing more than any other age group. Their bodies are rapidly getting bigger, and their hormonal changes are causing them to transition from being children to adults. This growth and change is stressful on them, and they need all the rest and sleep they can get. Any disruption to their sleep cycle can add to their stress, lead to sickness, and result in reduced performance in class or absence from school. I have taught in Danbury High School, Ridgefield High School, and Wallace Middle School in Newington, and every year in the fall and in the spring when we switch the time to or from Daylight Savings Time, I have seen more students get sick and miss school.

One consequence of the increase in sickness and absences in the spring is a reduced performance on standardized tests. Connecticut school districts typically assess students throughout the year, and some of the major tests are given in March, right about the same time as the "spring ahead" time change. For high school students, the start of school is already too early, as they come in before all other age groups. Studies have shown that high school students do better in school if they start later in the morning. Having high school students come in one hour earlier after we "spring ahead" our clocks makes them even more tired and

prone to illness. They have trouble thinking clearly in the morning, so any standardized test performance is guaranteed to be weaker.

Sudden time changes are stressful on anyone. We call the sudden time change caused by rapid air travel "jet lag," acknowledging that the jet passenger feels stress and fatigue from the time change. Yet we act as if it is no problem to "fall back" and "spring ahead" each year, while both time changes are actually just as stressful as jet lag. I know because before becoming a teacher, I was an Air Force pilot for twenty years flying large aircraft worldwide. I know what jet lag feels like, and I know that it does not matter how many time zones you cross. What causes the stress is the rapid nature of the time change. And that is exactly the problem with the time change to and from Daylight Savings Time - in one day, we switch the time by one hour, forcing ourselves to eat one hour earlier or later, go to sleep one hour earlier or later, and get up one hour earlier or later. For teenagers, these changes are even worse than they are for adults. We need to pick a time zone and stay in it permanently to end this needless stress.

Please consider this important issue and end the disruptive and detrimental semiannual time changes by keeping Connecticut on one time year-round.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signed/3-11-2018

Bryan D. Holmes
STEM Teacher, Newington Public Schools
Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force (Retired)