

**Testimony regarding HB5529
AN ACT ADOPTING ATLANTIC STANDARD TIME FOR THIS STATE
before the
Government Administration and Elections Committee**

March 19th, 2018

Dear Chairman Fox; Co-Chairs McLachlan and Winfield; Vice Chairs Frantz, Slossberg, and Winkler; Ranking Member Devlin; and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

My name is Scott Yates. Because nobody else has stepped up, I am the leading national voice on efforts to fix our antiquated system of changing clocks twice a year.

I've been communicating with Rep. Vail for a couple of years now, and I'm impressed with his ability to listen to constituent concerns in a real way. That's his motivation for bringing this bill, and it's a refreshing object lesson in democracy.

He's also run into a buzz saw that I've seen legislators run into in dozens of states over the last five years. But, instead of just getting disheartened, as so many do, he has changed tactics and come at this again with a fresh approach, one that in recent days has been shown to be successful.

You see, while bills here in Connecticut and around the country have all fallen short, one in Florida recently passed that uses a very clever new approach.

What the both houses of the Florida legislature passed with wide margins was a bill that addressed the federal law head on. The bill simply says that WHEN the federal government makes it legal to switch into year-round Daylight Saving Time, Florida would like to do that.

That was followed almost immediately by a pledge from U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida to announce that he will be introducing just such a bill.

This is huge news for this movement, and creates an opening that Rep. Vail has wisely (and quickly) acted on.

I've looked at dozens of bills from around the country, and this one is as good as any I've seen at actually addressing the problem while also working within the confines of U.S. Law.

But, you may now be asking yourselves: Is it a good idea in the first place?

Let me address that in the following remarks that will fall into three general areas: **research, good government, and politics**. Before I get to that, a very short bit of history.

I've been a leader on this issue for a couple of years now, having appeared in places such as CNN, The New Yorker, radio stations and newspapers around the world.

If you ask someone why we change the clocks twice per year, most will say it has something to do with agriculture. Let me just clear that up here and now, especially knowing how important agriculture is to Nebraska.

The farmers were always against clock-changing. Always. The Boston Chamber of Commerce issued press releases saying that farmers liked it, but farmers never liked it, and that bit of "fake news" has endured for about 100 years now.

Why we have it now is really something of a mystery, as it was actually just the U.S. following the example set by the Germans in World War I. They thought it would help them save fuel oil, but there's a theory that it was just a distraction to take people's minds off the facts that they only had turnips to eat one winter during the war.

Anyway, Great Britain followed suit, and the U.S. after that, and now we're stuck with showing up to work all bleary-eyed and needing to figure out the microwave settings twice a year.

Research

The clock change provides a golden chance for academics to study external factors on human behavior, so there are literally hundreds of fully vetted research papers available.

I have links to all of the following findings on my website, sco.tt/time and for those getting a printed version of this testimony I've attached summaries to the end of this document. Here's a very short summary of the most important findings:

- Heart attacks go up because of the clock change.
(New England Journal of Medicine, Sleep Medicine Journal)
- There's NO increased risk to children in rural areas.
(American Journal of Public Health)
- Traffic accidents spike on the Monday after "Spring Forward."

(American Economic Association, New England Journal of Medicine)

- Workplace injuries go up.
(Journal of Applied Psychology)
- Staying in DST will improve traffic safety in the winter months, and there is no increased risk to students waiting for school buses.
(Journal of Safety Research)
- Permanent DST saves energy.
(U.S. Department of Energy)
- Permanent DST helps in the fight against childhood obesity.
(Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity and Journal of Physical Activity and Health)
- Workplace productivity goes down because of the clock changes.
(Journal of Applied Psychology)
- Permanent DST will help decrease air pollution.
(Journal of the Air & Waste Management Assn.)
- Getting rid of clock changing will make the stock market perform better.
(Journal of Psychological Reports)
- Clock-changing brings harsher sentences from judges.
(Psychological Science)
- Staying in DST all year can save wildlife.
(The Royal Society Biology Letters)

In short, while it's easy to trivialize this issue, to do so is a slap in the face to those families who have lost loved ones simply because politicians couldn't get rid of something that didn't make that much sense in the first place.

That brings me to the next section of my remarks: **Good Government.**

I think the way we treat the clocks should follow something like the Hippocratic Oath: First, do no harm.

If you'll allow me to get slightly philosophical for a moment... What is time? I've thought a lot about this, and essentially "time" is just an agreement among people. We've all agreed in the idea of time being marked in a particular way, and it's very handy in a modern society.

Imagine if you bought an airplane ticket and the departure time was listed as "When the sun is three hands away from the horizon."?

So, given that "time" is just an agreement among people, shouldn't it be that the agreement itself doesn't kill people? That it doesn't make our children more obese, our skies more full of pollution?

The government controls the time. Our citizens are looking at what our government does, and when it imposes an absolutely indefensible glitch into time itself, how can the citizens trust that the government will get anything else right?

I know you have many weighty issues before you in this General Assembly this year in Connecticut, but can you name one that will have a more direct impact on regular citizens?

Politics

This issue is in no way partisan.

One small political note about Arizona. In 2015 a legislator in Arizona proposed having that state switch to the clock-changing system that the rest of us use, saying that it was confusing for interstate commerce to have Arizona change relative to other states twice per year. Indeed it is, and it's a valid idea.

However, this legislator was so overwhelmed with negative feedback that he held a press conference to publicly, positively and unequivocally say that he was withdrawing the bill. He got more praise for withdrawing a bill than perhaps any legislator in U.S. history for withdrawing a bill.

Arizonans know that it's a hassle coordinating the time with the rest of the clock-changing world, but they don't have to change so they are fine with that.

In short, your constituents will love you for passing this bill.

Thank you very much,
-Scott C. Yates