

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5139

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As of February 21, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to daylight saving time in Washington state.

**Brief Description:** Concerning daylight saving time in Washington state.

**Sponsors:** Senators Honeyford, Hunt, Van De Wege, Fortunato and Pedersen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/20/19.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Effective on the second Sunday in March, the year following the effective date of legislation passed by Congress to allow states to observe daylight savings time year-round, Washington State would remain on permanent daylight savings time.
- Requires Department of Commerce to review the impacts the time zone and daylight savings time have on commerce in the state of Washington and report to the Legislature.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

**Background:** The current standard time for Washington State is Pacific Standard Time with the observance of daylight savings time. Daylight savings time is observed in Washington from the Second Sunday in March of each year until the first Sunday in November, during which period the state time is advanced by one hour.

Congress, in the Uniform Time Act, grants states the ability to exempt themselves from daylight saving time. In addition, the Uniform Time Act provides two ways in which an area in the United States can be moved from one time zone to another. First, Congress may enact a statute. Second, a state or local government, by formal request of a governmental official or body, may provide detailed information to the United States secretary of transportation supporting the requesting party's contention the requested change would serve the

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convenience of commerce. The principal standard for deciding whether to change a time zone is the convenience of commerce, which is defined very broadly to include consideration of all of the impacts upon a community resulting from a change to its uniform standard time.

Hawaii and parts of Arizona currently opt out of daylight savings time. Other jurisdictions have been authorized through the secretary of transportation to change their standard time over the years. Currently parts of Idaho and Oregon observe Mountain Standard Time rather than Pacific Standard Time.

**Summary of Bill:** Washington State would remain on permanent daylight savings time starting on the second Sunday in March, the year following the effective date of legislation passed by Congress to allow states to observe daylight savings time year-round.

The Department of Commerce must:

- provide notification regarding the effective date of any legislation passed by Congress regarding daylight savings time; and
- review impacts the state time zone and daylight savings time have on commerce in the state of Washington and report to the Legislature by December 1, 2019, and every two years thereafter.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Research indicates that changing of times is detrimental to students testing, more auto accidents, more heart attacks and other health issues occur due to this change. The bill sets in action the ability for the state to go to permanent daylight savings time if congress acts so that we can make the change in time along with other states who are considering this. Farmers work with the light and it doesn't matter what the clock says. There is no real benefit to agriculture to switching clocks. There is more use of energy in evening that in the morning. Permanent daylight-savings time would save lives, studies show that darkness at night is more dangerous than having darkness in the morning. Having more light in the evening hours would also reduce crime and increase business and recreation in the state. The conversion to daylight savings time has always been a major inconvenience and source of confusion, resulting in a one hour gap in data. While pacific standard time would be favored, eliminating the switch will at least avoid most of the confusion that this causes. Most monitoring stations maintain their clocks on standard time and do not switch to daylight savings time.

CON: It is safer for children to have more daylight in the morning during the school year. There are pros and cons for both time periods, the current system provides the best of both worlds. The state should not go with what other states do because they are different. Northern states have less daylight hours than the southern states.

OTHER: The health impact review indicates that the impact of implementing year-round daylight savings time on health inequities is not well researched but that there is strong evidence that implementing year-round daylight savings time would likely improve health outcomes, particularly on days that would immediately follow a transition to or from daylight savings time.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Jim Honeyford, Prime Sponsor; Steve Calandrillo, University of Washington School of Law; Victor Morris, citizen.

CON: M. C. Halvorsen, citizen.

OTHER: Caitlin Lang, State Board of Health.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.