

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5140

As of February 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to uniform standard time for the state of Washington.

Brief Description: Concerning uniform standard time for the state of Washington.

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

Brief History:

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

Brief Summary of Bill

- States the intent of the Legislature to move to daylight savings time year-round if authorized by Congress.
- 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.

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 convenience of commerce. The principal standard for deciding whether to change a time

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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: The Legislature intends to move to daylight savings time year-round if authorized by Congress. Until any such change Washington State would remain on the time designated by the United States Department of Transportation under the Uniform Time Act, currently Pacific Standard Time, and maintain the current daylight savings time period.

The Department of Commerce must 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: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

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. This bill provides a process where the state could move its time. Farmers work with the light and it does not matter what the clock says. There is no real benefit to agriculture in switching clocks. There is more use of energy in evening than in the morning. 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; 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.