

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1196

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to observing daylight saving time year round.

Brief Description: Allowing for the year round observation of daylight saving time.

Sponsors: Representatives Riccelli, Steele, Stonier, Fitzgibbon, Ortiz-Self, Tarleton, Doglio, Schmick, Eslick, Lovick, Fey, Shea, Tharinger and Goodman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/29/19, 2/22/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that the state and all of its political subdivisions will follow Pacific Daylight Time throughout the year, if federal law changes to allow the state to do so.
- Submits the bill to the people as a referendum for their adoption and ratification, or rejection, at the next general election.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins and Smith.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mosbrucker.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

The State of Washington is located in the Pacific Time Zone. Standard time in the Pacific Time Zone is known as Pacific Standard Time (PST), which is offset by negative eight hours from Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 1951 Washington voters approved an initiative that prohibited counties, cities, or other political subdivisions from observing daylight saving time or any time other than PST, unless the Governor provided otherwise during a period of national war. In 1961 Washington voters reversed course and approved an initiative to institute a statewide daylight saving time period during which time would be advanced by one hour. This daylight saving time period lasted from 2:00 a.m. on the last Sunday in April until 2:00 a.m. on the last Sunday in September. In 1963 the state passed a law extending daylight saving time until 2:00 a.m. on the last Sunday in October. During the daylight saving time period, Washington observes Pacific Daylight Time (PDT), which is offset from UTC by negative seven hours.

In 1966 Congress passed the Uniform Time Act (UTA) to adopt a uniform system for keeping time within the standard time zones of the United States. The UTA included a standard daylight saving time period from April to October—the same dates that Washington had established just a few years prior. The UTA permits states to opt out of observing daylight saving time so long as the entire state does so. (For states that lie in multiple time zones, the entire area within any time zone may opt out.)

Beginning in 2007 Congress extended the daylight saving time period to start at 2:00 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and end at 2:00 a.m. on the first Sunday in November. Federal law does not permit a state to observe daylight saving time at any other time of year.

Summary of Bill:

The state and all of its political subdivisions will follow PDT throughout the year, if federal law changes to allow the state to do so.

The bill includes a referendum clause directing the Secretary of State to submit the act to the people for their adoption and ratification, or rejection, at the next general election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for sections 2 through 4, relating to requiring Washington to follow PDT throughout the year, which take effect on the first Sunday in November following the effective date of federal authorization to observe daylight saving time year round; unless the effective date of federal authorization occurs before the effective date of this act or between October 1 and the first Sunday in November, in which case sections 2 through 4 take effect on the first Sunday in November in the following year.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Changing clocks when daylight saving time begins and ends affects our health by impacting our natural body rhythms. When daylight saving time ends, kids playing sports have to end early because it is dark. There is no data to suggest that switching to year-round daylight saving time will cause more children to get in traffic accidents in the morning darkness. Instead, it may lead to a reduction in crime because it will be light later in the evening. We are already on daylight saving time for eight months. California and Florida have passed this, and we need to show our federal delegation that people on the West Coast want this. This bill has a referendum clause so we can show them that people support this policy.

(Opposed) The ballot measure should give voters a choice to choose either permanent standard time or permanent daylight time. This is a northern state and daylight is already so short during the main part of winter. Year-round daylight standard time will lead to higher energy costs because it is colder predawn than in early evening. It would also raise the predawn crime rate. There is a concern about children getting to school in pitch black and not being fully alert until sunrise. Switching clocks is not that big of an inconvenience—most people adjust quickly.

(Other) There is strong evidence that implementing year-round daylight saving time will improve health outcomes, particularly on days that follow spring and fall transitions. Whether this bill would affect health equity is not well-researched. Most studies reviewed discuss how daylight saving time affects sleep and circadian rhythms. The studies suggest that sleep loss for the following week can increase incidence of stroke and heart attack.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Riccelli, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Jim Heitzman.

(Other) Caitlin Lang-Perez, Washington State Board of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.