



**THE MAINE SENATE**  
**131st Legislature**

**Testimony of Senator Richard A. Bennett**

**In Support of LD 989, “Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System to Study the Potential Effects of the State's Adopting Atlantic Standard Time”**

**&**

**In Support of LD 1047, “An Act to Adopt Eastern Daylight Time Year-round Contingent on Federal Approval”**

**31 March 2023**

Good Afternoon Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am pleased to sponsor LD 989, “Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System to Study the Potential Effects of the State's Adopting Atlantic Standard Time” and LD 1047, “An Act to Adopt Eastern Daylight Time Year-round Contingent on Federal Approval.”

I am overwhelmed by the increasing numbers of people I hear from who ask, “Why do we bother to change our clocks for four months of the year?” Like these folks, I find this practice is anachronistic and lacking in common sense. The ultimate answer is that one we warned our children about using: “Everyone else does it.” But that is beginning to change, as other states – including those in our region – are beginning to exercise skepticism too and considering the issue afresh.

There is already evidence that changing the clocks twice a year results in:

- Disruption to sleep schedules;
- Loss of work productivity;
- Increase in traffic accidents;
- Depression; and
- Cardiovascular disease. <sup>i</sup>

In prior Legislatures, there have been efforts to pass legislation ending the practice of “springing forward” and “falling back” in Maine. However, those efforts were missing one important component. The U.S. Department of Transportation requires governmental entities seeking to change their time zone to first study the impacts it may have on commerce and quality of life. A report must be generated outlining the results.

That is why I have sponsored the legislation before you today. This resolve directs the University of Maine System to study and analyze the potential effects on the State's economy of

the State adopting permanent Atlantic Standard Time and determine if that adoption will serve the convenience of commerce as required by the United States Department of Transportation. The University of Maine System is a tremendous resource to our state, and I am confident that they will conduct an unbiased and professional analysis.

As the resolve is currently written, the University of Maine System is required to fund the study through private donations; however, I know this a concern of theirs, and it is my concern as well. Therefore, I look to the committee for guidance, and I am also committed to working with all interested parties to find funding.

Should the Federal Government take action independently on this issue and allow permit the year-round observation of eastern daylight time, I believe Maine should adopt it. This is where LD 1047 comes in. Under currently Maine law, the state can only adopt it if it is allowed under Federal law **AND** all the states in the eastern time zone and the District of Columbia observe eastern daylight time. I believe we should remove the provision of law requiring Maine to wait on other states. After all, Maine's motto is "Dirigo."

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.almanac.com/content/stopping-daylight-saving-time>