



DATE: March 31, 2023
TO: Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
FROM: Samantha Warren, UMS Director of Government & Community Relations
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RE: **LD 989, Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System to Study the Potential Effects of the State's Adopting Atlantic Standard Time**

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State & Local Government: My name is Samantha Warren and I am the Director of Government Relations for the University of Maine System (UMS). I write today to inform your consideration of LD 989, *Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System to Study the Potential Effects of the State's Adopting Atlantic Standard Time (AST)*.

As I shared with this Committee last session when a similar bill was considered, our public universities led by the R1 University of Maine take seriously their responsibility to serve as a resource to the people of this state, including by providing objective, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Legislature. We are appreciative that Senator Bennett, who has long been a champion of UMS research and development, continues to recognize the contributions our faculty, staff and student experts can uniquely make to informing and improving public policy.

I have previously spoken with economic researchers at UMaine who confirmed that if adequate funding was provided, they had the expertise to conduct a study like the one outlined in this legislation. In fact, one UMaine economist undertook a similar study in his native country of Wales.

Our researchers suggested that a simple study (estimated cost of \$15,000) would include a review of existing research and electronic surveys of key stakeholders relevant to the focus of LD 989 including those representing industry, media and transportation. To better inform decision-making consistent with [the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation](#), a more comprehensive study (estimated cost of \$75,000) would include the aforementioned literature review, more extensive surveying and stakeholder focus groups, and public meetings to gather input. UMaine researchers suggested any serious study must not only examine impacts of changing to AST, but also of stopping the twice-annual hour change to account for Daylight Saving Time (DST).

There is a growing body of research related to DST. In 2020, [the American Academy of Sleep Medicine released a position statement](#) that stated public health and safety would benefit from eliminating DST. More recently, the U.S. Congress has turned its attention to ending the bi-annual changing of the clocks, and last year the Senate unanimously passed the Sunshine Protection Act but it stalled in the House. Earlier this month, it was reintroduced in the 118th Congress.

I hope this information is informative to your consideration of LD 989. UMS looks forward to conducting this research if the Legislature deems it a priority and funding is provided, including from the private sources referenced in the bill. Please let me know any additional information I can produce in advance of your work session.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Maine's public universities.