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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on
LD 3, An Act to Adopt Eastern Daylight Time Year-round Contingent on
Federal Approval**

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**LD 4, An Act to Adopt Eastern Standard Time Year-round
February 5, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed 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 3, "An Act to Adopt Eastern Daylight Time Year-round Contingent on Federal Approval," and LD 4, "An Act to Adopt Eastern Standard Time Year-round."

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.

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 the legislature tasked the University of Maine System to conduct a study analyzing the potential effects of Maine adopting permanent Eastern Standard Time or Permanent Daylight Time.

The study is fascinating. Among its key findings:

- Previous research studies indicate that even small changes in circadian misalignment are linked to adverse health outcomes, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a regular circadian rhythm.
- Sleep deprivation resulting from time zone transitions may negatively impact motivation, attention, and alertness, potentially increasing accident rates.
- 72% of Maine business and community leaders who responded to our survey expressed a desire to discontinue the twice annual time change, but concern was

expressed about Maine being inconsistent with other states in the region. Among those who preferred to eliminate time changes, 75% favored permanent Daylight Savings Time.

- While Maine trades across the nation and world, 65% of the state's total domestic imports and 63.5% of its domestic exports are in the Eastern Time zone, and nearly all construction products are imported within Eastern Time zone. (Please note this does not include trade within Maine.)

Should the Federal Government take action independently on this issue and permit the year-round observation of eastern daylight time, I believe Maine should adopt it. This is where LD 3 comes in. Under current Maine law, the state can only adopt eastern daylight time 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." Besides, if everyone waits for their neighbors to be the first to act, no change will ever be made and we will be forced to suffer the biannual clock changes.

If you worry that it is unnatural to have so much daylight in the evening and that it is dangerous to have children waiting for school buses on dark mornings, LD 4 would make eastern standard time, the schedule we are currently in, as the standard time year-round. Either one of these bills would remove the need to "spring forward" and "fall back."

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 3 or LD 4.