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Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
Government Oversight Committee

**TESTIMONY OF SENATOR RICK BENNETT**  
**LD 826**  
**BEFORE THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**  
**April 7, 2021**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee, I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 13 towns in Oxford and Cumberland Counties in the Maine Senate. I am here before you today to introduce LD 826, “Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System To Study the Potential Effects of the State Adopting Atlantic Standard Time.”

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.

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>