

CHRISTINE KELLER

SOMERSET COUNTY RESIDENT & TAXPAYER • miltoncpk@gmail.com

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Committees on State & Local Government
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Senate Chair
Representative Ann Matlack, House Chair
Esteemed members of the State & Local Government Committee

Re: LD 826 (and previously 2019 LD's 144 & 885) – Legislation to place Maine permanently in the Atlantic Time Zone and desist Daylight Savings Time

I am writing to you today in **FAVOR of legislation that results in the placement of Maine permanently in the Atlantic Time Zone**. Please consider my testimony, and be mindful my perspectives represent the at least ¾ of Mainers in general.

I, along with tens of thousands of others - have requested this legislation for years. The current scenario we follow is antiquated – **States should be in a time zone applicable to their location** on the planet. Multiple states along the Eastern seaboard are considering this change; let's lead the way.

In nearly every public poll on the topic – more than 85%+ - of New Englanders (and much of the eastern seaboard) – Mainers particularly – FAVOR being in continuous Atlantic Time Zone. Maine being the most north-easterly state with the least amount of daylight hours has more to gain on multiple levels. Easterly Canada is already in the ATZ. Most states on the eastern seaboard are looking at this – including all of New England. **More than 30 states nationwide are considering this change.**

The old argument of children waiting alone for school buses in the dark is long gone – in our climate of crime and hover parenting – children are no longer unchaperoned in their transit from home to school, buses currently run during darkness for before and after school programs already.

There are more opportunities and efficiencies to be gained than not by this long over-due change.

Physical and Mental Health:

- With extremely long winters people can't exercise, recreate or do chores, farming, after work in daylight for too many months of the year, it's so limiting for so many.
- Seasonal Affects Disorder affects hundreds of thousands in the North East on some level, and in many exacerbates depression.
- Early darkness is a factor in people leaving New England for less brutal and depressing winters – daylight is paramount to health – it's the # source for useable Vitamin D.
- Changing sleep patterns is extremely unhealthy – heart attack rates go up in the 1st two weeks of "Spring Forward". Domestic and livestock animals don't conform to clock changes.
- Healthy physical activity would increase for thousands – along with the corresponding boost to mental health.
- Decrease in traffic accident expenses & injuries – hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on accidents that occur during post-sunset change to freeze conditions and poorer visibility. Many fatal - lives would be saved! Insurance rates are impacted.

Energy & Economic Savings:

- Dark early is extremely expensive to consumers, individuals, homesteaders, farmers for - lighting yards & buildings just to do daily chores.
- Think of the economic impact concerning the substantive expense to businesses maintaining: post-sunset heating, parking and security lighting.
- More business would consider coming to Maine, this would improve Maine's quality of life rating!
- Less people would leave Maine (this is a component of resident retention/loss).
- Businesses will adjust, and just like those of us that deal with organizations in other time zones – we'll work within that. It will diminish as the other states WILL follow, the people in general want this!

How would it help me and thousands of others like me?

- Lessened driving in the dark during evening commute. With aging eyes; night travel is hard with glare – and the transition to slick conditions that comes with after sunset commutes – risk of other vehicles colliding would diminish. Safety diminishes and accidents increase as the roads slicken.
- Many rural Mainers have small homesteads/farms/heat with wood – I personally have to run 500 watt spot lights to get my chores done after work. It's expensive. It's colder. Frankly – it's discouraging!
- It's exercise-prohibitive – making difficult: walking, running or fat-bike cycling for far too many months due to coming home in and to darkness, many are not the gym but rather the outdoor type for exercising.
- The current time tables are so limiting, we are imprisoned by a society and culture of not wanting to change because they simply don't like change – to everyone's detriment! This is unhealthy for Mainers overall.
- Many of us plan to leave Maine eventually due to the long, cold, DARK winters – this is an opportunity to retain residents – ease winter challenges with a significant improvement to health & mindset!
- Productivity & health would benefit tremendously! The human body does not respond well to time changes – it's hard on health, cognitive ability, daylight in appropriate doses is healthy, lack thereof is not. It takes a body several weeks to adjust to the changes, it gets harder as one gets older.
- People enjoy daylight – it is healthy Vitamin D, it boosts the immune system, it lifts ones mindset; deficiency is proven to have negative health effects. Mainers don't wish to be restricted for months on end needlessly.

Dr. Josh Axe, MD: *"If you're only getting outside for a few hours a week, you likely don't have nearly enough natural light in your life. This equates to a much bigger health risk than most people realize, and can be a root cause of **insomnia, fatigue, depression and other symptoms**" "The most common consequences of natural light deficiency and an overload of unhealthy blue light are **headaches, eye strain, chronic fatigue, insomnia and depression.***

WebMD: *"The reduction in sunlight in winter can throw your biological clock out of whack and reduce levels of serotonin (a brain chemical that regulates your mood) and melatonin (a chemical which regulates sleep and mood)."*

I don't know of a single person that actually enjoys darkness at 4pm, hundreds of thousands of people stand to benefit from this, and have asked for this change.

Maine and New England economics stand to gain from this. Health and wellness improves on multiple levels. Resident retention, personal productivity, employee productivity, and business attraction improve. This is WIN / WIN legislation.

You have an opportunity to make Maine the leader in an inevitable change – the people want this, tens of thousands have shared my same viewpoints with legislators for years, I ask you to act on this transitional legislation in favor of moving Maine to the Atlantic Time Zone.

Others WILL inevitably come on board - benefits and opportunity abound with this critical piece of legislation.

Please propel this forward to benefit Maine's demographics in totality.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Keller

Municipal Clerk / Registrar of Voters / Welfare Director

Taxpayer with outdoor interests and daily responsibilities after work