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**April 7, 2021**

**Testimony of Rep. Christopher Kessler  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
In Support of LD 826, Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System To Study the  
Potential Effects of the State Adopting Atlantic Standard Time**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Chris Kessler and I represent House District 32: part of South Portland and a sliver of Cape Elizabeth. I'm pleased to testify in support of **LD 826, Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System To Study the Potential Effects of the State Adopting Atlantic Standard Time.**

As some of you know from the previous Legislature, I have long advocated for ending the cycle of changing our clocks, disrupting our sleep cycles and harming our health and wellbeing. It's a practice that no longer makes sense in our modern world.

The most recent piece of legislation that Maine considered on this topic was LD 885 in the 129th Legislature. That bill, put forward by then-Rep. Donna Bailey of Saco, directs Maine to switch permanently to Eastern Daylight Time once the federal government has given its permission and once every other state in the eastern time zone has made the switch first.

While it was certainly an admirable first step, Maine needs to take further measures if we want to do our part to move the country toward a more stable accounting of time.

The U.S. Department of Transportation requires any governmental body requesting the time zone change to study the impacts it may have on commerce and quality of life, and then provide a clear report outlining those potential impacts. LD 826 directs Maine to take that federally required action.

Under the current fiscal circumstances, we did not want to devote state tax revenue to perform this as a Legislative study; thus, the original draft of this bill charged the non-partisan Maine Development Foundation to do the study, as they were created by the Legislature and are tasked in part with conducting economic analysis for us. That organization did not feel appropriately equipped to do this particular job, so this bill now proposes that Maine's university system conduct the work instead. We hope that the university system has the time and the talent, both in its staff and student body, to conduct a thorough analysis.

I believe very strongly that any such study will conclude that moving to Atlantic Standard Time (aka permanent Eastern Daylight Savings Time) will be good for our state, both for all of us who live here and for our already unique brand. Conversely, many studies have already shown how continuing along our current course will keep negatively impacting our health and safety.

Finally, I would say that this is one of the most bipartisan of issues. I have had no trouble finding like-minded co-sponsors from across the political spectrum in the two terms I've been in office, and the sentiment is shared widely amongst my friends, colleagues and constituents.

This is a prime opportunity for the Legislature to showcase our state motto, "Dirigo," which means "I Lead", not "I follow the rest of the eastern states." Let's not wait to follow other states that may never act without our bold example. Let's see how the University of Maine could help us accomplish this study and pass LD 826 with a strong committee vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.