



DATE: April 7, 2021
TO: Committee on State and Local Government
FROM: Samantha Warren, UMS Director of Government & Community Relations
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RE: **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 distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government: I am writing today on behalf of the University of Maine System (UMS) to inform the Committee's consideration of LD 826, *Resolve, Directing the University of Maine System To Study the Potential Effects of the State Adopting Atlantic Standard Time*.

Our public universities take seriously their responsibility to serve as a resource to the people of Maine, including by providing nonpartisan, objective data, economic analysis, and policy research and evaluation to the Legislature. We have both informal and formal partnerships to support this, from providing informational testimony on legislation for which we have unique scientific and technical expertise to the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI), which for two decades has had a contractual relationship with the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee to provide ongoing policy research to define and assess educational needs, services and impacts.

I have spoken with economics researchers at both the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine, who agreed they are capable of doing a study like the one outlined in this bill if adequate financial resources were provided. In fact, one economist at UMaine had actually led a similar study in his native country of Wales.

Our researchers suggested that a simple study (estimated \$15,000 cost) would include a literature review – noting, for example, that the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recently endorsed the elimination of daylight savings time – and electronic surveys of Maine's business community given LD 826's focus on commerce. To better inform decision-making, a more comprehensive study (estimated \$75,000 cost) would include the aforementioned work, more extensive surveying and focus groups including of relevant Canadian trade partners, trade associations, school administrators and residents of the state, as well as public meetings to gather input. They agreed the work must not only examine impacts of changing time zones, but also of stopping the twice-annual hour change to account for Daylight Savings.

The UMS is appreciative that Senator Bennett and Representative Kessler have recognized the contributions our faculty, staff and students experts can uniquely make to inform the development of good public policy and program development and implementation. There is a growing body of research related to the use of Daylight Savings Time (one in *Frontiers in Physiology* entitled "Daylight Saving Time and Artificial Time Zones – A Battle Between Biological and Social Times") and if we are serious about pursuing a change here in Maine, there is certainly value in a state-specific study that puts that work into a more local context. We look forward to conducting this research if the Legislature deems it is a priority and provides funding accordingly.

Thank you and I welcome providing any additional information you need before the work session.