

Legislative Analysis



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

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House Bill 4303 (proposed substitute H-2)

Sponsor: Rep. Michele Hoitenga

Committee: Commerce and Tourism

Complete to 10-31-19

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4303 would create a new act to express legislative intent regarding daylight saving time.

The act provides that, if the United States Congress authorized states to observe daylight saving time year-round, the intent of the legislature would be for daylight saving time to be the year-round standard time of the state and all of its political subdivisions, including both the part of the state that is in the Eastern Standard Time Zone and the part that is in the Central Standard Time Zone.

The act further provides that it would be the intent of the legislature for the above-described time change to take effect only if all of the following states observed daylight saving time year-round:

- Wisconsin
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

BACKGROUND:

Time Zones

Four counties in Michigan's Upper Peninsula—Gogebic, Iron, Dickinson, and Menominee—share their southern border with Wisconsin and observe Central Time. The remainder of Michigan observes Eastern Time.

The U.S. Secretary of Transportation has statutory authority to issue regulations modifying the boundaries between time zones in the United States for the purpose of moving an area from one time zone to another. The DOT uses a set of procedures to address time zone issues, and the process starts with a request from the highest elected official in an area submitting a petition requesting a change and providing data to support the change. The standard for a time zone change is one that serves the "convenience of commerce." Most recently, the DOT granted a time zone relocation request in 2010 to a county in North Dakota.¹

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/09/29/2010-24376/relocation-of-standard-time-zone-boundary-in-the-state-of-north-dakota-mercier-county>

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Through multiple acts and legislation, the United States Congress has established, repealed, re-established, and ultimately mandated standards for the observance of DST. Most recently, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 amended the Uniform Time Act of 1966 to provide that DST begins at 2 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and ends at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November. States have two options: (1) opt out of observing DST and observe Standard Time as otherwise applicable; or (2) observe DST on the federally mandated dates. Two states—most of Arizona and all of Hawaii—do not observe DST.²

According to testimony provided in 2001 to the Committee of Science Subcommittee on Energy in the U.S. House of Representatives, DST emerged as an energy-saving strategy during World War I, was implemented again during World War II, and was used extensively during the energy crisis of the 1970s. The rationale was that, with an hour of sunlight transferred from the morning to the evening, individuals would consume less energy (specifically energy for lighting) in the evenings.³

Michigan Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers, who previously served in both the Michigan House and Senate, gave opening comments at that hearing, providing background on Michigan's history with daylight saving time [the Michigan legislature initially passed a law to exempt the state from DST]:

I appreciate the hearing and I am reminded of the closest election in Michigan history when the states originally had to decide whether to go along with the new Federal law. We were in the far end, western end, of the time zone. The original, it went to a referendum, because the people weren't happy with it. The original vote, out of 2.5 million votes cast, there was a 44-vote difference, the closest election in Michigan history. The recount lasted almost as long as Florida's recount [in the 2000 presidential election], and it, eventually, reached a difference of several hundred, and we joined the rest of the nation in having Daylight Saving Time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on state or local government.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

² See <https://www.transportation.gov/regulations/daylight-saving-time>.

There have also been multi-state efforts to observe year-round DST and eliminate DST after that change; it is unclear how these legislative efforts would proceed, as they violate existing federal regulations. See Missouri HB 340 of 2013, <http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills131/sumpdf/HB0340C.pdf>

³ http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/science/hsy73325.000/hsy73325_0.htm