

Legislative Analysis



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 4052 (proposed substitute H-1)

Sponsor: Rep. Michele Hoytenga

Committee: Commerce and Tourism

Complete to 3-15-21

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4052 would create a new act to establish the official time that would be followed by this state in the event of certain federal actions regarding daylight saving time (DST).

Specifically, under the bill, if Congress eliminated DST, the official time followed by the state and its political subdivisions would be year-round standard time as otherwise provided by federal law.

However, if Congress authorized states to observe DST year-round, the official time followed by the state and its political subdivisions would be year-round DST—but only if Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin also all observed DST year-round.

The above provisions, in either case, would apply both to the part of the state that is in the Eastern Time Zone and the part that is in the Central Time Zone.

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 rest of Michigan is on Eastern Time.

The U.S. Secretary of Transportation can issue regulations modifying the boundaries between time zones in the United States to move an area from one time zone to another. The procedure used by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to address time zone issues 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 that it serves the "convenience of commerce." Most recently, the DOT granted a time zone relocation request in 2010 to a county in North Dakota.¹

Daylight Saving Time

Over the years, the U.S. Congress has established, repealed, re-established, and ultimately mandated standards for the observance of DST.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.

¹ <https://www.transportation.gov/regulations/recent-time-zone-proceedings>

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 (when the nation went on what was called “war time”), and was used extensively during the energy crisis of the 1970s. The rationale was that, with an hour of sunlight effectively moved from the morning to the evening, people would consume less energy (specifically energy for lighting) in the evenings.² Currently, the DOT website says that DST is observed because it saves energy, saves lives and prevents traffic injuries (because it isn’t dark when people are out and about), and reduces crime (because it’s still light when people are away from home and more crime is committed at night).³

However, a 2008 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that the adoption of DST in Indiana in 2006 actually increased residential electricity demand (it reduced demand for lighting, but increased demand for heating and cooling). Various other studies have indicated that there may be an increase in strokes, heart attacks, and traffic or workplace accidents in the days that follow the annual “spring forward” transition.

Under the Uniform Time Act, states cannot observe DST year-round. A state can opt out of observing DST, but if it chooses to observe DST, it must begin and end DST on the federally mandated dates. According to the DOT, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and most of Arizona do not observe DST.

As of January 2021, 13 states have enacted legislation to observe DST permanently if allowed by Congress to do so. In 2018, Florida became the first state to enact such a law, and California voters authorized their legislature to make the same change. (That legislative action is still pending.) In 2019, Arkansas, Delaware, Maine, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington likewise passed legislation to move to DST year-round, pending federal approval, and in 2020, these states were joined by Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, South Carolina, Utah, and Wyoming. Some of these states conditioned their switch on neighboring states doing the same.⁴

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

Legislative Analyst: Rick Yuille
Fiscal Analyst: Ben Gielczyk

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

³ <https://www.transportation.gov/regulations/daylight-saving-time>

⁴ <https://www.ncsl.org/blog/2019/10/31/time-passages-could-clock-switching-be-on-the-way-out.aspx>
and <https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/daylight-savings-time-state-legislation.aspx>