

March 9, 2021

Dear members of the Senate Political Subdivisions committee,

Below are two recent blog posts from my blog: sco.tt/time. That is the source of so much of the information that Legislators have been relying on for more than six years now.

In short, the bill before you, HB1371, is excellent. It's in line with other bills around the country, and especially with your neighboring states.

I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Yates
Denver, Colorado

Daylight Saving Time/Standard Time Legislative Update 2021

Last year at this time I had just finished testifying in Atlanta, and I had high hopes that we'd get to 20 states that had passed some kind of bill to #LockTheClock in 2020.

Well, as we know, 2020 through us all for a loop. A few states that move really fast, like Wyoming and Louisiana, got a bill

done before everything went to crap, but we ended up with only [15 states](#) that have taken action.

This year is poised to blast through the progress from last year. The bills I've seen, testified on, and talked to sponsors about are absolutely blazing through.



My last trip before Covid was to Atlanta in support of Wes Cantrell

One big thing that's different this year is that I'm able to be in many more places at the same time, through the magic of zoom. One of the realities of this new world is that people are much more accustomed to meeting in virtual rooms. That means less time on an airplane, and much more time getting the word out, so that's a net positive.

And the vibe I'm picking up everywhere is that it's time to get this done. *With all that's going wrong in the world, let's at least make the clocks work.* That's the general feeling I'm picking up all over the place.

What's going on in your state?

Well, for the very latest, check out the [Daylight Saving Time legislation page](#), which has a map and a list updated continuously. But for some of the story behind the story working roughly west to east, here are some updates:

Nevada

Around the country, there have been only a small handful of states that haven't done anything to #LockTheClock, Nevada among them. That changed with the introduction of [a bill](#) this week.

The bill follows a lot of the best practices I laid out in this post.

- It calls on the Feds to fix the U.S. laws.
- It cooperatively works with California.

There's a saying around state capitols that it takes five years to pass a good bill. Given the speed this is moving around the rest of the country, Nevada may be the first state to introduce a bill and pass it in the first year.

And if it does, California will be surrounded by states that want clock sanity, so maybe the legislators in California will finally get with the other states, and with the 70 percent of voters who said loud and clear they want something done. (It's going to be a bit harder since the two biggest advocates for change in California's legislature are both now out of state office, but it could still happen.)

If California does follow Nevada, it will be clear that what happens in Vegas stays in, well, at least it stays in the Pacific Time Zone.

Montana

Going just a bit west and north is the Big Sky state, which has the distinction of being the only state that touches two other time zones besides the one that it is in.

If the new law passes there, much of the credit will go to a

citizen, George Moncure, who just likes to play tennis outside, and likes the sun later in the day to be able to do that with friends.

I've told him that if I had 50 guys like him, this thing would have been fixed years ago. He's marshaled resources, found people to testify, worked with a sponsor... he's done it all and made it easy for me.

If you think you'd like to make a difference in your state, but don't think one person can make a difference, I hold up George as proof that one person can make a huge difference.

Montana's legislative session is short, so it may not squeak out in time, but it may.

Interestingly, there's another bill going through the legislature that George is not in favor of, a bill that would put Montana in Standard Time year round. Longtime fans of the #LockTheClock movement know that this blog doesn't have a position on which time zone is best to lock into.

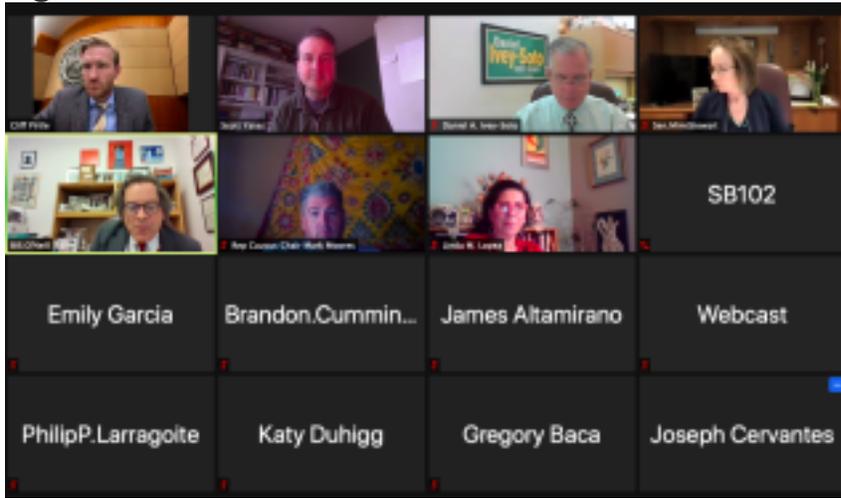
So, this state may be an interesting glimpse into which of those two choices a state legislature will opt for. More on that idea when we get to Texas.

New Mexico

One of the earliest legislators I ever wrote about on this blog was Sen. Cliff Pirtle, who has been advocating for clock sanity for years.

His bill for this year passed 6–2 out of its first committee, which I was honored to testify in front of by zoom. I was just glad to speak because I got [elbowed out of a chance to speak](#) when I drove down there to testify a couple of years

ago.



I understand that this year Pirtle has more bipartisan support for the bill, which should help it sail through a bit more quickly.

Texas

There are a bunch of bills in Texas this year, seven at last count.

The ones that are the most interesting to me are the two companion bills that would ask the voters if they prefer locking the clock in permanent Standard Time, or permanent Daylight Saving Time. These come from [Rep. Lyle Larson](#), and [Sen. Jose Menendez](#). (Note that these two sponsors come from different parties. It would be wonderful to see a bipartisan bill emerge from Texas on this clearly bipartisan issue.)

I've seen a zillion polls regarding DST, and in general it seems that about 70 percent of people want to #LockTheClock. If and when people are then asked what time they want the time locked into, again about 70 percent

say they want Permanent DST, the time we have in the summer.

But the polling is often muddled. The options are jumbled together, or the language isn't clear.

This proposal would make it crystal clear for voters:

Permanent ST or DST? Pick one.

Now, what goes for Texas may not go for every state, but it will be interesting to watch the results. The state is huge, but in general is toward the western side of the Central Time zone, so it would be easy to make the case that it should be in Standard Time year round. People in Texas, from what I hear, also like football and barbecue, both of which are better with more sunshine.



A really interesting vote to watch will be in the little chunk of Texas surrounding El Paso, which is in the Mountain Time zone. Their vote likely won't be enough to sway the state, but it will be interesting to see if people there opt to remain different than the rest of the state and like their neighbors in New Mexico and Mexico, or if they would want to join with

Dallas and Houston.

Just for the trove of new data we would get, I'm hoping that bill passes and the voters get to have a say this November. For one thing, it will take a lot of the arguments that are currently in the shadows, and force them into the light. Do pharmaceutical sleep aids do better with more clock changing? I don't know, but if there's a campaign on both sides, and the pharmaceutical companies donate to one side, we'll finally have a clear answer.

Oklahoma

The bills there would #LockTheClock for Oklahoma into Standard Time.

This will also be a fascinating one to watch. No state has opted to lock into Standard Time since Arizona did it in 1968, two years after the Uniform Time Act of 1966 made that the only legal choice for a state.

Every other state that's passed a law or resolution in the last four years has passed something saying that it wants to lock into permanent Daylight Time, so Oklahoma would be going the other direction.

Given that it is on the western edge of the Central Time zone, that makes some sense for people there. The sun wouldn't come up until awfully late in the winter. How will golfers react to the idea of sunsets around 7:30 instead of 8:30 p.m. in the summer? I haven't seen any organized opposition yet, and one bill already passed out of its first committee with a unanimous vote, so this bill might go all the way, which would mean that Oklahoma could be the first state in nearly 50 years to #LockTheClock.

Dad joke alert...

Will the Sooner state #LockTheClock sooner than the rest of the country?

North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas

These four states, like a stack of delicious pancakes in the heartland of the country, have some strong time zone similarities:

- They all have a weird line vaguely around the 100th Meridian that splits the time zones from the eastern population centers from western farm and ranch lands.
- They all have bills/resolutions calling to move to permanent DST.
- All those bills are sailing through. One bill that I thought was doomed in North Dakota is now doing very well. [I'm glad I didn't kill it!](#)

Illinois

The land of Lincoln has had a few bills each year for the last few years, but this may be the year something happens. The bill that I think may have the best shot is [the one](#) that has bipartisan sponsors. This is the ultimate in bipartisan issues, so it makes sense to have sponsors from both parties.

The only part of this bill that I disagree with is the fact that it just kind of announces that Illinois will be moving to DST permanently. That's not actually allowed under the current federal law. I'll try to work with the sponsors here and see if we can get the bill amended to something that has a better

chance of making a difference, which may in turn help it to get voted on, approved, and signed by the governor. The Illinois legislature meets essentially year-round, so it may be a while before we get news here.

Indiana

I'm not going to write about the states not doing anything, except I do want to mention Indiana, which has a particularly weird history with DST.

If I was in Indiana, I'd be reading the tea leaves of what's going on around the country, especially in DC, and I'd realize that there's a pretty good chance that Permanent DST is coming for everyone.

Perhaps more than the residents of any other state, Hoosiers may not be happy about this. The sun would come up awfully late in the winter. It's just nuts that Indiana is in the same time zone as, say, Vermont.

Their chance to fix this before it gets done to them is now. Why is there no action? I just don't get it.

Georgia

[Wes Cantrell](#) is another hero of the #LockTheClock movement. He's been pushing bills for a couple of years now, and actually getting them passed.

This year Georgia has a couple of bills that seem contradictory on the surface, but as Rep. Cantrell has explained to me, they actually are not.

Right now the federal government doesn't allow states to go to Permanent DST, only Permanent ST. One of the bills in

Georgia would have that state do what's legal now, and move to Standard Time year round. The other bill would have the state move to DST year round at the point that it becomes legal.

Sort of like with Texas, this will be a fascinating dynamic to watch play out.

If the feds move quickly, the Standard Time discussion will be moot. If not, however, Georgia could remain in Eastern Standard Time all year. Georgians may not hate that. The state is on the western edge of their time zone, but the effects aren't as pronounced because the time zone isn't as wide near the bottom as it is at the top. (I always thought the Eastern Time Zone looked a bit like a funnel.) Also, because the state is so far south the swing in daylight time isn't as dramatic as it is up north.

But tourism is a big industry in Georgia. Also, the state is probably a bit more socially and economically wrapped up with Florida, so it may want to stay in the same time zone with that state.

Will that state move to Standard Time, like it, and want to stay, or will it try it for a year, and realize that it wants Permanent Daylight Time? I don't know the answer to that, and really the people there probably don't either, but it could be an interesting test case that we can all learn from.

New York

In some ways, this is the ballgame right here.

For one thing, a lot of states are super tightly integrated into New York City. I was testifying in Connecticut where a bill seemed likely to pass (until the TV industry killed it, but that's

another story.) Part of the reason it was going to pass is a compromise I had a small part in brokering.

A representative from the part of Connecticut that has a ton of people who live there but work in “The city” (as they call New York City) said that he just couldn’t support something that might see people have to change time zones every morning on the way to work and again on the way home.

Fair enough.

So the compromise was that instead of Connecticut being dependent on Massachusetts before it adopts Atlantic Standard Time — which is the trick that they would use to help deal with current law about only being able to go into Permanent ST — it would be dependent on Massachusetts and New York doing the same.

The same kind of thing is at play with New Jersey. It would be a bit odd for the countless people that drive through the Lincoln tunnel or over the George Washington Bridge or take the PATH train if they had to change time zones each time. And with New Jersey, you need to bring in Pennsylvania and probably Delaware, etc.

So. Yeah. New York is kind of the key.

Also New York is pretty much the center of the broadcasting world. As far as I can tell, it’s broadcasters who are the most rattled by the idea of more daylight for everyone later in the days. They don’t want to come out and say it, but they want it to be dark outside so people will come inside and sit on the couch and watch TV.

How hard will they push when actual bills start getting hearings? Or will they push so hard behind the scenes that the bills won’t get hearings at all?

New York's legislature meets all year, so we won't get any quick answers, but you can be sure that I'll be paying close attention to the four bills, so far, that have been introduced there.

Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut

Another hero of the #LockTheClock movement is [Tom Emswiler](#) of Massachusetts. They are now considering [a bill](#) that would take the recommendation of the study committee that said moving to Permanent Atlantic Time would be best for the Bay State (report downloadable from [this link](#)). Tom gets a ton of the credit there.

It started when he wrote a column for his local paper. That turned into a law that ordered a comprehensive study. That study was conducted by consulting tons of experts, debating for hours, and the end result was that the best thing the state could do is move to Permanent Atlantic Standard Time, as long as a couple of neighboring New England states came along.

Well, now those states are slowly coming along.

They are getting some resistance. It was ESPN, based in Connecticut, that has previously killed proposals there, but overwhelming bipartisan support may finally push back against that.

New Hampshire has a creative lawmaker, Josh Yokela, pushing for practical solutions there, and his bill may get signed this year.

I disagree with national broadcasters when they want to see

it darker, earlier, so people will watch more TV. I do think they have a small nugget of a valid point in not wanting to see the continental United States move to five time zones from the current four. I don't think that will happen because of the Connecticut-New York issue. But if that was solved, and we had states in the Atlantic Time Zone, it could be a bit confusing for a while.

But the reality is that solar noon is way off clock time for the New England States. If politics were out of the equation, those states probably would be in the Atlantic Time Zone, in Standard Time, all year long.

After all the dust settles with the efforts to #LockTheClock, will we have five time zones in the lower 48? Probably not, but it's a fun thought experiment of where you might draw the line that works for solar time as well as for the natural associations of populations.

Summary

I hope you've enjoyed this walk around the country.

The one thing that seems to tie all of these conversations together is the fact that this topic is no longer a sideshow. For years it was discussed in a few states with a few lighthearted legislators who didn't mind a bit of snickering going on when their bills were brought up, and then killed.

There's still plenty of levity with this topic. In a recent hearing I was participating in the committee chair couldn't find the sponsor, and he joked that she must be operating in a different time zone.

But once the jokes are done, and people realize that approximately 28 people are going to needlessly die this year

because of the “spring forward” time change, and that countless more will have heart attacks, strokes, workplace accidents and more, the joking fades away and the voting starts. And this year more than any other year, legislators are voting yes.

Will state legislatures be able to fix this? Not on their own, and in an upcoming post I’ll take a look at what’s going on in DC, but there’s no question that state legislatures passing resolutions and laws is a hugely important effort that is absolutely getting noticed in Washington.

And if the U.S. can get this fixed, then maybe Europe will get out of its [current rut](#), and it will be able to fix this, too.

Then instead of dreading the clock change every spring and every fall, we’ll just be able to live our lives and someday our grandchildren will wonder what the heck we were doing changing the clock twice a year.

Thanks again for reading, and keep in touch!

February 06, 2021

DST Is Getting Fixed Everywhere But North Dakota, and It’s My Fault

I live in Denver, and recently had my first overnight trip in more than a year, going to Nebraska and Kansas to testify and talk to legislators (and to... you know... get out of the house and have a bit of father-son road-trip bonding time.)

And now I'm feeling really bad that I didn't make the trip just a bit longer.

I knew that North Dakota had a vote Friday, and I thought

about driving north from Lincoln, making a quick stop in Pierre, and then heading to Bismarck to talk to legislators about their [Daylight Saving Time bill](#).

The mistake I made was looking at the forecast, which showed that the expected high was going to be 9 degrees above zero. If you have to designate that a temperature is above or below zero... that's cold. And that was the high, and didn't count the wind chill, and from previous trips I know how the wind blows up there.



If I had as much fur as this North Dakota bunny, the bill might have passed!

Photo by [Atharva Tulsi](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Well, I didn't go, and the bill lost by **ONE VOTE**. Put into temperature terms, it was “one below.”

The issue was that some legislators were concerned that if they lock the clock, it might be confusing for people who have business over state lines, or live and work on two sides of the state line.

If I had only met the sponsor before he wrote up his bill, I might have guided him in **how to get a DST bill passed**.

And if I hadn't have been such a wimp about the weather, I probably could have convinced just one legislator that the bill won't take effect until there's a change in federal law, at which point all the neighboring states will also stop DST clock changing, so passing this bill will just be a signal to the feds that N.D. wants to #LockTheClock.

And maybe one of the legislators—we only needed one!—would have switched if they heard about the experience in Arizona where a lawmaker proposed that they start DST switching to make it less confusing, and was so flooded with constituents telling him that they liked it the way it was that he held a press conference announcing that he was killing his own bill.

I gotta not worry about it. The bills this year are absolutely on fire, and are winning at a higher percentage than they ever have before; indeed the Flickertail State is the only one with a loss so far this year. I wouldn't be surprised if we get to 30 states this year who have passed something to #LockTheClock.

But like the Prodigal Son, the loss of even one state (by one vote!) is rough when I could have helped.

Update: It turns out I didn't kill it!

