

California's Daylight Saving Dilemma: Spring Forward or Stay Put?

Understand the ongoing debate over daylight saving time in California and why the state continues to observe the practice in spite of 2018 vote.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Many Californians share a dream: to stop resetting their clocks for daylight saving time. In 2018, a majority of California voters supported doing just that. Yet here we are six years later, dreading the turn of the clocks in a couple of weeks when everyone in California (along with a majority of Americans) will collectively lose an hour of time. On Sunday, March 10, 2024, people will wake up to discover their cell phones and most electronic devices have magically sprung forward, "losing" an hour in the process. So, why does California still have daylight saving time?

The practice of daylight saving time mandates moving time forward one hour in the spring (March) and one hour back in the fall (November). Hence, the phrase "Spring forward, fall back."

The forced change of our time clocks leads to a [misalignment with our internal clocks](#). The implications? Not only do we fight daytime sleepiness and fatigue, but there is also a very real spike in workplace accidents, road accidents, and medical errors due to sleep deprivation. We also suffer from cognitive impairment, too.



California recognizes daylight saving time in spite of voting it out in 2018. Why?



The Science of Sleep

SAMINA is the organic mattress brand known for healthy sleep and sleep education.



Research shows that the abrupt seasonal shift in time disrupts circadian rhythms, leading to sleep disturbances, increased fatigue and even a heightened risk of heart attacks and strokes.”

*Dr. James A. Rowley, President,
American Academy of Sleep
Medicine (AASM)*

Why do we sustain a system that puts our health at risk? Adverse health effects directly linked to the sudden time changes twice a year are no small matter. Especially in the week we lose time after turning the clock back an hour. Predictable and documented increases in numerous maladies occur, including:

- Heart attacks'
- Strokes;
- Hospital admissions;
- Emergency room visits;
- Missed medical appointments; and
- Traffic and on-the-job accidents.

Aligning Time with Biology

Contradicting the popularity of prolonging sunlight into the evening hours, it's a permanent standard time that bodes better with [human circadian biology](#). Standard time is more natural and in harmony with our Circadian rhythm, with the sun overhead around noon every day.

"Permanent standard time aligns clocks with natural sun time for better sleep, health, mood, safety, and prosperity year-round." —Jay Pea | President, Save Standard Time

This is an idea and recommendation based in science. Twenty professional organizations, including the National Sleep Foundation, the Sleep Research Society, and the American Medical Association, carefully crafted a position statement updated in 2024. Their collective voices champion making standard time an everyday reality to dispel the predictable negative health and loss-of-life consequences of DST.

Leaders Light the Way for Change

In 2022, the matter reached a broader stage when the U.S. Senate passed the Sunshine Protection Act to make daylight saving time the permanent national standard. In the end, the 117th Congress concluded without the House taking a vote on the bill.

This year, the simultaneous introduction of identical bills in the California State Assembly and Senate stimulate fresh debate. With a preponderance of scientific support and evidence for standard time to prevail over daylight saving time, perhaps this legislative action will be easier to pass than other considerations this time.

Permanent Standard Time: No Federal Action Required

California would be in good company by joining the only two other states currently observing year-round standard time: Arizona (with the exception of the Navajo Nation) and Hawaii.

Why do only two states choose to opt out of daylight saving time?

The explanation lies within federal law, specifically the Uniform Time Act of 1966. The act allows states to forgo observing daylight saving time, resulting in a four-month period from November to March where they are out of sync with other states. However, the law does not grant states the authority to independently decide to permanently adhere to daylight saving time. The decision to stop changing the clocks back to standard time would necessitate an act of Congress (so it's best not to get your hopes up).

Therefore, Californians could opt to observe standard time permanently without Congressional action. Oregon, Washington, and Idaho join the state of California with similar efforts to “Ditch the Switch” in 2024 in a collaborative effort to sync their clocks. A west coast tour-de-force could soon join Hawaii and Arizona in observing year-long standard time.

2024 Update: California Daylight Saving Time Law

Assembly Member Tri Ta and Senator Roger Niello introduced identical bills, Assembly Bill 1776 and Senate Bill 1413. The legislative proposals differ this time. Supportive of scientific advice and recommendations, the proposal to make standard time all year long and cancel daylight saving time does not require the authorization of the US Congress. Now, it remains to be seen if their respective chambers can get the job done and move the state of California permanently to Standard Time.

California Residents Beckon for Change

In the golden state of California and beyond, the issue is not just about brightness and darkness or acts of Congress, but rather the intrinsic 'rightness' that should underscore our governance. It's about harmonizing our society with nature and the protection of human life. We should prioritize policies supporting tangible advantages to public health over outdated practices.

Time will tell if and when things will change. But one thing is certain: On Sunday, March 10, 2024, clocks will move forward an hour in California for the mandatory practice of daylight savings time. In defiance of human biology and compelling health statistics, this forward change of the clocks is a step in the wrong direction.

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