

**Senate Executive Departments and Administration  
Committee**  
*Cameron Lapine 271-2104*

**HB 85**, relative to using Atlantic Standard Time in New Hampshire.

**Hearing Date:** April 21, 2021

**Time Opened:** 9:16 a.m. **Time Closed:** 9:49 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Carson, Reagan, Ricciardi, Cavanaugh and Prentiss

**Members of the Committee Absent:** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill provides that New Hampshire will use Atlantic Standard Time throughout the calendar year if Massachusetts and Maine also move to Atlantic Standard Time.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. Yokela  
Rep. Schultz

Rep. Yakubovich  
Rep. Hill

Rep. A. Lekas

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**Who supports the bill:** Representative Josh Yokela (Rockingham – District 33), Scott Yates, Representative John Potucek (Rockingham – District 6), Bill Alleman, Charles Spangler, Kate Coon, Representative Carol McGuire (Merrimack – District 29), Alvin See, Eric Pauer, Matthew Philips, Jean Kimball, Michael Kimball, Kathleen Wikstrom, Timothy Comerford, Representative Bob Greene (Hillsborough – District 37), Representative Erica Layon (Rockingham – District 6), Representative Chris True (Rockingham – District 4), and Daniel McGuire.

**Who opposes the bill:** Jay Pea (Save Standard Time), Scott Spradling (NHAB), Representative Sallie Fellows (Grafton – District 8), Joseph Graham (NHAB), Matt Houseman, Representative Dianne Schuett (Merrimack – District 20), Representative Jeff Goley (Hillsborough – District 8), Patricia Anastasia, Paul Worsowicz (Motion Picture Association), Elizabeth Ellis (Motion Picture Association), and Kathleen Daigle.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** None.

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Josh Yokela**

**Rockingham – District 33**

- Representative Yokela said that HB 85 will set in motion the beginning steps of addressing the twice-per-year time changes, during the “fall back” and “spring forward” daylight savings time (DST) periods.

- Rep. Yokela said that HB 85 came out of the November 1, 2017 Report of the Special Committee on the Commonwealth’s Time Zone from the Massachusetts General Court. He said that the Special Committee found it to be a great economic and health benefit for New England to move as a group towards Atlantic Standard Time (AST), rather than state by state.
- Rep. Yokela said that HB 85 is contingent upon other states adopting the same policy.
- Rep. Yokela said that the federal government is not likely to allow DST to be adopted year-round. He said that one option is to move to AST, which would keep New Hampshire in the same time it was in at the time of the hearing. Rep. Yokela said that this solution only requires approval from the federal Department of Transportation and not the entire U.S. Congress.
- Rep. Yokela said that HB 85 passed the House with a veto-proof majority. He said that many people feel the issue of standard time versus DST is a big issue and there is a lot of support for HB 85.
- Rep. Yokela said that passing HB 85 does not mean that the “fall back” and “spring forward” changes would be killed. He said that the change is contingent on other states and it is more of a signal that New Hampshire believes it is an important issue to address and will give more credence to bills at the federal level.
- Senator Cavanaugh asked if New Hampshire did not nothing and federal law changes, would New Hampshire have to comply anyway.
  - Rep. Yokela said that most of the bills on the federal level would allow DST to be in place year-round. He said that a change would not be forced. He said that the current federal rules allow DST during the specific times that DST is currently in place or to be on standard time year-round. He said that those are the only two options currently and Hawai’i and Arizona both use standard time year-round.
- Senator Prentiss expressed a concern over things like dispatch centers, hospitals, radio stations, and other “time-stamp specific” groups, especially those operating across state lines.
  - Rep. Yokela said that the Massachusetts special committee addressed that issue with their recommendation that the region move together, rather than individual states moving. He said that some states are in multiple time zones currently and people address these issues daily. He said that people do not want to be out of synch with their economic hub, which is why HB 85 is contingent on Massachusetts enacting similar legislation. Rep. Yokela said that the Eastern Time Zone is the widest time zone and covers one hour and 45 minutes of sun time in total.
- Senator Prentiss said that, in her opinion, changing the time was an all-or-nothing proposition. She said that she thinks it is a federal issue and everyone that she works with, because of Washington, D.C., works off of Eastern Time. She said that she appreciates HB 85 and is not afraid of change, but believes this issue needs to be handled sensitively.
  - Rep. Yokela said that he would not be opposed to a Committee Amendment that adds more states to the contingency plan. He said that once New York moves, he feels that everyone else will move. He said people do not want to be out of synch with the financial markets.

**Scott Yates**

**Lock the Clock Movement**

- Mr. Yates said that Senator Marco Rubio has a bill in Washington, D.C. now that has bipartisan support and would put the whole nation on permanent DST.
- Mr. Yates said that there are 16 states that have passed something similar to HB 85, and three more that are likely to pass bills in the coming weeks – Montana, Georgia, and Nebraska.
- Mr. Yates said that HB 85 is not too far reaching and not overwritten.

- Mr. Yates said that it is a common misconception that pedestrians would be more unsafe in darkness in the morning, as pedestrians are six times more safe during the morning than in the afternoon. He said that, based on a study in Washington, pedestrians would be more safe with more daylight during the more dangerous afternoon.
- Mr. Yates said that heart attacks and strokes are an issue for one week per year after the “spring forward” change but, overall, the health effects are a wash. He said it is silly that the sun goes down at 4:15 PM in New Hampshire due its location in the East.

## **Summary of testimony presented in opposition:**

### **Representative Sallie Fellows**

#### **Grafton – District 8**

- Representative Fellows encouraged the Committee to reference her written testimony and the chart she provided on relative sunrise and sunset times.
- Rep. Fellows said that switching to AST would make winter mornings darker, especially in December and January. She said that in December and January sunrise would not be until between 8:00 AM and 8:15 AM.
- Rep. Fellows said that students would be walking to their school buses in total darkness, up to two hours before sunrise, which would be very dangerous if there were no sidewalks.
- Rep. Fellows said that the heavy commuter period of 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM would be completely in the dark in December and January under AST and mostly dark in November and February. She said that it would make difficult commutes after snowstorms even worse.
- Rep. Fellows said that it is often said that eliminating DST will reduce heart attacks and strokes but, she said, the causes of heart attacks and strokes are blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes, not losing an hour of sleep once, once per year.
- Rep. Fellows said that it is often said that the extra afternoon sunlight can be used for exercise, but the cold and snow in New Hampshire keeps people indoors during that time anyway.
- Rep. Fellows said that there are hormonal changes in adolescents that have led doctors to recommend school start times shift to 8:30 AM. Under AST, that recommendation would be 9:30 AM.
- Rep. Fellows urged the Committee to have a plan in place for the impact of AST on schools before passing HB 85.

### **Scott Spradling**

#### **NH Association of Broadcasters**

- Mr. Spradling said that HB 85 is a conversation every couple of years. He said that it started with frustrations over DST and, while he understands the purpose, the process is flawed and dangerous.
- Mr. Spradling said that HB 85 would only need Massachusetts and Maine for New Hampshire to move to AST. He said that those three states would be an hour ahead of the rest of the region some months but not for others, leading to understandable confusion.
- Mr. Spradling said that a fifth national time zone would pose severe economic challenges to radio and TV stations. Knowing that the busiest hours for those stations are drive time in the morning and prime time in the evenings, Mr. Spradling said that AST would shift those windows by a full hour, interrupting or fully removing critical revenue time.
- Mr. Spradling urged a federal solution, citing syndication problems. He said that existing time zones were developed in the 1880s, well before current technologies were developed, and said

that HB 85 is changing courses midstream, which he compared to shoving a pineapple into a tailpipe.

## **Jay Pea**

### **Save Standard Time**

- Mr. Pea said that there is a strong scientific consensus that DST is not the correct clock to keep. He said that standard time is the longitudinally correct time. He said that AST is defined as 60 degrees West, more than 500 miles East of Eastern Time.
- Mr. Pea said that DST would force everyone to wake up an hour earlier than they are accustomed to during winter months. He said there was not enough daylight to shift around in mornings during the winter. He said that the National Safety Council, national parent teacher associations, and sleep academies all oppose AST.
- Mr. Pea said that DST experiments were attempted during the 1970s oil crises and World War II, both of which were abandoned very quickly.
- Mr. Pea said that “saving daylight” and “protecting sunshine” are corporate marketing terms to increase evening sunshine for shopping purposes. He said that people should stay with their longitudinally correct time.

## **Joseph Graham**

### **iHeartMedia NH**

- Mr. Graham said that HB 85 would make it harder and more expensive for broadcasters to serve their local communities.
- Mr. Graham said that most syndicated programs do not offer an AST option, meaning an additional fee would need to be paid by the broadcaster or they would have to offer a different program.
- Mr. Graham said that many programs are offered free to the public and need advertising revenues to be able to serve their local communities.

## **Matt Houseman**

### **Vice President of Programming for Great Eastern Radio**

- Mr. Houseman said that Great Eastern Radio has nine different stations that broadcast in both New Hampshire and Vermont and it would be a logistical nightmare for those stations if New Hampshire and Vermont were in different time zones.
- Mr. Houseman reiterated comments made by Mr. Spradling and Mr. Graham.

**Neutral Information Presented:** None.