

# **Advocating for Permanent Standard Time: A Call to Prioritize Health, Safety, and Well-being**

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As the only pediatric sleep medicine doctor in North Dakota, I have witnessed the profound influence sleep has on children and families. Every decision that impacts sleep rhythms ultimately affects physical and mental health, academic performance, and safety. Today, I advocate for adopting permanent Standard Time year-round—a choice rooted in scientific evidence and public benefit.

For children, this disruption is especially damaging. The transition during Daylight Saving Time can result in delayed bedtimes, shortened sleep durations, and groggy mornings that interfere with their ability to focus and thrive in school. Adolescents, whose circadian rhythms are already delayed during puberty, face compounded difficulties adjusting to abrupt time changes. Furthermore, families are burdened with the stress of realigning their daily routines twice a year, creating additional strain on already busy households.

## **The Importance of Ending Seasonal Time Changes**

Most Americans agree that biannual time changes cause unnecessary disruption. However, we now face a critical decision: Should we adopt permanent Standard Time or permanent Daylight Saving Time? Permanent Standard Time is the clear, evidence-based solution, offering unmatched advantages for health, safety, and alignment with natural rhythms.

## **Why Permanent Standard Time Is the Best Option**

1. **Health** Permanent Standard Time aligns most closely with the sun's natural cycles and our body's circadian rhythms. This alignment is essential for regulating sleep, mood, and overall biological functions. The disruption caused by Daylight Saving Time—especially its spring transition—leads to sleep loss, impaired cognitive performance, and increased risk of cardiovascular issues and metabolic disorders. Standard Time supports optimal health by preserving natural light in the mornings, when our bodies need it most.
2. **Safety** Morning sunlight plays a vital role in maintaining alertness and safety. Permanent Standard Time ensures safer morning commutes, with better visibility for drivers and pedestrians. In contrast, permanent Daylight Saving Time would delay sunrise significantly during winter, leaving children waiting for buses in the dark and increasing risks on the road.
3. **History** We have already experimented with permanent Daylight Saving Time in 1974, and the results were disastrous. Widespread public opposition quickly led Congress to reverse the policy within months. The extended morning darkness proved untenable, particularly for schoolchildren and commuters. History has taught us that Standard Time is the practical and beneficial choice.

## **Addressing Misconceptions About Daylight Saving Time**

While some may favor Daylight Saving Time for longer evening daylight, this comes at a steep cost. It disrupts circadian rhythms by increasing evening light exposure, delaying melatonin production, and impairing sleep. During winter, it causes dangerously late sunrises, with cities like Fargo seeing sunrise as late as 9:30 a.m. Such conditions exacerbate seasonal affective disorder and create widespread safety hazards.

## **Conclusion: Science Supports Permanent Standard Time**

As a representative of both the Dakota Sleep Society and the American Academy of Sleep Apnea, I stand alongside my colleagues in advocating for policies that promote restorative sleep and public health. Adopting permanent Standard Time is a simple yet profound step toward healthier individuals, stronger families, and thriving communities.