



## Opening Statement

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Prepared for the Senate Committee on Commerce and Transportation

### *If I Could Turn Back Time: Should We Lock the Clock?*

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Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee, Thank you for inviting me here today.

Allow me to start with a hypothetical. Imagine two identical people commit the exact same crime on the exact same day. They are the same in every way, but today one of them is out of prison rebuilding his life, while the other remains behind bars, draining state resources.

What is the difference?

The second man was sentenced the Monday after we “spring forward” into Daylight Saving Time. Researchers at the University of Washington reviewed every criminal sentence handed down in America over an 11-year period and found the single harshest day of sentencing was that Monday in March, when judges, like all

of us, had been jolted awake an hour earlier than their bodies expected. That one seemingly harmless act—dialing back our clocks one hour—means some people receive harsher sentences than they otherwise would.

The harm doesn't stop there.

Peer-reviewed studies consistently show that heart attacks, strokes, car crashes, and even miscarriages spike in the days following the spring switch. One study from the University of Vienna found that overall deaths increased by 3 percent following this annual clock change. Studies show other problems: Medical errors spike. Diabetics lose glucose control. Crime goes up. People are less empathetic and helpful.

And why do we do this? For farmers?

No. The story about farmers was always just a myth, created as a PR stunt by a retailer in Boston who wanted shoppers to have more daylight after work. He thought it would sound better to say it was for farmers.

If changing the time twice a year is a deadly, outdated relic, why haven't we fixed it yet? I suspect it's because we're all too groggy after the time change to decide. But the real issue is simpler: we can't agree whether to adopt permanent Standard Time or permanent Daylight Time.

I've seen countless polls and talked with thousands of people—most don't strongly prefer one time over the other; they just hate the switching. There are valid arguments for either permanent choice.

So, what should Congress do?

My name is Scott Yates and I've been reading and writing about this as a hobby for nearly a decade, and I have this recommendation: Lock the clock into permanent DST in **two years**, in 2027, while continuing to allow each state to opt out and remain in Standard Time if it decides to do so, as Hawaii and Arizona have already decided.

This is fundamentally a states' rights issue.

Consider Indiana. Indianapolis is roughly the same latitude as New York City but about 700 miles west. For Congress to force Hoosiers to commute and send

children to school in winter darkness, only to accommodate barbecues in New York, feels ... rude.

But as the Commerce Committee, you do have an interest in promoting a stable and predictable environment for commerce.

That's why I suggest Congress establish a firm date—2027—to permanently end clock-changing nationwide. States would then have ample time to decide if they want to do nothing and remain in Daylight Time or opt out and pick Standard Time. They wouldn't have the option to continue the deadly twice-yearly switching.

With clear federal guidance, schools can evaluate optimal start times and businesses can plan confidently, free from the confusion caused by time changes. States would even have time to hold elections to let the people decide directly.

I started my remarks with that study about judges. The reason researchers could do that—and find in so many other ways that the time change is harmful—is that DST creates what scientists call a “natural experiment.” Scientists can compare real world results about what happens with the time changes.

Interestingly, in traditional experiments with lab rats, scientists are careful not to change the clocks for DST. It's too disruptive.

So my closing question for you today is this: At long last, can we put aside partisanship and take action to treat our citizens at least as well as we treat our lab rats?

Thank you, and I look forward to any and all questions.

*For a full briefing book, a state-by-state analysis, and a summary of the voluminous research into this topic, please see [www.LockTheClock.net](http://www.LockTheClock.net).*