

“One State Doesn’t Want to ‘Fall Back’”

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Almost exactly a year ago, Florida State Senator Greg Steube left the barbershop with more than a haircut. The woman giving him a trim complained that after the recent time change, her kids’ schedules were off. Other customers had different objections to moving clocks back an hour. Then someone Googled why so many of us “spring forward” in March and “fall back” in November to observe daylight saving time.



The answer? During World War I, Germany shifted its clocks to save

electricity: Wake people up an hour earlier, the sun feels like it sets an hour later, and you don’t need to turn on as many lights. The concept caught on around the world, including the United States, which first introduced daylight saving time in 1918 (although it didn’t become permanent in most of the country until nearly 50 years later).

But times have changed — and so have energy costs. In 2006, Indiana joined in on daylight saving time, leaving Hawaii and Arizona as the only states that don’t observe it. That created a “natural experiment,” says Yale University economics professor Matthew Kotchen, who studied data from before and after Indiana’s switch and discovered that energy use increased slightly after.

Kotchen’s other finding: “Everyone is confused about daylight saving time.” Many folks think it starts in the fall, which is when it ends. They’ll tell you it’s for farmers, who don’t care about time (animals don’t wear watches). Some even believe it extends sunlight, a trick that would require controlling the Earth’s rotation.

Back in that barbershop, the customers told Steube they were done adjusting clocks. When he went to work on the issue, he quickly learned that the majority of Floridians agree. But there’s a hitch. The state prefers year-round daylight saving time, not standard time, and that’s against U.S. law. So Congress would need to change the law.

Maybe senators and representatives will be swayed by what’s happening across the Atlantic Ocean, where Europe may soon abolish its twice-yearly clock changes. The European Commission, which represents 28 countries, recently asked for public comment on what it calls “summertime arrangements,” and 4.6 million people responded — 84 percent in favor of picking a time and sticking with it. (The majority were German!)

The European Parliament will vote by next spring, when clocks are slated to jump ahead possibly for the final time. Then it’s up to each country to decide whether to stay on summertime, or fall back in October to permanent wintertime.

It’s an easy choice for Sean Kelly, an Irish member of Parliament who’s opposed clock changes since

childhood, when “falling back” made it too dark to play soccer after school. He’s already fantasizing about how he’ll celebrate next fall. In that last hour before sunset, Kelly vows, “I will go for an hour-long walk or cycle.”

Hallett, Vicky. “One State Doesn’t Want to ‘Fall Back.’” *Washington Post KidsPost*, The Washington Post, 26 Oct. 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/not-all-of-america-wants-to-fall-back-and-spring-forward/2018/10/26/bcd1d9ca-d715-11e8-83a2-d1c3da28d6b6_story.html. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

Daylight Savings Time Timeline:

1784	The idea of daylight saving is first conceived by Benjamin Franklin.
1914-1918	Britain goes on DLS during World War I.
March 19, 1918	The Standard Time Act establishes time zones and daylight saving. Daylight saving is repealed in 1919, but continues to be recognized in certain areas of the United States.
1945-1966	There is no federal law regarding Daylight Saving Time.
1966	The Uniform Time Act of 1966 establishes the system of uniform Daylight Saving Time throughout the United States. The dates are the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October. States can exempt themselves from participation.
1974-1975	Congress extends DLS in order to save energy during the energy crisis.
1986-2006	Daylight Saving Time begins on the first Sunday in April and ends on the last Sunday in October.
August 8, 2005	President George W. Bush signs the Energy Policy Act of 2005 into law. Part of the act will extend Daylight Saving Time starting in 2007, from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.
2007	Under the new laws, all of Indiana now observes Daylight Saving Time, where only certain areas of the state did before.

Exceptions in the United States:

- In the United States, Hawaii and most of Arizona do not follow DLS.
- The US territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and American Samoa also do not observe DLS.

What countries follow Daylight Saving Time?

- About 70 countries around the world observe DLS.
- Many countries near the equator do not adjust their clocks for daylight saving.
- Neither China nor Japan observe DLS.
- Some countries refer to "Daylight Saving Time" as "Summer Time."

“Daylight Saving Time Fast Facts.” *CNN*, 22 Aug. 2013, www.cnn.com/2013/08/22/world/daylight-saving-time-fast-facts/index.html. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.