

03/17/2022 10:29:19 [BN] Bloomberg News

What Year-Round Daylight Saving Time Would Mean: QuickTake

By Angel Adegbesan

(Bloomberg) -- "Spring forward, fall back" has been a twice-a-year part of life in the U.S. for over a century, at least for most of the country. It's a ritual that produces pretty regular grumbling, particularly around the "lost hour" in the spring, when clocks are switched ahead from standard time. The Senate on March 15 unanimously approved a switch to permanent daylight saving time. But the history of the issue both in the U.S. and around the world shows that no approach is likely to make everybody happy.

1. What is the purpose of daylight saving time?

Daylight saving time -- more popularly miscalled "daylight savings time" -- moves an hour of sunlight from the early morning, when most people who aren't farmers are in bed, to the evening, when they're more likely to make use of the extended daylight.

2. When was DST created?

The idea for daylight saving time was said to have originated in the 18th Century; Benjamin Franklin thought sleeping late in the summer was a waste of productive time, and that the extra hour of sunlight in the evening would reduce candle consumption. The idea was first adopted as official policy by Germany during World War I, to save energy costs. Other countries followed, including the U.S., which adopted the time change in 1918, although without a uniform national system. In 1966, Congress passed the Uniform Time Act, which unified daylight saving time across the country -- or most of it. In 2005, the period for daylight saving was expanded to the current schedule, under which it runs from the second weekend in March through the first weekend in November.

3. Are some places not on DST?

Yes. The 1966 law said that any state could exempt itself. Hawaii opted out of the law, as did Arizona, except for the lands of the Navajo Nation. They chose to stay on standard time year-round instead. Several overseas territories, including American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands also do not observe daylight saving time.

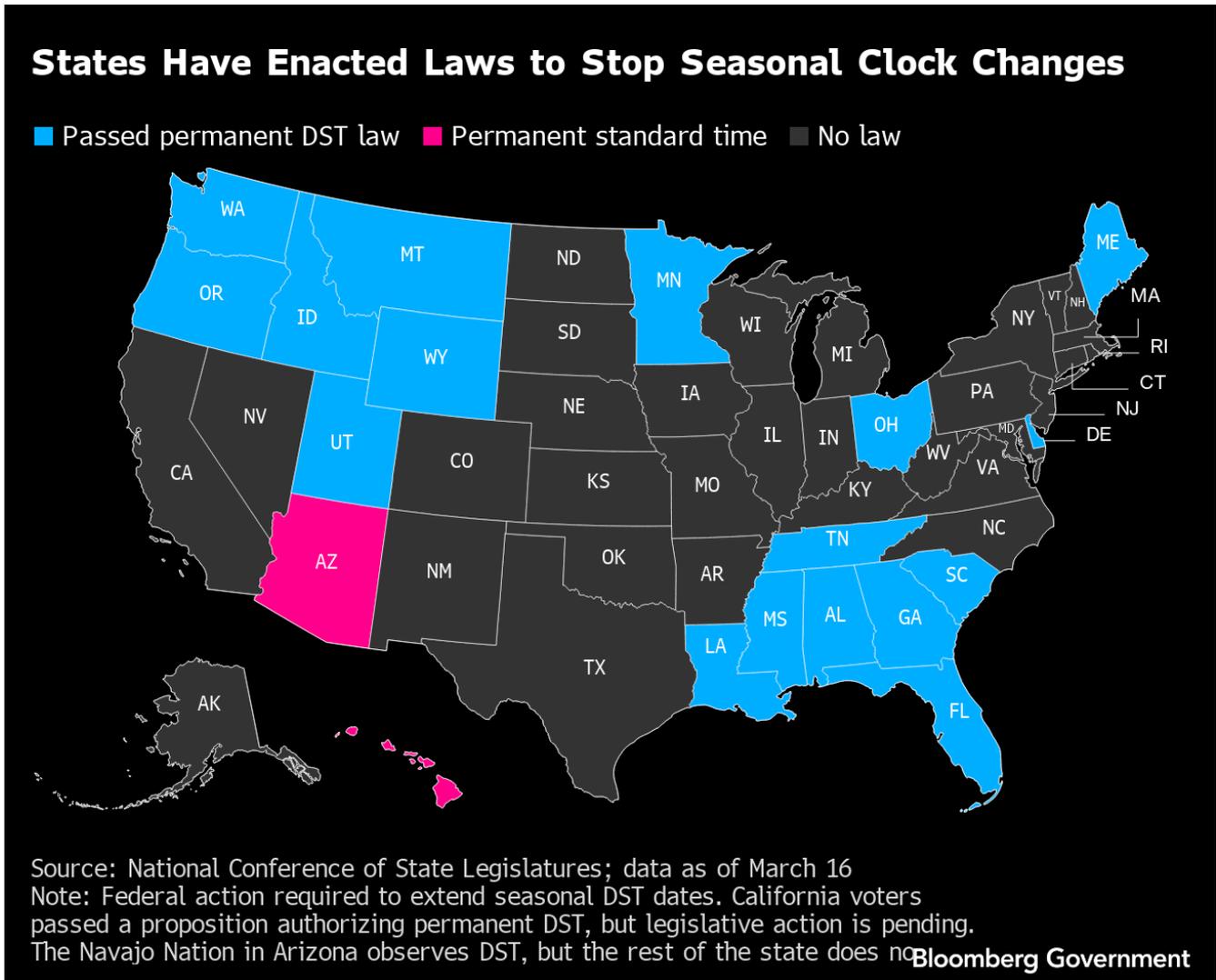
4. What does the Senate bill propose?

The Senate bill would move standard time forward by one hour. If passed by the House and signed into law by President Joe Biden, that would have the effect of making daylight saving time permanent across the country. States would have the option of remaining on current standard time, but no state would be allowed to shift from one kind of time to the other during the course of a year -- they would have one or the other for all 12 months. The Senate bill proposes that the change would take effect in November 2023, a delay meant to give airlines and other businesses time to prepare for schedule changes.

5. Which states support this?

Starting with Florida in 2018, a number of states have passed laws that would put them on permanent daylight saving time if federal law allows it, including Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah and Washington. Other states, including Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Alaska,

Texas and Utah have discussed dropping daylight saving time.



6. What would be the benefit?

Proponents point to a number of advantages:

- For one thing, we wouldn't have to change our clocks twice a year any longer. Beyond the annoyance and confusion that can cause, studies have shown that changing the clock can be detrimental to people's health. The "spring forward" in particular has been found to lead to disruptions in sleep, as well as increased risks of heart attacks, strokes and car crashes.
- Economists say that restaurants, retail shops and leisure activity businesses like golf clubs benefit from the extra daylight in the evenings. The National Retail Federation, representing retailers across several countries, strongly supports daylight saving time. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is also an advocate for DST as an economy booster. According to a report by the JPMorgan Chase Institute, shoppers spend 3.5% less in retail stores in the month following the end of daylight saving time.

This report may not be modified or altered in any way. The BLOOMBERG PROFESSIONAL service and BLOOMBERG Data are owned and distributed locally by Bloomberg Finance LP ("BFLP") and its subsidiaries in all jurisdictions other than Argentina, Bermuda, China, India, Japan and Korea (the "BFLP Countries"). BFLP is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bloomberg LP ("BLP"). BLP provides BFLP with all the global marketing and operational support and service for the Services and distributes the Services either directly or through a non-BFLP subsidiary in the BLP Countries. BFLP, BLP and their affiliates do not provide investment advice, and nothing herein shall constitute an offer of financial instruments by BFLP, BLP or their affiliates.

- One longstanding argument for DST, that it reduces energy costs, has been contradicted by a number of studies -- the extra driving consumers do more than offsets any reduction in lighting expenses.
- Others say it can possibly help reduce robberies. One analysis found that the stock market goes up more during daylight saving months than during standard time, though only by a small amount.

7. What are the arguments against the change?

The big one: even darker mornings during the winter. That would mean longer hours of darkness for people going to work as well as children heading to school. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has come out against the proposal, saying that the body's internal clock fits standard time better. It called for eliminating "spring forward, fall back," but by eliminating daylight saving time altogether.

8. Has this been tried before?

Yes. The U.S. experimented with permanent DST for about 16 months in the 1970s. President Richard Nixon signed the change into law in January 1974, shortly after the upheaval of the 1973 energy crisis, when gas prices soared. The change was dropped before the date for eliminating standard time was reached, after support for the switch fell in the face of dark winter mornings. Russia in 2014 reversed a decision to switch to a permanent summer time as its people struggled with prolonged darkness during the winter.

The Reference Shelf

- A Bloomberg Government OnPoint report on the debate over daylight saving time.
- A Smithsonian Magazine article on the switch to DST for 16 months in the 70s.
- A New York Times article reviewing studies that found that DST doesn't save much energy.
- The American Academy of Sleep Medicine called for the elimination of daylight saving time.
- A letter in which Benjamin Franklin discussed his calculations around a time change.

To contact the reporter on this story:

Angel Adegbesan in New York at aadegbesan3@bloomberg.net

To contact the editors responsible for this story:

Timothy Annett at tannett@bloomberg.net

John O'Neil, Rob Golum