

The year Daylight Saving Time went too far

[Susan Steade](#) November 7, 2018 at 11:17 a.m.

The 7 a.m. darkness in the last days before springing forward put us in mind of a historical footnote: the year of unending Daylight Saving Time.

Or at least that was how it was supposed to be.

It was 1974, and the energy crisis was cutting into the American way of life, with odd-even gas rationing, a national speed limit and shortened Nascar races. The Emergency Daylight Saving Time Act signed by President Nixon dictated that clocks would spring forward one hour on Jan. 6 — and stay that way for almost 16 months, until April 27, 1975.

By fall, the dark mornings were apparently wearing on the American people. Proclaiming "it's for the children" — those scholars standing at bus stops in the predawn — lawmakers threw in the towel of gloom. Year-round DST was scrapped, and on Oct. 27, clocks fell back.

But there's no way to stop the Earth from tilting, and — in 1974 as in all years — most of the morning daylight gain was gone within weeks.

The 1974 experiment was but one of the federal revisions of Daylight Saving Time in the past 50 years.



Students wait for a schoolbus at 7:35 a.m. in Astoria, Queens, during the daylight savings experiment. (Getty Images)

- 1966: To standardize practices across the United States (with a few exceptions), it was declared that DST would run from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in October.
- 1986: The start date was moved to the first Sunday in April.
- 2007: DST was extended on both ends, and it now runs from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.