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New bills aim to make daylight saving time permanent in Minnesota

Updated: February 13, 2020 07:16 AM

At least seven states have approved legislation to make daylight saving time permanent, and if two bills in the legislature — HB 1397 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF1397&ssn=0&y=2019>) and SF 1416 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=SF1416&y=2019&ssn=0&b=senate>) — move forward, Minnesota could be added to the list.

On Sunday, March 8, the clock "springs forward" an hour in Minnesota.

But Dr. Andrew Stiehm, Allina Health sleep specialist at the United Lung and Sleep Clinic in St. Paul, says that change isn't good for the body.

"That's been well-defined medically as having consequences. We know the incidents of heart attacks rises by about 15-25% the week after we spring forward," said Stiehm.

So why have daylight saving at all? Minnesota State Representative Mike Freiberg, DFL-Golden Valley, who is one of the sponsors on the house bill, says it's about eliminating the time change and adding more hours of sunlight when people are awake.

"There are more people in Minnesota who like that extra hour of evening sunlight during the summer, and wouldn't want to be on standard time permanently," said Freiberg. "There is an even mix of Democrats and Republicans on the bill in the house."

But even if the clock says you're working from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during daylight saving time, Stiehm says your body still knows you're actually working from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., based on when the sun is directly in the horizon at noon.

"Light is what tells us it's the day. Light is what tells us to wake up, and we need that light in the morning. And shifting it more to the afternoon, makes our mornings harder," said Stiehm.

That's why the backers of daylight saving time aren't usually from the medical community.

"The general consensus among the scientists are that our bodies are much more in tune with standard time than they are daylight saving time," said Stiehm.

According to the Washington Post, convenience stores, fast-food companies, and candy manufacturers were the ones who lobbied for daylight saving time. For them, more sunlight after a workday meant more consumer spending.

The proposal is expected to be discussed on the House and Senate floor this session. But even if it does pass, Gov. Tim Walz would have to sign off on it.

Then, Congress would also have to approve a change in federal law before the proposal could take effect. Currently, states are permitted, by federal law, to opt out of daylight saving time and remain on standard time year-round. However, states are not currently permitted to permanently stay on daylight saving time, as this potential legislation proposes.

Crystal Bui (<https://kstp.com/news/crystal-bui/5410016/?cat=13037>)

Updated: February 13, 2020 07:16 AM Published: February 12, 2020 09:58 PM