

Dear Chair Riley and Members of the Senate Committee on Business and General Government,

I am writing to you to express my support for SB 320, a bill intended to permanently move Oregon to daylight saving time (DST), eliminating the twice-annual clock change. As a software engineer, I routinely work with problems involving dates and times. As such, the clock changes associated with DST have been a tremendous burden on myself and my fellow software developers.

Consider a simple problem: how much time elapsed between 12am and 3am on the same day? If we did not have clock changes, this would be a very simple subtraction problem, and we get the obvious answer of 3 hours (figure 1). However, to account for the possibility of clock shifts, significantly more logic is needed, along with more information. In particular, the software must be aware of the date the times were recorded on, the region that the times were recorded in, and the regional rules for clock shifts that apply anywhere the software is intended to operate.

This inflated complexity in a seemingly simple task is why, for instance, hospital workers report having significant computer issues impacting their ability to provide quality health care on days where clock changes occur.[1] This is also why Apple encountered an issue in which Australian customers woke up on a clock change day to find that their smart watches no longer functioned.[2]

SB 320 on its own will not eliminate clock changes. As programmers, our work runs globally, and clock changes will remain an issue beyond the borders of our state. However, Oregon is not alone in considering this legislation. Over 26 other states are considering ending the twice-annual clock shifts, including Washington (HB 1196) and California (AB 7). As of this writing, the Washington bill has passed the house with overwhelming support, with 89 voting in favor to 7 against.

In our increasingly automated world, clock shifts create not merely a category of bug, but a metaphorical bloodsucking time vampire that goes shambling through our economy, feeding on the stress of our support personnel, the befuddlement of our engineers, the frustration of our users, the embarrassment of our executives, and the fright of our shareholders. I urge you to support SB 320 and drive a stake through the heart of this monster so that it may prey upon Oregonians no more.

Thank you,

Jonas Acres

1: <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/nov/04/daylight-saving-time-stumps-hospital-record-keepin/>

2: <https://www.idownloadblog.com/2018/10/08/apple-watch-daylight-saving-time-bug/>