

Debate Topic: Abolishing Daylight Savings

Concordia Tournament (November 16 & 23, 2024) – Saturday, 7 PM to 9:30 PM

Pros and Cons of Abolishing Daylight Saving Time (DST):

Background: Daylight Saving Time (DST) is the practice of advancing clocks during summer months so that evening daylight lasts longer, while sacrificing normal sunrise times. In the United States, DST begins on the second Sunday in March and ends on the first Sunday in November [1](#). The practice was first implemented nationally during World War I as an energy-saving measure, and has been in place in its current form since 1966 when the Uniform Time Act standardized the start and end dates across the country [3](#). In recent years, there has been growing debate about whether the U.S. should abolish the biannual time changes and adopt either permanent standard time or permanent daylight saving time. Several states have passed laws to switch to year-round DST if allowed by federal law [4](#). However, sleep experts and medical groups generally advocate for adopting permanent standard time instead [5](#).

Top 10 Pros of Abolishing DST:

1. Eliminates disruption to sleep patterns and circadian rhythms twice a year [1& 5](#)
2. Reduces negative health impacts associated with time changes, including increased risk of heart attacks and strokes [1](#)
3. Improves road safety by eliminating drowsy driving after spring time change [1](#)
4. Increases productivity by avoiding adjustment periods after time changes [3](#)
5. Simplifies timekeeping and eliminates confusion around clock changes [4](#)
6. Aligns better with human circadian biology (if switching to permanent standard time) [5](#)
7. Reduces energy usage (contrary to original purpose of DST) [3](#)
8. Eliminates inconvenience of changing clocks twice yearly [4](#)
9. Standardizes time observance across the country [4](#)
10. Reduces scheduling conflicts with international partners who don't observe DST [3](#)

Top 10 Cons of Abolishing DST:

1. Loss of extra evening daylight hours in summer months [1](#)
2. Potential negative impact on some businesses that benefit from extended daylight [3](#)
3. Darker mornings in winter if adopting permanent DST [5](#)
4. Misalignment with school and work schedules [5](#)
5. Reduced opportunities for outdoor activities in evenings [1](#)
6. Potential increase in energy usage in some regions [3](#)
7. Disruption to existing transportation and business schedules [4](#)
8. Loss of traditional marker for seasonal changes [3](#)
9. Potential negative impact on public health if adopting permanent DST [5](#)
10. Requires complex legislative process to implement nationwide [4](#)

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Top 10 Pros of Abolishing DST:

1. **Improved sleep patterns:** Eliminating the biannual time changes would prevent disruptions to people's circadian rhythms, potentially leading to better overall sleep quality [2](#).
2. **Reduced health risks:** Studies have shown an increase in heart attacks and strokes following the spring time change. Abolishing DST could mitigate these risks [2 & 5](#).
3. **Enhanced road safety:** There's evidence of increased traffic accidents immediately after DST changes, particularly in spring. Eliminating these changes could improve road safety [2 & 5](#).
4. **Increased productivity:** The adjustment period after time changes can lead to decreased productivity. Abolishing DST could eliminate this issue [1](#).
5. **Simplified timekeeping:** Removing the need to change clocks twice a year would simplify timekeeping for individuals and businesses [1](#).
6. **Potential energy savings:** Contrary to DST's original purpose, some studies suggest that permanent standard time might actually save more energy [1 & 3](#).
7. **Reduced impact on vulnerable populations:** Children and the elderly are disproportionately affected by DST changes. Abolishing it could benefit these groups [2](#).
8. **Alignment with natural circadian rhythms:** Permanent standard time aligns better with human biology and natural light cycles [5 & 7](#).
9. **Economic benefits:** Some economists estimate that DST changes cost the U.S. economy billions in lost productivity [2](#).
10. **Global synchronization:** Eliminating DST could simplify international communications and scheduling, especially for countries that don't observe DST [1](#).

Top 10 Cons of Abolishing DST:

1. **Loss of extended evening daylight:** During summer months, people would lose an extra hour of evening daylight for outdoor activities [1 & 3](#).
2. **Potential impact on certain businesses:** Some industries, like retail and tourism, benefit from extended evening daylight and might be negatively affected [1 & 3](#).
3. **Darker mornings in winter:** If permanent DST were adopted instead of standard time, winter mornings would be darker, potentially affecting morning commutes and school start times [7](#).
4. **Adjustment period:** There would likely be a period of adjustment as people and systems adapt to the new permanent time [1](#).
5. **Potential increase in evening energy usage:** Some argue that permanent standard time could lead to increased energy use in the evenings, especially during summer [3](#).
6. **Loss of traditional seasonal marker:** The time changes serve as a cultural marker for seasonal transitions for many people [1](#).
7. **Reduced outdoor activity time:** Less evening daylight could potentially lead to reduced outdoor activities, especially for working adults [3](#).
8. **Potential impact on crime rates:** Some studies suggest that DST reduces certain types of crime due to extended daylight. Abolishing it could potentially impact these rates [3](#).
9. **Legislative challenges:** Changing DST laws would require complex legislative processes at both state and federal levels [1](#).
10. **Disruption to existing schedules:** Many long-standing schedules and systems are built around the current DST system, and changing it could cause widespread disruption [1](#).

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Analysis from Ivy League Sources:

Dr. Charles Czeisler, professor of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School, argues strongly against adopting permanent daylight saving time: "The scientific evidence points to acute increases in adverse health consequences from changing the clocks, including in heart attack and stroke risk, and chronic adverse effects of living out of sync with the sun" [5](#). He advocates for abolishing DST in favor of permanent standard time. Research from the University of Pennsylvania found that the spring transition to DST results in a 6% increase in fatal car accidents in the U.S., likely due to sleep deprivation [2](#). This suggests that eliminating the time change could have significant safety benefits. However, a study from Cornell University found that robberies decrease by 7% following the spring shift to DST, likely due to increased daylight in the evening hours [3](#). This indicates there may be some public safety benefits to maintaining DST. The debate ultimately centers on whether the benefits of abolishing time changes outweigh the costs of losing extra evening daylight. While most sleep and health experts advocate for permanent standard time, the political and economic implications of such a change remain complex. Any nationwide shift would require careful consideration of impacts across various sectors and regions.