

The Last Fall Back Act

Ending Washington's biannual clock change, without waiting on Congress

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On **November 1, 2026**, Washington turns its clocks back and British Columbia does not. Vancouver will be an hour ahead of Seattle every winter from now on. B.C. settled this in a single legislative session. Washington has been waiting on Congress since 2019.

THE PROBLEM

In 2019 the Legislature passed **SHB 1196** (Ch. 297, Laws of 2019), declaring Washington's intent to observe permanent daylight saving time. It has never taken effect. The law is conditional on congressional authorization, and federal law still forbids states from adopting permanent daylight time on their own.

Congress has introduced ten such bills in eight years. In 2022 the Senate passed one and the House never voted. On **July 14, 2026** the House passed the Sunshine Protection Act 308 to 117, then recessed without Senate action. The Senate's own version has sat in committee since January 2025 without a vote. Oregon and California are stuck identically, while Washington keeps changing its clocks twice a year.

THE SOLUTION

- 1 Permanent standard time, immediately.** Federal law (15 U.S.C. § 260a) already lets any state exempt itself from daylight saving time. Arizona and Hawaii do. No permission required.
- 2 No more clock changes, either direction.** The state and all political subdivisions stop advancing official time on any future spring-forward date.
- 3 An automatic federal bridge.** If Congress authorizes permanent daylight time, Washington transitions on the next spring date, at least 60 days out. No new bill, session, or ballot measure.

This preserves the 2019 policy rather than replacing it. Permanent daylight time remains the destination. Washington simply stops changing clocks while waiting for the door to open.

THE EVIDENCE — TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF FINDING

- Transition effects** spike after a clock change and settle. They end once the switching stops, whichever time a state lands on. Not seriously contested.
- +6% fatal crashes** the workweek after spring forward, concentrated in the morning and on the western edge of each time zone — where Washington sits. Fritz et al., Current Biology
 - Elevated heart-attack risk** in the days after spring forward. 2024 review, 12 studies, 10 countries
 - +5.7% workplace injuries** and 68% more workdays lost the Monday after spring forward. Barnes & Wagner, J. Applied Psychology
 - +16% deer-vehicle collisions** the week after falling back; elevated ischemic stroke within two days of any transition. Cunningham et al.; Sipilä et al.

Level effects shift a baseline permanently and cut both ways: morning light favors standard time; evening light, wildlife collisions, and evening commerce favor daylight time. The interim step carries real level costs — but they are **bounded and reversible**, lasting only as long as Congress takes and ending the day the bridge fires. Transition costs recur every year, forever. The status quo is the only option that pays them indefinitely and receives nothing.

ON DARK WINTER MORNINGS

The most common objection is that children would travel to school in darkness. Many Washington children already do. **Bellevue** rings its middle school bell at **7:45 a.m.**; **Lake Washington** at **7:50**; sunrise is 7:57. **Bellingham** elementary starts at 8:00 against an 8:03 sunrise. Bus riders board 20 to 40 minutes earlier.

CITY	TODAY, STANDARD TIME	PERMANENT DAYLIGHT TIME
Bellingham	8:03 a.m.	9:03 a.m.
Seattle	7:58 a.m.	8:58 a.m.
Bellevue	7:57 a.m.	8:57 a.m.
Vancouver, WA	7:51 a.m.	8:51 a.m.
Spokane	7:38 a.m.	8:38 a.m.

Latest sunrise of the year, first week of January. Source: U.S. Naval Observatory. Bell times from published 2025-26 and 2026-27 district schedules.

Not universal, and we will not claim otherwise. Spokane sees the sun by 7:38 and starts nothing before 8:00. Vancouver moved its high schools to 8:40 in 2023; Seattle moved its to 8:50 in 2016. The dark commute disappeared in each case.

Notice what fixed it. None of those districts moved the clock. They moved the bell. That is the lever that works on dark commutes, and every school board in Washington already holds it.

The honest counterpoint: under permanent daylight time the earliest bell in every district above would again fall before sunrise, including Seattle's 8:50 high schools. A real cost of the destination, one B.C. and the U.S. House both accepted, and not one the interim step creates.

PRECEDENT IN OLYMPIA — AND WHY IT STALLED

Four bills have proposed this at the state level: **SB 5511 (2022, Honeyford)**, **SB 5795 (2024, Padden)**, **SB 5001 (2025, J. Wilson and Dhingra)**, and **HB 2119 (2026)** — the same structure proposed here, year-round Pacific Standard Time with an automatic switch to daylight time upon federal authorization. SB 5795 drew **13 bipartisan sponsors** and support from the **Association of Washington Business**, UW biologist Horacio de la Iglesia, and the AASM; opposition came from UW's Steve Calandrillo and Laura Prugh, both of whom prefer permanent *daylight* time. **Not one of the four reached a floor vote.** SB 5795 was scheduled, then pulled before cutoff. The obstacle is scheduling, not merits. What is new: B.C. has acted, the House voted 308-117, and a citizens' initiative now stands behind the bill.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING

- 1. Legislators:** introduce and pass the Act in the 2027 session. Draft text available now for review.
- 2. Organizations:** a public endorsement, a note to your Washington membership, or a witness for 2027 committee testimony.
- 3. Everyone:** contact your legislators, and add your name at lastfallback.org. We would rather the Legislature do this. If they don't, we file in March and the voters decide in 2028.

THE PATH

- Now - Jan 2027** Coalition, legislator outreach, prefilings
- Jan - Apr 2027** 2027 session. If it passes, done
- Mar 2027** File Initiative to the Legislature
- Dec 2027** ~386,000 signatures due; measure goes to the 2028 Legislature
- Nov 2028** If they decline again, Washington voters decide