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**HEARING ON “CHANGING TIMES: REVISITING SPRING FORWARD, FALL
BACK”**

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify today on U.S. law regarding changing between standard and daylight saving time each year. NACS has been active in policy decisions relating to daylight saving time for decades and I'm pleased to share the industry's views with you. As I will explain, the bottom line is that daylight saving time is good for business and commerce across the United States and our industry urges you to keep it in place.

By way of background, the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) is an international trade association representing the convenience store industry with more than 1,500 retail and 1,600 supplier companies as members, the majority of whom are based in the United States.

The industry as a whole represents approximately 80 percent of retail sales of motor fuel in the United States. The convenience industry employed about 2.34 million workers and generated more than \$548.2 billion in total sales in 2020, representing more than 3 percent of U.S. gross domestic product. Of those sales, approximately \$292.6 billion came from fuel sales alone.

Members of the industry process more than 160 million transactions every single day.

That equates to about half the U.S. population on a daily basis. In fact, ninety-three percent of Americans live within 10 minutes of one of our industry's locations. These businesses are particularly important in rural and urban areas of the country that might not have as many large businesses. In these locations, the convenience store not only serves as the place to get fuel but is often the grocery store and center of a community.

Background on Daylight Saving Time

Daylight saving time was employed at different points during the twentieth century, principally as an energy-saving measure. This occurred, for example, during World War II. The Uniform Time Act of 1966 moved the nation to the basic system we have today of switching from standard time during the winter to daylight saving time during the summer. During the energy crisis of the early 1970s we moved to year-round daylight saving time. Since then, the portion of the year we spend using daylight saving time has been extended multiple times with Congress passing legislation to do so in 1986 and 2005.

Switching between daylight saving time and standard time is, of course, a balancing act. None of us can change how much sunlight there is in a given day - not even in the winter when the days get shorter - and it can negatively impact our plans and state of mind. There are many benefits to having more time when it is light in the afternoon and early evening. These include increasing economic activity as well as reducing motor vehicle accidents, as I will explain. But these benefits have always been weighed against concerns that we should not have kids going to school in the dark. It is the balancing between those various interests that led us to the longstanding policy of switching our clocks in the spring and fall to take the most advantage we can of the daylight we have at different times of year.

NACS testified in favor of extending daylight saving time before an Energy & Commerce Subcommittee as early as 1983 and has supported extensions of the policy. While there are questions about how much (if any) energy is saved with daylight saving time, the majority of studies show that

reduced use of electricity for lighting does decrease overall energy demand.¹ That has been one of the overriding points of public discussion regarding the use of daylight saving time, but there are other reasons that moving from standard time to daylight saving time in the spring is good policy.

Business and Daylight Saving Time

Our industry has consistently found that commerce increases when the nation moves to daylight saving time. When the clocks change in the spring, people feel as though they have more time after work to engage in a range of activities that increase commerce from eating out to shopping to participating, in or taking kids to, a variety of outdoor activities. The increases in economic activity that result can be dramatic. They consistently show increased spending when daylight hours are shifted later in the day through daylight saving. One study compared spending changes when daylight saving started and stopped in Los Angeles with spending in Phoenix, which does not observe daylight saving time. The result was clear increases in spending in Los Angeles when daylight saving started and losses of spending when it ended.²

The golf industry is one specific example. That industry estimated as early as the 1980s that an additional month of daylight saving time would mean hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue to the industry.³ For the convenience industry specifically, 76.5% of sales come during the part of the year when we are on daylight saving time. That is a significantly higher percentage than the 65% of the year we spend using daylight saving time. Overall, this means about \$5 billion of incremental sales for the industry attributable to the change to daylight saving time. Those are big numbers – particularly in an industry dominated by small businesses that operate with tight profit margins.

The legislative record of past debates of these policies shows consistent statements regarding the benefits to the economy from daylight saving.⁴

Everyone understands that changing clocks can be annoying. We all lose that hour of sleep in the spring and can feel tired adjusting to the change. But my personal experience and the evidence of our behavior shows that we are pretty happy to have that extra hour of daylight later in the day. It matters more than you might think when you look at shopping as well as the data on behavior.

Other Benefits of Daylight Saving Time

For example, studies have found that daylight saving time reduces motor vehicle accidents.⁵ Darkness increases the danger of accidents and fatalities – and the studies have shown that drivers are less safe in the evening than in the morning. The evidence also shows that there are additional vehicles on the

¹ “Does Daylight Saving Save Electricity? A Meta-Analysis,” by Tomas Havranek, Dominik Herman, and Zuzana Irsova (June 1, 2018), *The Energy Journal*.

² “Why daylight saving means more light and more spending,” by Courtney Jespersen, *Christian Science Monitor* (March 12, 2017) at [Why daylight saving means more light and more spending - CSMonitor.com](#).

³ “How golf plays a role in the battle for ‘locking the clock’ on Daylight Time,” by Henry Greenstein, *Golf Week* (June 5, 2021) at [How golf plays a role in the battle for Daylight Time \(usatoday.com\)](#).

⁴ See Daylight Saving Time: Hearings on S. 385, S. 1260, S. 2568 and S. 2602 Before the S. Comm. on Commerce, 93d Cong. 26 (1974) (statement of Rep. Craig Hosmer) (“People do not shop between 6 and 9 in the morning, but in the evening. Year-round Daylight Saving Time... would also make after work shopping more attractive because of the added hour of daylight.”).

⁵ Susan A. Ferguson et al., Daylight Saving Time and Motor Vehicle Crashes: The Reduction in Pedestrian and Vehicle Occupant Fatalities, 85 Am. J. Pub. Health 92, 95 (1995); Douglas Coate & Sara Markowitz, Pedestrian Fatalities, Motor Vehicle Occupant Fatalities, and Daylight Saving Time 7 (2002), <http://www.cornwall.rutgers.edu/pdf/Daylight%20Saving%20Time-Report.pdf>.

road during the evening commute. The morning rush hour is also generally shorter than the evening rush hour. The result is that increasing light hours into the evening helps reduce accidents.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that there are many benefits to daylight saving time. In fact, it would be more appropriately referred to as “daylight optimization time.” The idea of switching our clocks is that we need to maximize the light we have at all times of year. And, of course, the changes from one season to the next can be pretty dramatic. Just like we set different time zones across the country so that each region can make the best use of the daylight it has, we need to deal with seasonal changes affecting those time zones. While the impacts are much larger the farther north you go within the United States, ignoring those impacts would be difficult in the same way that erasing different time zones would be. All we can do with policy is make the best use of what we have – seasonally and regionally.

NACS has long supported the current system and the increases in the part of the year subject to daylight saving because of the positive effects it has on commerce. While we recognize the concerns about losing an hour of sleep one day a year, we do not think that should override the benefits of daylight saving. The current system of daylight saving is good for business, energy efficiency, and the prevention of vehicle accidents. Preserving or extending these benefits are the only policy choices that make sense from our perspective.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify and we look forward to working with you on these issues as well as answering any questions you may have.