

Statement to the House Intergovernmental Affairs & Operations Committee  
of  
Ted Leonard, Executive Director, Pennsylvania AAA Federation  
On  
Daylight Saving Time Legislation

April 29, 2026

Good morning, Chairmen and members of the House Intergovernmental Affairs & Operations Committee.

My name is Ted Leonard. I am the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania AAA Federation which is the state association of the AAA clubs in Pennsylvania, encompassing over 3.1 million member-motorists. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issue of Daylight-Saving Time legislation.

While Daylight Saving Time was implemented as an energy saving policy, the impacts are felt in other aspects including highway safety of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and even wildlife. The issues associated with time shifts include sleep deprivation, ambient light conditions, and deer-vehicle collisions. A AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study (*Acute Sleep Deprivation and Risk of Motor Vehicle Crash Involvement*) reported drowsy driving is a factor in ten times as many traffic fatalities as traditional crash data indicates. Eighteen percent of all traffic fatalities between 2017 and 2021 were estimated to involve a drowsy driver, accounting for 30,000 deaths. Drowsiness impairs drivers in several ways. It reduces alertness, impairs judgment, and can cause momentary lapses in consciousness or hazardous microsleep, leading to loss of vehicle control and failure to respond to dangers on the road or emergency response areas. According to researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder (*A Chronobiological Evaluation of the Acute Effects of Daylight-Saving Time on Traffic Accident Risk*), fatal traffic accidents increase by six percent during the first workweek after the Spring Daylight Saving Time transition. In the second week, the rate of fatal traffic accidents begins to decline.

A recent study in the Journal of Safety Research (*Daylight saving time and fatal crashes: The impact of changing light conditions, Volume 93, July 2025*) noted that light condition is a key determinant of the impact of time changes on fatal crashes. Fatal crashes involving pedestrians have been shown to occur more frequently following the switch to standard time in the Fall and less frequently following the switch to daylight saving time in the Spring. Overall, daylight

saving time and specifically more daylight hours reduce pedestrian crash fatalities. In the Fall, drivers must remain vigilant and remember that moving clocks back one hour will mean darker evenings, with children walking and biking from school during this time. In the Spring, drivers must remain vigilant and remember that moving clocks ahead one hour will mean darker mornings, with children walking and biking to school during this time.

Year-round daylight-saving time reduces deer-vehicle collisions by keeping more drivers on the road during daylight, preventing thousands of accidents and saving lives. A study by the University of Washington (*Permanent daylight-saving time would reduce deer-vehicle collisions*) found that deer-vehicle collisions are thirteen times more likely in the two hours after sunset than in the two hours before sunset. Nighttime traffic and deer-vehicle collisions are more frequent during standard time. Collisions with deer increase by 16% in the week following the Fall clock change. Adopting permanent daylight-saving time, according to the study, would save approximately 36,550 deer deaths, thirty-three human deaths, 2,054 human injuries, and \$1.9 billion in collision costs annually.

As of 2026, 19 states have adopted laws or resolutions to adopt daylight saving time permanently if the federal law changes. To help reduce crash-related incidents due to fatigue or sleep deprivation, commonly referred to as drowsy driving, AAA has urged the U.S. Department of Transportation and the safety community to educate the driving public about the safety hazards of driving without adequate sleep and appropriate rest breaks. Such efforts should also focus on countermeasures that could reduce drowsy driving crashes.

To further reduce negative health impacts, AAA nationally has urged Congress to allow states to permanently observe daylight savings time.

AAA also calls upon federal and state transportation departments to conduct rigorous evaluations of highway rest areas for their usefulness and safety. Moreover, AAA calls on government officials, the scientific and medical communities, and manufacturers to conduct research on the effects of sleep deprivation and to evaluate the effectiveness of on-board drowsiness-detection monitoring devices.