



**EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 7, 2023**

**SENATE BILL 268**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS - FULL-YEAR DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**

**TESTIMONY OF AVI LENCZ,  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, AGUDATH ISRAEL OF MARYLAND**

**OPPOSE**

Agudath Israel of Maryland speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities across Maryland and on behalf of the 10,000 students attending 30 Jewish day schools in our great state.

Common concerns with switching to permanent Daylight Savings Time include very real concerns regarding the ramifications of such a change on children and young adults. Forcing children and young adults to wake up in the early morning to prepare for school impedes their sleep patterns and negatively impacts learning readiness and physical and emotional health. Early school commutes before daylight would increase the likelihood of accidents, as well as force students to freeze during the winter as they wait for the school bus or as they walk to school. Indeed, the scientific consensus of organizations such as the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine is to oppose eliminating Standard Time.

But beyond school-related concerns, we would like to emphasize the deleterious impact this bill would have on the Orthodox Jewish communities of Maryland because of the requirements of our faith. Our morning services, rituals, and prayers, required of all adults of our faith, are time-based. For instance, the Shema prayer, a statement and affirmation of our acceptance of G-d and His Kingship that serves as one of the centerpieces of the morning service, must be recited after dawn but before mid-morning. The Amidah prayer, a selection of blessings and supplications first recited by each individual and then repeated aloud by the prayer leader, is to be said after sunrise.

If Daylight Savings Time was to be instituted year-round, services in the winter months would not be able to start before 8, or even 8:30, in the morning. As the services take between forty minutes to an hour, this would place a severe burden on members of our faith, forcing them to make the horrible choice between observance of the morning services and coming to work on time. Employers would look for any excuse to avoid hiring members of our community. Faced with shrinking opportunities, people would be forced to sacrifice their livelihoods, be false to their beliefs, or relocate.

While in principle we do not oppose "locking the clock" and eliminating seasonal time adjustments by adopting Standard Time year-round, the adoption of Daylight Savings Time year-round would create a very difficult environment for many Marylanders. We ask you to help our state maintain its well-deserved reputation for hospitality to members of all faiths and beliefs, and report unfavorably on Senate Bill 268.