The Politics of Daylight Savings Time

- In 1966 the U.S. Congress passed the Uniform Time Act which set daylight savings time as starting the last week in April and ending six months later
- Beginning in 1976 the Congress began to seek to extend DST
- The move to extend DST took ten years to achieve a three week extension.

DST

- Why would it take ten years to do a simple thing like extend DST?
- First take is that extending DST would be good for the country
  - the evidence seemed to say that extending daylight savings time would be good for the country
  - a. The Department of Transportation estimated that extending would saved energy and decreased crime
  - b. in the 1780’s Ben Franklin showed the French they could save 96 million candles by extending one hour.

DST

- During the energy crisis of 1973 1974 the country had extended DST and the results had been positive –saved energy and lower crime rates plus car accidents were down three percent
- Given this data why did it take ten years to extend the hours of DST?
- Who would oppose extending DST and why would they oppose extending it?

DST

- The answer is –Mothers and Father who did not want their children going to school in the dark –farmers who held second jobs and thus had chores in the dark –Orthodox Jews–radio stations with daylight to sunset licenses-2,450 of them
- These interests were represented by the PTA the AFBF and various Jewish organizations—the opposition was strongest on the western edge of time zones
DST

- A legislative history of DST
  - 1976 Senate extends to 8 months 1 week
    House does not act
  - 1981 House extends for a shorter time
    but Senate does not act and again in 1983
    no bill
  - 1985 Rep Markey (D-Mass) introduces
    bill extending DST from third Sunday in
    March to first Sunday in November.

DST

- The Markey bill was approved in subcommittee
  but an amendment reduced the start time to the
  first week in April—this passed 247 to 157 in
  October of 1985
- Senator Gorton (R-Washington) introduced a bill
  extending DST but it was blocked in Commerce
  Committee by Exxon (Neb) and Ford (KY) Why
  were they opposed?
- Gorton got bill passed as a rider to an
  authorization bill but the extra week in November
  was removed.
- Bill passed 58 to 36 but House bill different
  Conference

DST

- The House of Representatives rather than
  go to conference accepted the Senate bill—
  Why?

DST

- Think of the policy as roughly the following

  " SQ

  Extend in Spring    Extend in Fall"
<table>
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<th>DST</th>
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| • The SQ will be hard to move because of opposition and it is always harder to change something than to keep it the same SQ are there for a reason  
• There were a number of interests out there who were in favor of extending DST but they were unorganized and they had to shift the SQ  
• We now turn to groups in favor of extending DST | • Interest Groups will have a desire to affect legislation if the benefits of the bill exceed the costs –  
• the benefits in this case are extending DST increases sales and profits while the costs would be how much effort you have to expend to get the bill passed  
• Thus if you could sell two thousand dollars more stuff but it would cost you five thousand to attempt to get bill passed costs would exceed benefits thus no action. |
| • Which Groups would care about DST and why?  
• Barbeque Industry Association  
  – Estimated an increase of 56 million in charcoal briquettes and 15 million in starter fluid  
• American Nurseymen’s Association  
• Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association  
  – Golf - 7 million more on clubs and balls plus 4 million more rounds  
  – Tennis balls and racquets – 7 million | • Hardee’s estimated 800 dollars per store per week  
• 7-11 –30 million annually  
• Chocolate Manufacturing Association  
• National Candy Brokers Association  
• National Confectioners Association  
  – Previous three only care about fall extension  
• RP Foundation fighting blindness –400,000 members with night blindness |
DST
• Note that in some cases the direction of the extension mattered

Nurserymen Candy Mfg.

Spring Fall

DST
• Note-In some cases as in RP foundation the support is not economic per se
• Same is true for parents opposing extension
• Wherever there exist moral origins to collective organization the game changes
  – Negotiation becomes more difficult –hard to figure compromise
  – Example of ANWR
  – The process will take longer and losing is harder as in abortion politics

DST
• In regard to demand there are
  – Substitutes
  – Magnitude of effect
  – Per capita effects

DST
• In regard to supply of action there are
  – Numbers of members
  – Resources
  – Cost of organizing

DST
• What prohibits these groups pro and anti from getting together
• Two components: one, the desire to act: two, the ability to act or economically the demand to act and the supply of political action

Diagram: Group A

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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>Action</td>
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Diagram: Group B
DST

- Examples: Unions = money and numbers and no cost to organize, doctors = money and prestige, small business = numbers money and no cost to organize
- Consumers = numbers, potentially money but high cost to organize
- Ideological groups of left and right have money desire and time and are organized
- Over the last two decades there has been huge growth in interest groups

DST

- The pro extension groups here were unorganized until the 1984-85 time period.
- They hired a coordinator who put together the various interests and made necessary trade-offs
  - Substitution for daylight radio stations
- They provided relevant information to groups which allowed them to identify relationships and consequences
  - SOLVED FREE RIDER PROBLEMS

DST

- Information allowed legislators to better assess the different views
  - Note the facts will always be disputed in politics and motives will always be stated in the positive
- The groups favoring extension needed to coordinate and provide relevant information to like minded groups thus coordinating the effort to pass legislation - when they did this they overwhelmed the pro SQ forces

DST

- The legislation may be seen as the following

Gorton Markey

Weeks of extension →
DST

- If there were only two alternatives q and M then the vote would be over preferences for either – since any number of weeks extension could be proposed the House took the Senate bill as the best they could get.
- The institutional incentives and arrangements affected the results
  - Smaller Senate size over represents rural states
  - Committee assignments make a difference
  - House and Senate differences have to go to Conference Committee – forces Senate policy

DST

- Summary: Even a simple act like DST is characterized by interest groups pushing different views on issues
- The number and variety of interest groups is astounding
- The motives of the actors are almost always disguised while the incentives are easier to grasp
- Institutional arrangements affect public policy results