

I am an attorney in Mercer County. Our office opens at 8:00 am, Mountain Time. Law offices in Bismarck/Mandan and Minot, where most of the attorneys I deal with are located are on Central Time and already have been open for an hour. They have been unable to contact me for the first hour of their day. All the judges are chambered in Bismarck/Mandan and we have also missed an hour during which we could have been communicating. At 11:00 am Mountain time, the same offices in the surrounding cities close for an hour for lunch. When they reopen, it is lunch time here. Two more hours are lost. At 4:00 pm Mountain time, our office closes because the offices in the cities have closed and there is no point in staying open. Four hours of communication with the cities of Bismarck/Mandan and Minot are lost each day.

Mercer County shares 911 dispatch services with Oliver County, which operates on Central time. Miscommunication due to the time difference raises the potential for harm to the populace.

At the public hearing, some people in the agricultural industry voiced opposition to the time change because it would somehow interfere with their operations. I grew up on a farm in the Central Time Zone, about 60 miles east of here. We worked when we needed to work. The clock had nothing to do with our hours. The Central Time Zone north of here extends west to the Montana border, about 200 miles. There has never been any action from the people in the Northwest part of the state to change from Central to Mountain time.

The people from the energy industry that voiced opposition said they liked the extra hour for shopping and to spend with their children. They want the benefit of working on Central time regardless of the inconvenience of the people who must work on mountain time.