at least 5 years before the enactment of the law, have good moral character, graduate from high school or obtain a GED, and complete 2 years of college or military service in good standing.

Having been brought by their parents to the United States as children, these young men and women know America as their home. Without question, DREAM students exemplify the best of American ideals, such as hard work, perseverance, and the desire to contribute to our Nation's workforce, economy, and civic life.

In the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, DREAM students have excelled in school and have become valedictorians, Advanced Placement Scholars, and student leaders, despite facing difficult circumstances.

As ranking member for the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, I have no doubt that the DREAM students can help America achieve President Obama's ambitious high school and college completion goals by the year 2020. Many of these students are working tirelessly to earn their high school and college diplomas and aspire to become professionals in the sectors of our workforce which need their talent, skills, and ingenuity.

In the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, better known as STEM, our country must train a new generation of high-skilled scientists, engineers, and mathematicians to bolster scientific discovery and spur technological innovation. Simply stated, these talented youth can help our Nation increase its global competitiveness and be the innovators of tomorrow.

Finally, it's important to note that the DREAM Act has enjoyed broad, bipartisan support from Members of Congress and Administration officials on both sides of the aisle. They include Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Carlos Gutierrez, former Secretary of Commerce under President Bush.

Chancellors and university presidents and thousands of students, civil rights groups, and prominent education, business, religious leaders, and elected officials support the DREAM Act because it is humane and sensible. It's the right thing to do.

THE PLUNDER OF COLFAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. In the Sierra foothills in northeastern California lies the little town of Colfax, a population of 1,800, with a median household income of about $35,000. Over the last several years, this little town has been utterly plundered by regulatory and litigatory excesses that have pushed this little town to the edge of bankruptcy and ravaged families already struggling to make ends meet.

You see, Colfax operates a small wastewater treatment plant for its residents that discharges into the Smuthers Ravine. Because it does so, it operates within the provisions of the Clean Water Act, a measure adopted in 1972 and rooted in legitimate concerns to protect our vital water resources. The problem is that predatory environmental law firms have now discovered how to take unconscionable advantage of that law to reap windfall profits at the expense of working-class families like the townspeople of Colfax.

In the case of Colfax, an environmental law firm demanded every document pertaining to the water treatment plant from the date of its inception. It then pored over those documents looking for any possible violations, including mere paperwork errors. By law, those documents include self-monitoring reports by the water agency itself, and any violation, no matter how minor, establishes a cause of action for which the law provides no affirmative defense, even if the violation is due to factors completely beyond the local community's control, including acts of God and acts by unrelated and uncontrollable third parties. Prove one such violation—and remember, the law allows for no affirmative defense—and you've just guaranteed the attorneys all of their fees, which in this case were billed at $550 per hour.

As a result of this predatory activity, the town of Colfax is facing legal fees alone that exceed the town's entire annual budget. Families that are struggling to keep afloat just above the poverty level are fleeced by attorneys charging $550 an hour. But that's just part of the problem.

The law requires constant upgrading of facilities to meet ever-changing state-of-the-art regulations that have nothing to do with health and safety and with absolutely no concern for the prohibitive costs involved. In fact, Colfax is now required to discharge water certifiably cleaner than the natural stream water into which it is discharged. In Colfax's case, this required a $15 million expenditure, divided among 800 working-class residents, who are now paying $2,500 per year just for their water connections. And once the town has met the standard, there's no guarantee that in 5 years it won't be told, Sorry, the rules have changed and you'll need to start over.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to restore some form of rationality back to this law and to stop the plunder of small towns like Colfax. And Colfax isn't alone. Any community that operates a wastewater treatment plant is in the same jeopardy.

No one disputes that we need to maintain and enforce sensible and cost-effective protections of our precious water resources; but legitimate environmental protections must no longer be used as an excuse for regulatory extremism and litigatory plundering of our local communities.

Today, I'm introducing legislation to offer six reforms to protect other communities from going through the same nightmare as the people of Colfax:

First, to limit private-party lawsuits to issues of significant noncompliance rather than harmless paperwork errors;

Second, to shield local agencies from liability for acts that are beyond their control;

Third, to give local agencies 60 days to cure a violation before legal action can be initiated;

Fourth, to allow communities to amortize the cost of new facilities over a period of 15 years before new requirements can be heaped on them;

Fifth, to require a cost-benefit analysis before new regulations can be imposed;

Sixth, to limit attorney fees to the prevailing fees of the community.

Like many movements, the impetus for stronger environmental protection of our air and water was firmly rooted in legitimate concerns to protect these vital resources; but like so many movements, as it succeeded in its legitimate ends, it also attracted a self-interested constituency that has driven far past the borders of common sense and into the realms of political extremism and outright plunder. I'm hopeful that we're now entering an era when common sense can be restored to environmental law in this session of the Congress.

PILOT FATIGUE RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. In February 2009, tragedy struck western New York when Continental Connection Flight 3407 crashed outside of Buffalo. The National Transportation Safety Board found that one of the principal causes of the crash was pilot fatigue, so Congress passed landmark aviation legislation to reform the system.

One of the key provisions required that the Federal Aviation Administration update flight and duty time rules and set minimum rest requirements for airline pilots by August 1, 2011. Congressional intent was clear. That should have been enough time. After all, the National Transportation Safety Board had urged that pilot fatigue rules be updated for the past 20 years.

Getting it right is also about getting it done. Yet here we are today, 16 months after Congress asked the Federal Aviation Administration to issue these reforms and 4 months past the deadline we gave them, and still no pilot fatigue rule.

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That is unacceptable to me, that is unacceptable to my colleagues from western New York, and it is unacceptable to the flying public.

I urge the Federal Aviation Administration to complete the pilot fatigue rule immediately.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.