



April 11, 2019

The Honorable Lynne Patton
Region II Administrator
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Jacob K. Javits Federal Building
26 Federal Plaza, Room 3541
New York, NY 10278-0068

Re: The Boy Crisis

Dear Administrator Patton:

We write to you about a matter unrelated to your current portfolio of responsibilities. We do so because in your relatively short tenure at HUD you have remarkably demonstrated the admirable trait of empathy, particularly with respect to your work addressing the abysmal living conditions amongst NYCHA residents. It is because of that trait we are reaching out to you, hoping that a strong, smart and well-respected woman can instigate the creation of an entity that can help the young men of this country.

If you would, please consider the following statistics:

- Between the ages of 10 and 14, boys commit suicide at almost twice the rate as girls.
- Between the ages of 15 and 19, boys commit suicide at four times the rate of girls.
- Between the ages of 22 and 24, male suicide is five and six times that of females.
- More black boys between the ages of 10 and 20 are killed by homicide than by the next nine leading causes of death combined.
- While the rate of obesity amongst adolescent girls has stabilized, the rate for boys is increasing.
- Young men have gone from 61 percent obtaining a college degree to a projected 39 percent.
- Our sons are twice as likely as our daughters to be killed by accident.
- We are less likely to read to our sons.
- Women constitute 75 percent of those who seek professional help to prevent suicide; men constitute 75 percent of those who actually do commit suicide.

We could go on. And on. And on. In fact, there are 70 different metrics which demonstrate the undeniable truth that a boy crisis exists in America. Worldwide, boys are 50 percent less likely than girls to meet basic proficiency in reading, math, and science. A third of boys are raised in father-absent homes. In 1920, American males lived on average only one year less than females; today it is five years less -- yet federal offices for boys' and men's health are non-existent.

A boy crisis.

Not coincidentally, *The Boy Crisis*, written by Warren Farrell, Ph.D., an award-winning author, a former board member of the National Organization for Women, and who in 2009 was invited by President Barack Obama's White House to be a leading adviser of what was planned to be an advisory board to a White House Council on Girls and Women.

His book has profoundly impacted us - so much so that we were motivated to reach out to you directly for help. Simply put, Dr. Farrell wants to do for boys and men that which has been done for girls and women. We strongly concur. We, therefore, write seeking your help in having President Donald Trump issue an Executive Order creating a White House Council on Boys and Men.

In *The Boy Crisis*, Dr. Farrell writes, "A White House Council on Boys and Men could search for programs around the world that have most successfully turned father absence into father presence, by training both parents to integrate dad whenever possible, and, when father absence is necessary, how and when to integrate male teachers, mentors, and programs - such as scouting. It could look for the best approaches to paternity leave, veteran reintegration, and so on."

He continues with this critical point: "But most important, a White House Council on Boys and Men could catalyze a cultural shift from our current dismissive shrug of the boy crisis. It would publicize the problem and also lend it credibility, not just in the United States, but worldwide."

In establishing a White House Council on Boys and Men, we are seeking a short-term investment that will yield long-term savings, which Dr. Farrell estimates could be about a trillion dollars a year. How? He points out that more than 90% of mass shooters, ISIS recruits, and male prisoners are dad-deprived. As he writes in his book, "Next to war, nothing calls for the presence of government more than the absence of dad. And nothing limits the need for the presence of government more than the presence of dad."

President Obama deserves credit for considering the creation of a Council on Girls and Women in 2009. After Dr. Farrell was called to solicit his help, he implored President Obama to immediately create a separate Council on Boys and Men. The idea was never nixed by President Obama *per se*, but apparently top aide Valerie Jarret rejected the idea.

By the way, did you know that with the Affordable Care Act (ACA), women can get free flu shots? Great! Men, not so much. It's but one small example within Obamacare of such patently absurd inequities, such that Dr. Farrell points out that while "the ACA itself makes gender discrimination illegal...it is in violation of its own law."

Lastly, consider the existing mindset within some circles. Dr. Farrell points out that when "the National Association on Social Workers studies suicides, they study only female suicide. When social worker Tom Golden asked why, he was told by the executive director that it was because the funding only allowed the study of girls." There's more. "But wait. What about the American Association of Suicidology? Its executive director lamented, 'As much as I would love to lead the charge (in finding out why boys kill themselves), try to go out and get funding for it.'"

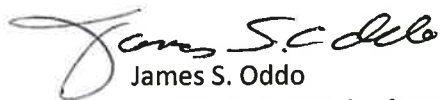
A reminder: between the ages of 13-20, boys' suicide rates soar from equal to that of girls, to five times that of girls.

There is so much more to say, but more importantly, so much more to do. As Fed Chair Jerome Powell recently said on *60 Minutes*, the crisis of young American males is one of the two biggest threats to America's economic future. Yes, that it may be – but we believe it is much more than that.

After all, as Dr. Farrell, and co-author John Gray, Ph.D., succinctly but powerfully assert early in the book, "Whenever only one sex wins, both sexes lose."

Thank you for your kind attention, and we sincerely hope that you will consider our suggestion.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James S. Oddo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being significantly larger and more stylized.

James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Borelli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being significantly larger and more stylized.

Joseph Borelli
Council Member, City of New York