Where Are the Men?

by Phyllis Schlafly December 4, 2009

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights announced in November that it will investigate whether colleges illegally discriminate against women by admitting less qualified men. This is only the latest in a decades-long campaign by the feminist lobby to sell the false propaganda that girls are cheated all through the education system, K through 12.

Colleges used to have a male-female ratio of about 60-40, and suddenly, we've discovered that it's close to 40-60. Colleges don't like this change; men don't like it; women don't like it; but the feminists are bragging about it and plan to use their clout in the government bureaucracy and in the Democratic Party to maintain it.

One of the causes for this dramatic shift is that colleges perceive applications by women to be better than those by men. Another cause seems to be that men don't seem to be as eager to get a college education as women.

We see the results in the granting of degrees. Women receive 58 percent of bachelor's degrees in four-year colleges, 62 percent in community colleges, and graduate degrees are headed in the same direction.

Those who worry about the continuation of American exceptionalism are concerned because, if they have the courage to face reality, they know that women and men follow different paths both in and after college. Many more men than women drop out before graduation, and women receive only about a fifth of bachelor's degrees in engineering, physics, or computer science.

After college, men and women make different choices, too. Women don't take the risks necessary for business start-ups or for business ownership, or choose the social isolation of technical laboratories, in anywhere near the proportion of men.

But why is it that women knock at the college admissions office with higher high-school grade-point averages, better essays, and even a bigger variety of extracurricular activities than men? Fewer boys manifest significant interest in academic achievement or aspirations to walk through the doors that a college degree can open.

Even the Wall Street Journal calls this the "boy mystery" that "nobody has solved." We should respond with the famous line attributed to Sherlock Holmes, it's "elementary, my dear Watson."

We can even claim a double entendre for the word elementary. The reason is obvious, and the causes originated in elementary school.

The ultra-feminist American Association of University Women (AAUW) issued a report in 1992 called How Schools Shortchange Girls. It claimed "findings" that teachers focused their attention on boys, neglected girls, and discouraged girls from taking important math and science courses.

The AAUW report was a lie that started real discrimination against boys and young men plus government spending to address a non-existent problem. The AAUW report was fully debunked by researcher Christina Hoff Sommers, who proved that feminist claims that girls are shortchanged in school are "riddled with errors" and not "published in peer-reviewed professional journals."

Elementary schools are not only ruled by females; they are dominated by feminists who make school unpleasant for boys from the get-go. Fewer than ten percent of

elementary school teachers are men, giving boys the distinct impression that school is not for them.

Elementary school teachers used to understand that boys will be boys, but teachers now look upon boys as just unruly girls. Feminists manifest hostility to males and to masculine traits such as competitiveness and aggressiveness, and instead reward typical female behaviors such as non-assertiveness and group cooperation.

Schools cannot make gender go away by pretending that boys do not have an innate masculinity, or by trying to suppress it with ridiculous zero-tolerance punishments, banning sports such as dodge ball and tag, and allowing only playground games without winners.

Five- and six-year-old boys are not as able or willing as little girls to sit quietly at a desk and do neat work with pencil and paper. Even worse is the appalling fact that first-grade kids are not taught how to read phonetically, and the assigned stories are mostly about topics of interest to girls not boys.

It's no wonder that boys are more likely to have academic or behavior problems, repeat a grade, get suspended, be enrolled in special education programs, or become involved in drugs, alcohol or crime. Little boys make the calculation that school (and college) is not an environment where they want to remain.

The solution to the college 40-60 male-female problem is certainly not to let the feminist bureaucrats force colleges to admit an even higher percentage of women. One solution is for colleges to be told (by regulation or statute) that a 50-50 male-female ratio is not, by definition, "sex discrimination."