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The potential of the CHIPS and Science Act for rural America

Hidden among the \$52 billion of investments allocated in the CHIPS and Science Act are landmark provisions in place-based policy, which are designed to enable a much wider array of communities across America to participate in, and reap the benefits of, the changing economy. Tony Pipa and Zoe Swarzenski explain how the legislation provides a unique opportunity to support rural America.

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Book spotlight: 'Of Boys and Men'

This week, Brookings Senior Fellow Richard Reeves published his latest book, "Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do about It." We asked Reeves some questions about his process of writing the book and about public policy around this issue. Check out his answers below and [order your copy today](#).

What inspired you to write this book?

I'm not sure if inspired is the right word, honestly! It was more like I felt obliged to write it. I've raised three boys to adulthood, so that was certainly a factor—I think all scholarship is at least a little bit autobiographical, whether we admit it or not. But the main reason is that as I was working on issues of inequality, especially in terms of race and social class, I kept stumbling across a gender story that often ran contrary to the general impression, and often to my own preconceptions. The boys and men I am most worried about are the ones lower down the economic and social ladder.

Most men are not part of the elite, and even fewer boys are destined to take their place. I became convinced that a specific focus on boys and men is needed to tackle many of the social and economic problems in our country.

While writing the book, what did you discover that surprised you or was counter to your expectations?

I was really surprised to discover how many policy interventions are much more effective for girls and women than for boys and men. The one that first caught my eye was a free college program in Kalamazoo, Michigan, which increased college completion rates among women by 50%—and that's a massive impact—but which did not move the needle for men at all. Once I started looking, I found dozens of programs that benefit girls and women, but not boys and men. In isolation, this gender gap might be seen as a quirk of a specific initiative. But it is a repeated pattern. So, not only are many boys and men struggling, but they are also less likely to be helped by policy interventions. This issue is barely being discussed, let alone addressed.

What would you say to those who argue that we don't really need to focus on boys and men in public policy?

I'd say: first, look at the data. Men are at three times a higher risk from “deaths of despair” than women. There's a bigger gender gap in college today than in 1972, when Title IX was passed—but the other way round. One in four Black boys are repeating a grade before finishing high school. Most men today earn less than most men did in 1979. Of course, there are plenty of examples of gender inequalities running the other way. But it is possible to hold two thoughts in our head at the same time: to be passionate for women's rights, but compassionate about the plight of many men.

For related research, see the [Boys and Men Project](#).

