




## PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

**Katie Berger**  
**Professional Staff Member**  
**Committee on Education and Labor**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**



Katie Berger is a Professional Staff Member on the higher education team for the House Committee on Education and Labor majority. Prior to joining the Committee, Katie was a senior policy analyst for higher education at The Education Trust, where she developed and advanced policies in support of a more equitable system of postsecondary education. While at The Education Trust, Katie published and presented on topics including college access and affordability, free college programs, and degree attainment goals, and led the organization's work on financial aid, student debt, and the expansion of evidence-based practices. Prior to joining Ed Trust, Katie spent five years as a coordinator for federal relations at The University of Texas System. Katie also worked as the Public Policy Coordinator at the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), where she represented high school counselors and college admission officers and advocated for policies aimed at improving college access and success for underserved students. A native Texan, Katie received her bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at Austin with majors in Government and Plan II Honors.

**Martha Kanter**  
**Executive Director**  
**College Promise Campaign**  
 [@marthakanter](#) [@College\\_Promise](#)



Dr. Martha Kanter leads the College Promise Campaign, a national initiative to increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion in American higher education, starting in America's community colleges. She is also a Senior Fellow at New York University's Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy. She specializes in policy efforts to identify and apply innovative, evidence-based education interventions, financing models, and behavioral incentives to raise America's high school and college graduation rates. From 2009-2013, Dr. Kanter served as the U.S. Under Secretary of Education, overseeing all federal postsecondary education programs. From 1993-2009, she was president of De Anza College and then chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District in Silicon Valley, California. She began her career as an alternative high school teacher in Lexington, MA. Dr. Kanter holds a B.A. degree in Sociology from Brandeis University, an M.Ed. from Harvard University, and an Ed.D. from the University of San Francisco.



American Youth  
Policy Forum



**Alyssa Ratledge**

**Research Analyst**

**MDRC**

 **@MDRC\_News**



Alyssa Ratledge joined MDRC in 2012. As a research analyst in MDRC's Postsecondary Education policy area, she works closely with community colleges, technical colleges, and open- and broad-access institutions to implement and evaluate programs for low-income students. Her primary areas of focus are developmental (remedial) education and financial aid programs. She has coauthored MDRC reports for several studies in postsecondary education, and she is the project manager for the Detroit Promise Path evaluation and the College Promise Success Initiative. Ratledge holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Brown University.

**Alex Ricci**

**Professional Staff Member**

**Committee on Education and Labor Republicans**

**U.S. House of Representatives**



Alex Ricci joined the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor in 2014. In his role as a Professional Staff Member, Alex specializes in higher education policy with a specific focus on student aid and helping students access and complete postsecondary education with the skills they need for lifelong success.



American Youth  
Policy Forum



**Monica M. Rodriguez**

**Director of Children and Youth Services**

**City of Detroit Mayor's Office**



Monica Rodriguez is the manager for the Detroit Promise Path, a student success initiative for students participating in the Detroit Regional Chamber's Detroit Promise program. Rodriguez has been with the Detroit Promise through its initial approach as a tool for college access, to its evolution as a respondent to student success.

Before joining the Chamber in 2013, Rodriguez worked as a high school teacher for high-risk and adjudicated youth. Rodriguez earned her bachelor's degree in organizational communication from the University of Southern California while working at a local educational nonprofit. After graduating, she returned home to metro Detroit to continue her education at the University of Michigan, earning a master's degree in urban pedagogy.