

***Ally Bernstein-Talcott, Principal & Co-Owner, Step Up Advocacy***

Ally is an expert in coalition building and management, federal education policy, direct lobbying, and bringing diverse groups together to advance shared policy goals. All of Ally's work on behalf of her clients is centered around a mission to close the equity gaps across all sectors of the education system, which disproportionately impact underserved students and families, especially those of color, in low-income communities.

In 2016, Ally brought a wide array of organizations together to form the [Title IV-A Coalition](#), an organization that advocates for maximum funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE), the flexible block grant under Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under her leadership and guidance, she successfully lobbied Capitol Hill on behalf of a diverse group of education nonprofits that make up the Title IV-A Coalition and helped raise funding for the program from \$400 million to \$1.1 billion in just one year. She currently serves as their Executive Director and strongly advocates for continued investments for safe and healthy students, well-rounded education programs, and the effective use of technology. Additionally, Ally's work on behalf of the National Summer Learning Association ([NSLA](#)) to ensure every child, especially those in marginalized communities, has access to high quality summer programs, youth workforce programs, and nutritious summer meals underscores her commitment to supporting the most vulnerable children. Lastly, Ally's dedication to advancing policies that promote a \$100 billion investment to rebuild America's schools in the highest poverty communities is showcased by her leadership of the [Re]Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition ([BASIC](#)), which is a coalition made up of industries, nonprofits, civic, and education organizations to advance these policy goals. Most recently, Ally helped secure the inclusion of the "Rebuild America's Schools Act" (RASA) in the House's comprehensive infrastructure package, known as HR2, which for the first time in history included a \$130 billion investment in school facilities.

While in law school, Ally Taught 4th and 5th grade students in low-income schools as part of the "Humane Education Program", where she taught social and emotional learning evidence-based programs. At her law school graduation, Ally received the Outstanding Pro Bono Service award for her dedication to community service. She received her Juris Doctorate from Pace University School of Law, her Bachelors degree from Florida State University, and is a member of the Virginia State Bar Association. In addition to her direct lobbying work and coalition building, Ally is an active member of Women in Government Relations ([WGR](#)), served on the Committee for Education Funding ([CEF](#)) board of directors from 2015-2018, and graduated from the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) Washington DC Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP) in 2017.