

# A PUBLIC VOICE 2017

## SAFETY & JUSTICE

**WHO** THE [KETTERING FOUNDATION](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization; THE [NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS NETWORK](#), a network of independent forum moderators and centers for democratic public life; PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, like the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, libraries, interfaith groups, colleges and universities and citizen groups.

**WHAT** IN 1983, KETTERING FOUNDATION BEGAN AN ANNUAL PROGRAM TO COMMUNICATE THE VOICE OF THE PUBLIC TO POLICYMAKERS. Each year, citizens across the country come together in deliberative forums to talk through a tough issue, and Kettering reports insights from these forums to policymakers in several ways: a yearly DC event, briefings, and a final cumulative report on the forums.

SO WHY ARE DELIBERATIVE FORUMS DIFFERENT AND VALUABLE?

1. Forums start from a non-partisan, non-polarizing framework.
2. Forum conversations promote action-oriented, deliberative decision making, not debate.

THIS YEAR'S FRAMEWORK: Obviously, many Americans are concerned that something is going on with violence in communities, law enforcement, and race that is undermining the national ideals of safety and justice for all. After extensive research and testing with citizens across the country about their concerns regarding both safety and justice, Kettering was able to produce a non-partisan, non-polarizing [framework](#) as a starting point for these forums.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A DELIBERATIVE FORUM? A [forum](#) is a conversation amongst community members, usually guided by both a moderator and framework, in which participants:

- examine options for dealing with an issue
- exchange their views and lived experiences
- weigh potential consequences and work through tensions
- identify any areas of common ground.

Because participants talk about what they're willing to give up in order to solve a problem, rather than attempting to win a debate, these forums often produce very different conversations about issues than we're used to seeing in traditional town halls or public meetings.

## WHEN

- 2017: Forums held throughout the country.
- SPRING: May 9, 1:30 – 3 pm ET: The Kettering Foundation hosts a gathering of Congressional and agency staffers in Washington DC. This event will be streamed via Facebook Live and forum participants are highly encouraged to contribute via social media.
- FALL: Kettering and our research partners analyze a variety of different forum reports and data and brief policymakers on insights from the forums.
- WINTER: Kettering publishes a cumulative report on the national conversation for policymakers and all those who participated in the forums.

**WHERE** There are forums in communities across the country, as well as [online forums!](#)

**WHY** BECAUSE THE PUBLIC'S VOICE IS MISSING FROM OUR NATIONAL POLITICS. People don't believe their concerns are taken into proper account by policymakers, and policymakers often worry that the public isn't thinking deeply or weighing the tradeoffs involved in an issue. A Public Voice is designed to stimulate the sound judgment of people all across the country, and to convey that judgment to the policy community.