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5.9.2017 | CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING | WASHINGTON DC

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# A PUBLIC VOICE 2017

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How are people talking about **safety and justice** in their communities?

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## About the Kettering Foundation

The Kettering Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is: what does it take to make democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation.

The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. Guiding Kettering's research are three hypotheses. Kettering's research suggests that democracy requires:

- Responsible citizens who can make sound choices about their future;
- Communities of citizens acting together to address common problems; and
- Institutions with public legitimacy that contribute to strengthening society.

The foundation's small staff and extensive network of associates collaborate with community organizations, government agencies, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Those working on related problems share what they are learning through ongoing research exchanges. As the foundation's learning progresses, Kettering shares its research findings through publications. In addition, Kettering produces materials, including issue guides and starter videos, for the National Issues Forums (NIF). The foundation collaborates with NIF as part of its research efforts.

Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. It is an operating foundation headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, with offices in Washington, DC. For more information, call 800-221-3657 or visit the foundation's website at [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org).

## About the National Issues Forums

The National Issues Forums (NIF) is a network of organizations that bring together citizens around the nation to talk about pressing social and political issues of the day. Thousands of community organizations, including schools, libraries, churches, civic groups, and others, have sponsored forums designed to give people a public voice in the affairs of their communities and their nation.

Forum participants engage in deliberation, which is simply weighing options for action against things held commonly valuable. This calls upon them to listen respectfully to others, sort out their views in terms of what they most value, consider courses of action and their disadvantages, and seek to identify common ground for action.

Issue guides are designed to frame and support these deliberations. They present varying perspectives on the issues at hand, suggest actions to address identified problems, and note the trade-offs of taking those actions to remind participants that all solutions have costs as well as benefits.

In this way, forum participants move from holding individual opinions to making collective choices as members of a community—the kinds of choices from which public policy may be forged or public action may be taken, on community as well as national levels.

For more information, visit the National Issues Forums Institute website at [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org).

## About A Public Voice

For more than 30 years, the Kettering Foundation has organized A Public Voice, which brings together policymakers and practitioners of deliberative democracy from around the country to discuss insights from citizen deliberations.

A Public Voice 2017 focuses on an issue important to all Americans: safety and justice. After extensive research and testing with citizens around the country, the Kettering Foundation prepared an issue guide for the National Issues Forums: *Safety and Justice: How Should Communities Reduce Violence?* Citizen deliberations using the issue guide are taking place throughout 2017 in public forums around the country. In these public forums, citizens consider the options for dealing with a problem, share their views, and weigh the costs and benefits of possible actions. Forums are held both online and face-to-face, typically last 90 minutes, and attract participants of all ages from all walks of life.

## What is A Public Voice?

Deliberative forums yield insights about public thinking that are different from polling data. Polling provides snapshots about public thinking that, when looked at together, produce a picture that can seem incoherent. Public opinion surveys show a public that often appears uninformed, contradictory, unwilling to make choices, easily manipulated, and quickly polarized. But in deliberative forums, citizens come together, exchange views authentically but civilly, weigh the nuances and trade-offs of particular potential solutions, and move toward a truly sound judgment on the issue. From these forums, policymakers can get a considered, seasoned judgment that reflects a knowledge based on the interaction of citizens, not off-the-cuff answers to a quickly posed question.

# A PUBLIC VOICE 2017

How are people talking about safety and justice in their communities?

# Agenda

**1:00 PM Registration, Doors Open**

**1:30 PM Lunch Is Served**

## **Introductions and Opening Remarks**

Gail Leftwich Kitch, NIFI Board Member, Executive Vice President,  
Communications and Finance, at the Voter Participation Center

## **Tabletop Discussions**

National Issues Forums moderators and leaders from locations around the country will describe the deliberative quality of the forums—how forum participants were weighing safety and justice, what key tensions and trade-offs emerged in the deliberations, and anything else policymakers would like to know about these kinds of conversations.

## **Insights from the Forums**

Key takeaways from across the forums, with additional input from other forum moderators and participants from around the country via social media, plus how policymakers can connect with the deliberative democracy network to convene, observe, and/or be briefed on future forums.

## **Closing Remarks**

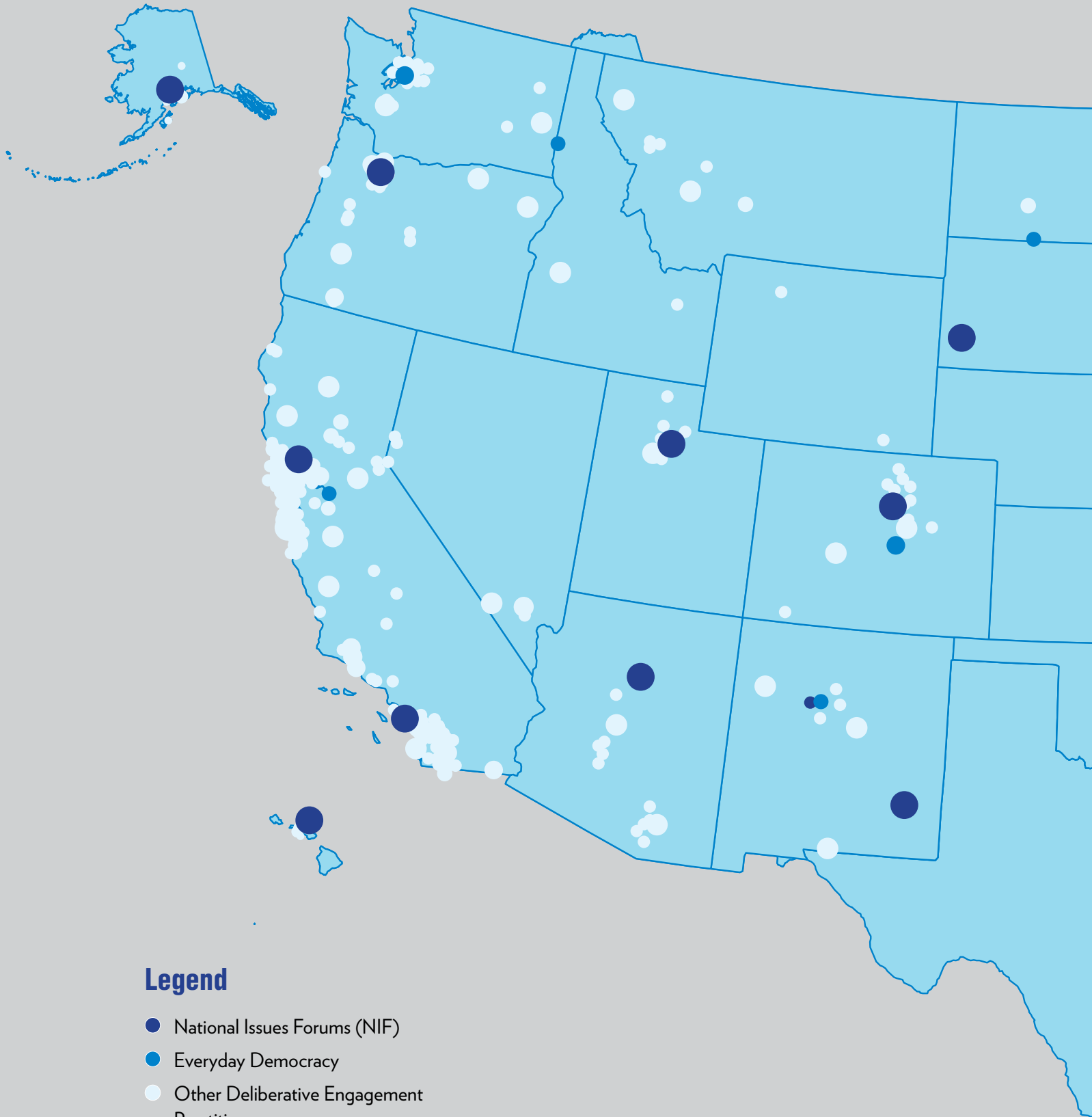
David Mathews, President, Kettering Foundation

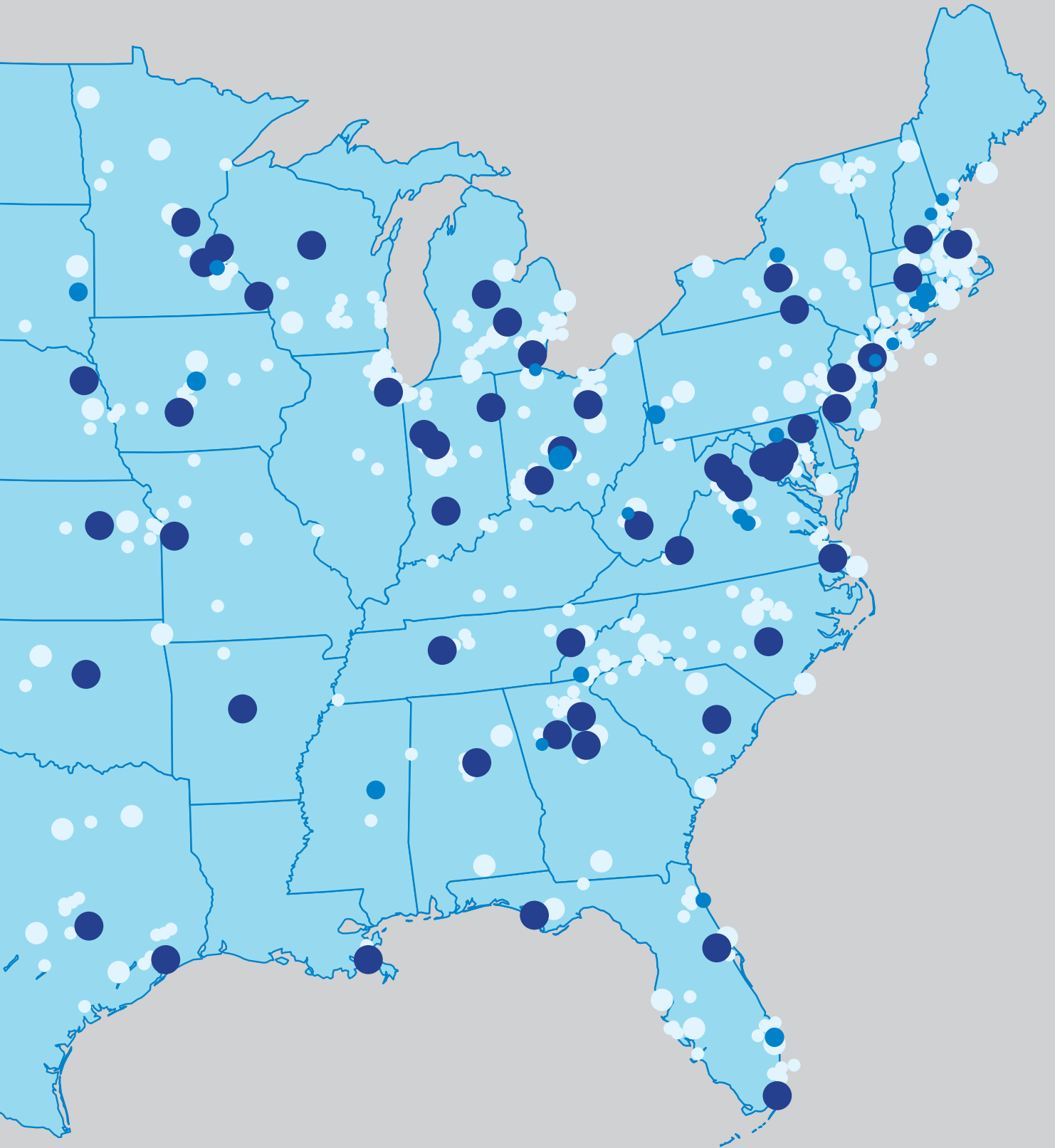
**3:00 PM Depart**

# Deliberative Forums In Communities. In Your District. Across the Country.

| <b>LOCATION</b>              | <b>DATES</b>                                   |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b><u>Alabama</u></b>        |  |
| Auburn . . . . .             | March 2  |
| Birmingham . . . . .         | February 17, 18, 28; March 18                  |
| Center Point . . . . .       | March 3  |
| Columbiana . . . . .         | February 11                                    |
| Fairfield . . . . .          | February 21                                    |
| Montevallo . . . . .         | February 27                                    |
| Selma . . . . .              | Summer 2017                                    |
| Tuscaloosa . . . . .         | January 30, 31                                 |
| <b><u>Arizona</u></b>        |  |
| Flagstaff . . . . .          | March 6, 27                                    |
| <b><u>California</u></b>     |  |
| San Diego . . . . .          | March 9  |
| Valencia . . . . .           | March 3; May 19                                |
| <b><u>Colorado</u></b>       |  |
| Denver . . . . .             | April 6  |
| <b><u>Connecticut</u></b>    |  |
| Bloomfield . . . . .         | May 4  |
| <b><u>Florida</u></b>        |  |
| Jacksonville . . . . .       | February 1, 5, 7, 16, 25                       |
| Jacksonville Beach . . . . . | March 8  |
| Miami . . . . .              | March 29                                       |
| Panama City . . . . .        | February 1, 2, 8, 23; March 9                  |
| <b><u>Georgia</u></b>        |  |
| Savannah . . . . .           | February 20                                    |
| <b><u>Hawaii</u></b>         |  |
| Honolulu . . . . .           | March 9  |
| <b><u>Indiana</u></b>        |  |
| Bloomington . . . . .        | April 4  |
| Crawfordsville . . . . .     | February 23                                    |
| Gary . . . . .               | April 21                                       |
| Indianapolis . . . . .       | April 11                                       |
| South Bend . . . . .         | March 21                                       |
| <b><u>Kansas</u></b>         |  |
| Johnson County . . . . .     | May 4  |
| Kansas City . . . . .        | March 13                                       |
| Manhattan . . . . .          | February 20, 22;<br>March 10, 14, 17; April 11 |
| Salina . . . . .             | March 8, 27, 28, 30                            |
| Wichita . . . . .            | March 16                                       |
| <b><u>Kentucky</u></b>       |  |
| Highland Heights . . . . .   | March 10                                       |
| <b><u>Louisiana</u></b>      |  |
| Homer . . . . .              | March 25; April 1, 4, 5                        |
| New Orleans . . . . .        | March 9, 14                                    |
| <b><u>Maryland</u></b>       |  |
| Baltimore . . . . .          | March 9, 19, 23; Summer 2017                   |
| Dundalk . . . . .            | March 23                                       |

| <b>LOCATION</b>   | <b>DATES</b>   |
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| <b><u>Massachusetts</u></b>   |  |
| Boston . . . . .  | March 22   |
| Framingham . . . . .  | Summer 2017  |
| Greenfield . . . . .  | February 23  |
| Randolph . . . . .  | May 6  |
| Salem . . . . .   | March 6  |
| <b><u>Michigan</u></b>  |  |
| Detroit . . . . .   | March 16, 18; Summer 2017  |
| <b><u>Mississippi</u></b>   |  |
| Cleveland . . . . .   | November 2016; March 7, 9;<br>November 2                               |
| Starkville . . . . .  | March 26   |
| <b><u>Missouri</u></b>  |  |
| Kansas City . . . . .   | March 15   |
| <b><u>New Hampshire</u></b>   |  |
| Rindge . . . . .  | March 28; April 3  |
| <b><u>New York</u></b>  |  |
| Binghamton . . . . .  | March 28; April 20, 25, 26; May  |
| New York . . . . .  | March 16, 21; April 3, 22, 24, 28;<br>May 4, 11, 19, 26                |
| Sound Beach . . . . .   | March 21   |
| Windsor . . . . .   | March 3  |
| <b><u>North Carolina</u></b>  |  |
| Salisbury . . . . .   | March 13   |
| <b><u>Ohio</u></b>  |  |
| Ashland . . . . .   | March 21   |
| Dayton . . . . .  | January 28; February 12; March 2,<br>14, 27; April 3, 4, 6, 18, 19, 21 |
| Fairborn . . . . .  | February 22  |
| Wilberforce . . . . .   | March 6  |
| <b><u>South Carolina</u></b>  |  |
| Aiken . . . . .   | February 18  |
| Charleston . . . . .  | Early March 2017   |
| Sumter . . . . .  | February 11  |
| <b><u>Texas</u></b>   |  |
| El Paso . . . . .   | March 28; April 4; May   |
| Round Rock . . . . .  | March 10   |
| <b><u>Virginia</u></b>  |  |
| Harrisonburg . . . . .  | February 6, 23   |
| <b><u>Washington</u></b>  |  |
| Seattle . . . . .   | March 6  |
| <b><u>Common Ground for Action</u></b>  |  |
| Fifteen online Common Ground for Action forums have been held so far in 2017; more are scheduled in the fall. |  |







*Kettering*  
Foundation



[www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org) | [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org)