FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 21, 2017

Contact:
Maggie Osborn, Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers
202-386-6426, maggie@givingforum.org

Philanthropy Leaders Urge Congress to Strengthen Charitable Giving

WASHINGTON, DC — More than 250 philanthropy leaders from across the nation are gathering on Capitol Hill starting today to urge lawmakers to value and strengthen charitable giving in America. Their meetings are part of Foundations on the Hill, a multi-day event presented by the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers in partnership with the Council on Foundations and the Alliance for Charitable Reform.

“This is an important opportunity for foundations to engage members of Congress and their staffs about the vital role of philanthropy to help their constituents every day by building thriving communities, creating jobs, helping children succeed in school, supporting the social safety net and improving lives in countless ways,” said Forum President and CEO David Biemesderfer.

“This is a critical time for the nonprofit sector,” said Vikki Spruill, President and CEO of the Council on Foundations. “Congress is poised to undertake a major re-write of the tax code, which could have an enormous effect on charitable giving in this country. Philanthropy is speaking with a powerful, collective voice to make sure that lawmakers work to strengthen, not diminish, our nation’s strong tradition of charitable giving.”

Participants in Foundations on the Hill are advocating to maintain the full scope and value of the charitable deduction. Individual giving accounted for more than $265 billion given to charities in 2015, according to Giving USA, and more than 80 percent of those charitable dollars are given by taxpayers who itemize and use the charitable deduction. As lawmakers are drafting
tax reform legislation, several provisions have been proposed that alter this tax incentive in ways that could significantly reduce charitable giving.

“Since 1917, the charitable deduction has been a lifeline for communities across America, and a guardrail protecting civil society from government intrusion,” said Adam Meyerson, President of The Philanthropy Roundtable, which oversees the Alliance for Charitable Reform project. “We urge Congress to preserve the full scope and value of the charitable deduction. It is good tax policy that emboldens our country’s long-standing tradition of private charitable giving.”

During their Hill visits, philanthropy leaders are talking with their congressional representatives about several additional tax policy issues that are important to growing charitable giving in our country. These issues include simplifying the private foundation excise tax and allowing IRA charitable rollovers to donor advised funds.

The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers is the largest network serving philanthropy in America, consisting of more than 50 regional and national philanthropy-serving organizations representing more than 7,000 philanthropic organizations. With deep regional roots and a broad nationwide reach, the Forum facilitates effective philanthropy to strengthen communities and improve lives throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.givingforum.org.

An active philanthropic network, the Council on Foundations (www.cof.org), founded in 1949, is a nonprofit leadership association of grantmaking foundations and corporations. It provides the opportunity, leadership, and tools needed by philanthropic organizations to expand, enhance and sustain their ability to advance the common good. With members from all foundation types and sizes, the Council empowers professionals in philanthropy to meet today’s toughest challenges and advances a culture of charitable giving in the U.S. and globally.

The Alliance for Charitable Reform is a project of The Philanthropy Roundtable that educates legislators and policymakers about the central role of private giving in American life and the importance of protecting philanthropic freedom. Its mission is to promote the right of Americans to choose how and where to spend their charitable assets and to defend that right amidst legislative or political processes that weaken it. ACR organized today’s ACR Summit for Leaders, which is part of the programming for Foundations on the Hill. For more information, visit www.philanthropyroundtable.org and acreform.org.

#FOTH17  @givingforum  @COF_  @ACReform

#  #  #