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A Joint Statement from AFP, Feeding America, Independent Sector, Land Trust Alliance, and YMCA of the USA Urging Bipartisan Support for the America Gives More Act

(WASHINGTON, July 16, 2014)— As the leaders of organizations whose networks collectively represent tens of thousands of charities and foundations working across the country, we strongly urge all House Members to vote in favor of H.R. 4719, the “America Gives More Act of 2014,” legislation that will increase charitable giving in the U.S. Enactment of this legislation will have a significant and positive impact on millions of individuals and families in every congressional district who benefit from the programs and services provided by charitable organizations.

Lost in the recent debate surrounding this legislation is the fact that giving incentives in the tax code enable people and businesses to support causes that improve lives and strengthen communities. To that end, H.R. 4719 contains a number of vital provisions that will allow America’s charities to continue serving vulnerable families across the nation.

Specifically, the legislation makes permanent the IRA charitable rollover and enhanced deductions for the donations of food inventory and conservation easements, all of which are currently lapsed. Additionally, the bill would streamline the excise tax on private foundation investment income and extend until April 15 the deadline for taxpayers to make charitable contributions and claim a deduction on their previous year’s tax return.

The charitable giving provisions contained in H.R. 4719 are also an extremely efficient and cost-effective way for the federal government to spur investment in our communities. When an individual in the highest tax bracket donates \$1,000 to charity, the government forgoes just under \$400 in tax revenue. However, communities benefit from the entire \$1,000 gift. Congress is unlikely to find another vehicle that can leverage private spending for community services at better than a 2.5-to-1 ratio.

The charitable giving incentives being considered by the House have encouraged individuals and small businesses to actively support the development and sustainability of our society. They have spurred contributions, for example, to build health centers, develop counseling programs for at-risk youth, provide nutrition assistance to hungry children, conserve land, and offer art therapy for people with developmental disabilities.

The time to make permanent these provisions is now, as America’s charities shoulder increased responsibility in the face of declining government spending on a range of programs and services. Strong bipartisan support from the House of Representatives for H.R. 4719 will underscore our nation’s long-standing commitment to strengthening charities to do the important work of lifting up lives and improving communities.

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Independent Sector is the leadership forum for nonprofits, foundations, and corporations whose member networks collectively represent tens of thousands of organizations locally, nationally, and globally. Learn more at www.independentsector.org.