



The Hearthstone Accord

A FOUNDING CHARTER

Preamble. We hold that every human being has inherent worth; that no group may hold concentrated power; that truth is civic infrastructure; that the future has claims on the present; that our systems shall incline us toward one another rather than against; and that the pursuit of knowledge is an obligation we owe to those not yet born. We establish this Accord not to bind the living to a dead hand, but to hand each generation the roots from which it will grow its own season.

Article I — The Limitation of Power. No person, institution, or group shall accumulate financial, political, military, or informational power beyond the limits this Accord sets. The limits are fixed in the structure, not left to discretion, and are enforced by automatic thresholds and by independent bodies insulated from the power they check; and those bodies are bound by the same limits they impose on others.

Article II — The Separation of Domains. The domains of power shall be kept apart. Financial power shall not purchase political power; political power shall not command the findings of science or the keeping of the record; military power shall answer to civilian governance and never override it. Each domain is financed and held to account through channels the others do not control, and passage between them, whether of persons or of money, is limited and made transparent.

Article III — Subsidiarity. Authority resides at the lowest level competent to exercise it, and rises no higher than it must; the burden of lifting any decision upward falls always on the higher level. The people decide questions of value and of outcome; those with the relevant competence implement the means, accountable to the community they serve. Disputes over which level is competent are settled by an independent adjudicator bound by the standing presumption for the lowest level.

Article IV — The Epistemic Commons. The methods by which the society tells what is true — the scientific method, the honest keeping of statistics and of the historical record, the freedom of inquiry and of the press, and transparent public reasoning — are civic infrastructure: protected, independently funded, and beyond the command of any power. What is protected is the method and its freedom to correct itself, not any official conclusion. No official truth shall be decreed, and no honest inquiry shall be forbidden.

Article V — The Generational Review. Once in each generation the society shall review its own institutions and laws, keeping what serves and revising what does not. The review may redesign any mechanism of this Accord. It may not repeal the core values, which it re-ratifies in its own voice.

Article VI — Money. Money is a medium of exchange and a store of the community's shared effort, not an instrument of extraction. Its creation shall be bounded, transparent, and subject to Article I; the essential rails of payment shall be maintained as neutral public infrastructure, open to all; and no person shall be compelled onto a form of money by which another may switch off their access to the means of exchange.

Article VII — The Commons. The shared inheritances — the air, the waters, the ocean, the living world, and the space beyond the Earth — are held in trust for all who live and all who are yet to come. They are governed as commons at the scale that fits each, neither enclosed as private property nor seized by a central power, and are not drawn down for present use in a manner that robs the generations to come.

Article VIII — Ratification and Amendment. This Accord draws its authority from the free adoption of those who live under it, and keeps that authority only so long as each generation, through the review of Article V, affirms it anew. Its mechanisms are open to amendment by that review; its core values are the root that the review renews but may not tear out.

*The values do not change. The mechanisms may.
Let the fire not go out.*

BUILDING IT OUT · THE SUBSIDIARITY LADDER

Article III is the hardest to build and the easiest to lose, so the Accord names its structure explicitly. Authority is assigned along a ladder of competence:

- the household,
- the block,
- the neighborhood,
- the town or municipality,
- the region,
- the nation,
- and the planetary bodies, which handle only what is genuinely shared by all: the atmosphere, the oceans, pandemics, and the reach into space.

Each rung holds the decisions it is competent to make. Any move upward must justify itself to an independent adjudicator, under a standing presumption for the lowest level. Where an old tier has hollowed out, the adjudicator routes the decision to the nearest level that can actually carry it, not to the one that used to.

A NOTE ON ADOPTION

This charter is not designed to be imposed whole on a nation by a single stroke. It is designed to be grown from the lowest level upward: adopted first where the stakes are survivable and the results are visible — a cooperative, a town, a region — proven there, and widened as it earns trust. A community adopting it need not implement every article at national scale on the first day. It needs only to build, on its own ground and at its own level, structures that honor the roots: to cap the power that pools among its own members, wall its decision domains apart, push its choices down to those who live with them, protect its own means of telling the truth, hold its shared things in trust for its children, and re-examine the whole, deliberately, once a generation.

Begin small. Build on the stone. Let it be seen to work.

Adopted by the free choosing of those who live under it

R. O. Walters



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