

The Weremoot and Wifemoot

The two legislative houses of Hearthsider are the lower *weremoot* and the upper *wifemoot*. The original distinction was not of gender but clerical status. The wifemoot is only open to clergy while the weremoot represents the laity. However, Hearthsider women who want to get into politics usually start out as hearthkeepers, so the weremoot is where the men end up.

Members of the weremoot are elected by the populace (representation is TBD, but likely resembles the US House), and the members of the wifemoot are appointed by the high hearthkeeper.

Under most circumstances, local law supersedes planetary law, and the two moots handle interactions between smaller jurisdictions and international affairs.

The wifemoot has veto power over any legislation proposed by the weremoot. The only way the weremoot can strike down legislation proposed by the upper house is by unanimous vote, with no abstentions.

The compensation of government officials is tied to the minimum wage, meaning the only way to give yourself a raise is to increase the minimum wage. Privately owned companies are similarly restricted in how their boards are compensated.

While the weremoot is home to several political parties, members of the wifemoot swear an oath to be loyal only to the Uncreated Light. Sophonts being sophonts, informal cliques and in-groups tend to form anyway.

Hearthsider's economic structure makes it difficult for international businesses to set up shop. Hearthsider citizens are forbidden to hold a stake in a foreign company, and home-grown companies must either be privately owned or cooperatives. Patent and copyright duration are the lowest of any state at Focus, and fair use laws are similarly broad. This favors the use of what humans would call "open source" solutions.

Residential landlords may not own "discontiguous" plots, meaning if you plan to rent homes or apartments, you may only own a single complex or subdivision. Absenteeism is also illegal, meaning you are required to live among your tenants. Individuals who purchase a home are required to live there for an extended period of time. This is in order to discourage flipping.

Social policy tends to focus on dissuading the enabling of destructive behavior rather than punishing those who engage in the behavior themselves. For example, a drug abuser would most likely have his contraband confiscated and be required to attend recovery sessions if warranted. It probably wouldn't even go on record unless it happened repeatedly. Drug dealers would serve

time, but the most severe punishment would be meted out to those who produce or traffic drugs.

Most social policy making is left to local governments. The City of Eternal Noon is the strictest by far, with no non Claravian religious institutions permitted within its jurisdiction, but an exception is made for Terran faiths after First Contact.

Hearthside grants large swaths of territory to human settlers. Their communities are given much more autonomy over their own affairs compared to the rest of Hearthside, almost to the point of being separate countries. This is mostly due to the difference in lifespan.

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