

# The Principles of Statements of Principle



A guide to writing *effective* and *evocative*  
Statements of Principle for the Synod

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## What is a Statement of Principle?

A Statement of Principle is the most basic form of Judgement that can be raised for the scrutiny of the Imperial Synod. It expresses the opinion or will of an Assembly, typically without any legal power being exercised. A Statement of Principle can be raised by **any Member of the Synod** for the attention of **any Assembly** they are a part of.

## What is the impact of a Statement of Principle?

A Statement of Principle requires a **Lesser Majority** (more votes in favour than against) to be upheld. If this happens, it signifies the opinion of that Assembly and enters the official record as such.

If a Statement of Principle achieves the more difficult **Greater Majority** (more than half of the available votes in favour), then **the Civil Service will distribute it to all relevant congregations:**

- ❖ **General Assembly** statements will be distributed to all congregations in the Empire and beyond
- ❖ **National Assembly** statements will be distributed to all congregations in that nation
- ❖ **Virtue Assembly** statements will be distributed to particularly inclined congregations
- ❖ **Assembly of Nine** statements will be distributed to all Imperial congregations

If such a Statement of Principle carries a message that resounds strongly with an appropriate group, it may have additional consequences. Usually these take the form of **Mandates** where the Civil Service identifies opportunities for the Synod to sway the hearts and minds of Imperial or foreign citizens.

## What makes a Statement of Principle effective?

Many Statements of Principle are written in the hope of **provoking a notable response** that leads to opportunities such as a Mandate. With this in mind, here follows some **key advice** for citizens to consider when crafting such a statement.

**Pick the right Assembly.** Virtue Assembly statements rarely have much of an impact outside of Anvil, because dedicated congregations are uncommon and dispersed throughout the Empire. National Assemblies are powerful at speaking to their own nation and peoples directly associated with them. The General Assembly, and to a lesser extent, the Assembly of Nine, can have a powerful impact on the whole Empire – but only issues of Imperial scale are likely to be suitably aired there.

**Make your message clear.** If you do not, then without a clear call to action or rational basis, not only will the wider citizenry struggle to be moved, but Members of the Synod may well question your statement, making it less likely to achieve a Greater Majority.

**Brevity.** Avoid unnecessary length. If your Judgement takes longer than half a minute to read out, it's probably too long.

**Be reasonable.** A statement calling upon Freeborn to stop lying won't have any effect – we already don't. Similarly, calling upon Freeborn to *start* lying also won't do anything – it's inimical to our culture. A call to action should be something which does not ordinarily happen, but *could*, and which resonates with the people involved in a clear way.

**Get advice.** The Synod is full of Members with thoughts and opinions. Canvassing them on your wording before raising the Judgement can ensure you end up with something people actually want to vote on.

## What makes a Statement of Principle evocative?

Statements of Principle can be powerful enough to sway the opinion and future actions of diverse peoples. They can also be easily ignored. The following advice focuses on making statements interesting and inspiring.

**Know your audience.** Dawnish are swayed by glory and love. The courageous are swayed by facing unwelcome truths and never accepting defeat. Freeborn are not easily moved to charity. Choose themes and words that people will hear.

In that light, **make reference.** Many are moved by reference to Doctrine, the tenets of the Virtues, the tales of Exemplars and Paragons, the words and views of national heroes. Don't go overboard with this though – it's very easy to lose an audience with a sermon.

**Be passionate and direct.** Consider every opportunity to bolster and vivify your language. Saying that a course of action might be *helpful* will evoke little feeling. Calling out another as *the moral imperative of every citizen, vital to collective efforts*, will speak to people's hearts. Try not to mince your words.

**Pick a side.** This is one of the hardest for many to consider, for a great number that attend Anvil are diplomatic, conciliatory sorts who seek to resolve differences. Differences *can* be resolved, but where there are conflicting options, stating both have their merits leads to either everyone agreeing – and thus doing nothing – or disagreeing – and thus doing nothing. If you want something to *happen*, tip the scales. Find your cause and fight for it with your words.