

# OHIO COMMON GROUND

## CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

### Executive Summary

#### Purpose

The Constitutional Charter serves as the highest internal governing document of Ohio Common Ground (OCG). It functions similarly to a constitution, establishing the organization's mission, principles, governance structure, member rights, and distribution of authority.

The Charter exists to ensure that OCG remains a citizen-centered organization that cannot be easily captured by political parties, donors, factions, special interests, or future leadership.

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#### Core Principles

The Charter establishes six foundational principles:

- Member Sovereignty
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Competition
- Independence
- Civil Discourse

These principles guide all governance decisions and organizational activities.

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#### Member Rights

The Charter guarantees Voting Members:

- Voting rights
- Initiative rights
- Recall rights
- Due process protections
- Equal participation rights

- Access to organizational information

These rights are protected from arbitrary restriction.

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## Governance Structure

The Charter establishes a distributed governance model consisting of:

### *Voting Members*

The ultimate source of organizational authority.

### *County Chapters*

Local participation and representation units.

### *State Convention*

Representative assembly of delegates elected through County Chapters.

### *Board of Directors*

Responsible for strategic leadership and organizational oversight.

### *Ombudsman*

Independent member-elected officer responsible for protecting member rights and reviewing complaints and appeals.

### *Governance & Integrity Committee*

Independent Convention-elected oversight body responsible for governance audits, anti-capture protections, conflict reviews, and accountability reporting.

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## Anti-Capture Safeguards

The Charter contains explicit protections against organizational capture, including:

- No governance authority based on donations.
  - No control by political parties or candidates.
  - Independent oversight institutions.
  - Recall rights.
  - Initiative rights.
  - Leadership rotation principles.
  - Transparency requirements.
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## Constitutional Supremacy

The Charter serves as the highest internal authority within OCG.

All Bylaws, Charters, Policies, Manuals, Rules, and Procedures must remain consistent with the Charter.

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## Strategic Purpose

The Charter is designed to ensure that OCG remains a durable, member-governed institution focused on citizen influence, accountability, and civic engagement regardless of future leadership changes.

# OHIO COMMON GROUND

## CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

Attorney Review Draft Version 1

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### PREAMBLE

We, the members of Ohio Common Ground (“OCG”), establish this Constitutional Charter to create a durable, member-governed civic organization dedicated to strengthening self-government, increasing political accountability, encouraging meaningful citizen participation, and advancing the long-term interests of the people of Ohio.

This Charter exists to preserve the mission, principles, and governance structure of OCG against temporary political pressures, factional control, organizational drift, or concentration of authority.

The authority of Ohio Common Ground derives from its members.

All powers exercised by officers, directors, delegates, committees, chapters, employees, and representatives of OCG shall be exercised consistent with this Charter.

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### ARTICLE I

#### NAME, PURPOSE, AND MISSION

##### Section 1.01 Name

The name of this organization shall be Ohio Common Ground (“OCG”).

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##### Section 1.02 Purpose

Ohio Common Ground exists to organize, educate, engage, and empower Ohio citizens through lawful civic participation and accountability-focused public engagement.

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## Section 1.03 Mission

The mission of OCG is to build a durable citizen-centered organization that enables Ohioans to identify shared concerns, develop collective civic influence, and encourage responsive, accountable government.

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## Section 1.04 Organizational Character

OCG is not organized as a political party.

OCG exists as an independent citizen organization dedicated to member participation, accountability, transparency, and civic engagement.

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# ARTICLE II

## CORE PRINCIPLES

The following principles are foundational and shall guide all organizational activities.

### Section 2.01 Member Sovereignty

The members are the ultimate source of authority within OCG.

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### Section 2.02 Accountability

Public officials, organizational leaders, and institutions should remain accountable to those they serve.

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### Section 2.03 Transparency

Transparency shall be favored whenever practical and consistent with privacy, legal obligations, and organizational security.

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### Section 2.04 Competition

Healthy institutions require competition, accountability, and meaningful participation.

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## Section 2.05 Independence

OCG shall remain independent of political parties, candidates, donors, corporations, unions, and outside organizations.

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## Section 2.06 Civil Discourse

Members are encouraged to engage in respectful disagreement while pursuing shared objectives.

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## Section 2.07 Equal Dignity

All members shall be entitled to equal treatment under governing documents.

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# ARTICLE III

## MEMBERSHIP

### Section 3.01 Membership

Membership shall be open to individuals who satisfy requirements established by the Bylaws.

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### Section 3.02 Voting Membership

Voting Members shall possess voting rights established by governing documents.

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### Section 3.03 Membership Rights

Voting Members possess:

- Voting rights;
- Initiative rights;
- Recall rights;

- Participation rights;
  - Due-process rights;
  - Rights established by governing documents.
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## ARTICLE IV

### RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

#### Section 4.01 Equal Participation

Members shall have equal opportunity to participate in organizational affairs.

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#### Section 4.02 Access to Information

Members shall have access to organizational information consistent with governing documents.

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#### Section 4.03 Due Process

Members shall receive due process before significant disciplinary actions.

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#### Section 4.04 Freedom of Opinion

Members shall not be required to adopt ideological positions unrelated to OCG governance or participation.

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#### Section 4.05 Petition Rights

Members may petition for initiatives, reforms, and recalls pursuant to governing documents.

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## ARTICLE V

### STATE CONVENTION

#### Section 5.01 Purpose

The State Convention serves as the representative assembly of OCG.

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#### Section 5.02 Composition

The Convention shall consist of delegates selected pursuant to governing documents.

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#### Section 5.03 Powers

The Convention shall possess powers assigned by this Charter and the Bylaws.

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#### Section 5.04 Responsibilities

The Convention shall:

- Elect designated officials;
  - Consider governance matters;
  - Consider Constitutional amendments;
  - Review reports;
  - Represent county membership interests.
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## ARTICLE VI

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Section 6.01 Purpose

The Board of Directors shall provide strategic leadership and organizational oversight.

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## Section 6.02 Authority

The Board shall possess authority delegated through this Charter and the Bylaws.

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## Section 6.03 Limitations

The Board may not exercise powers reserved to:

- Members;
  - State Convention;
  - Ombudsman;
  - Governance & Integrity Committee.
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## Section 6.04 Fiduciary Duty

Directors owe duties of loyalty, care, and obedience to OCG and its mission.

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# ARTICLE VII

## COUNTY CHAPTERS

### Section 7.01 Local Participation

County Chapters shall serve as local participation units of OCG.

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### Section 7.02 Representation

County Chapters shall provide opportunities for member participation and delegate selection.

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### Section 7.03 Chartering

County Chapters shall operate pursuant to the County Chapter Charter and governing documents.

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## ARTICLE VIII

### INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT INSTITUTIONS

#### Section 8.01 Purpose

Independent oversight institutions are established to protect accountability, transparency, and member rights.

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## ARTICLE IX

### GOVERNANCE & INTEGRITY COMMITTEE

#### Section 9.01 Establishment

A Governance & Integrity Committee (“GIC”) is hereby established.

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#### Section 9.02 Independence

The GIC shall operate independently of the Board.

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#### Section 9.03 Election

Members of the GIC shall be elected by the State Convention.

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#### Section 9.04 Responsibilities

The GIC shall:

- Conduct governance audits;
  - Review conflicts of interest;
  - Monitor anti-capture safeguards;
  - Publish governance findings;
  - Recommend governance reforms.
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## Section 9.05 Minority Reports

The GIC may issue Minority Reports pursuant to its Charter.

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# ARTICLE X

## OMBUDSMAN

### Section 10.01 Establishment

The Office of Ombudsman is hereby established.

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### Section 10.02 Independence

The Ombudsman shall remain independent of the Board and all operational leadership.

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### Section 10.03 Election

The Ombudsman shall be elected directly by Voting Members.

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### Section 10.04 Responsibilities

The Ombudsman shall:

- Protect member rights;
  - Review complaints;
  - Hear authorized appeals;
  - Investigate retaliation;
  - Promote procedural fairness.
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# ARTICLE XI

## MEMBER INITIATIVE RIGHTS

### Section 11.01 Initiative Power

Voting Members possess the right to propose organizational initiatives.

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### Section 11.02 Procedures

Initiative procedures shall be established by governing documents.

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### Section 11.03 Protection

The initiative process shall not be unreasonably restricted.

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# ARTICLE XII

## MEMBER RECALL RIGHTS

### Section 12.01 Recall Power

Voting Members possess the right to recall elected officials and officers as authorized by governing documents.

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### Section 12.02 Procedures

Recall procedures shall be established by governing documents.

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### Section 12.03 Protection

The recall process shall not be unreasonably restricted.

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## ARTICLE XIII

### ANTI-CAPTURE PROTECTIONS

#### Section 13.01 Organizational Independence

No political party, candidate, donor, corporation, union, government entity, or outside organization shall control OCG.

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#### Section 13.02 No Governance by Donation

Financial contributions shall not confer governance authority.

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#### Section 13.03 No Permanent Factions

No organizational structure shall grant permanent governing authority to any faction or interest group.

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#### Section 13.04 Leadership Rotation

Leadership structures shall encourage accountability and periodic renewal.

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## ARTICLE XIV

### TRANSPARENCY PRINCIPLES

#### Section 14.01 Transparency

OCG shall operate transparently whenever practical.

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#### Section 14.02 Reporting

Members shall receive reasonable access to governance reports, financial reports, and accountability reports.

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## Section 14.03 Oversight Reports

Reports issued by the Ombudsman and Governance & Integrity Committee shall be available pursuant to governing documents.

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## ARTICLE XV

### FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

#### Section 15.01 Stewardship

Organizational resources shall be managed prudently and solely in furtherance of OCG's mission.

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#### Section 15.02 Accountability

Financial oversight procedures shall be established by the Bylaws and policies.

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#### Section 15.03 Compliance

OCG shall comply with applicable laws governing nonprofit organizations.

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## ARTICLE XVI

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

#### Section 16.01 Proposal

Amendments may be proposed by:

- State Convention;
  - Governance procedures established by the Bylaws;
  - Member initiative procedures.
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## Section 16.02 Notice

Proposed amendments shall be distributed to Voting Members before voting.

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## Section 16.03 Ratification

Ratification shall require approval by Voting Members pursuant to procedures established in governing documents.

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## Section 16.04 Protection of Core Principles

Amendments affecting:

- Member sovereignty;
- Recall rights;
- Initiative rights;
- Ombudsman independence;
- Governance & Integrity Committee independence;

shall require heightened approval thresholds established by the Bylaws.

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# ARTICLE XVII

## DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution, assets shall be distributed in accordance with:

- Applicable law;
- Articles of Incorporation;
- Organizational obligations.

No assets shall inure to the private benefit of any individual.

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## ARTICLE XVIII

### CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY

This Constitutional Charter is the highest internal governing document of Ohio Common Ground.

All Bylaws, Charters, Policies, Manuals, Rules, Procedures, and organizational actions shall be interpreted and applied consistently with this Charter.

In the event of conflict, this Charter shall control.

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## ARTICLE XIX

### EFFECTIVE DATE

This Constitutional Charter shall become effective upon ratification by the founding membership of Ohio Common Ground.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

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Founding Chair

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Secretary

Ohio Common Ground