



DisCon III

The 79th World Science Fiction Convention
Washington, DC • Omni Shoreham Hotel
December 15-19, 2021 • discon3.org

Statement on DisCon III Sponsorship

I am Mary Robinette Kowal, and I was the chair for DisCon III. I take full responsibility for accepting Raytheon Intelligence and Space as a sponsor, and I apologize for doing so.

The decision tree that led us to this point is filled with branches that sound like excuses for my own culpability. At the root of it is simply that in accepting funding from Raytheon Intelligence and Space and partnering with them for the members' red carpet event, I was wrong.

That choice has caused harm and damage to people: the finalists, who were unaware; the people in our communities; the members and staff of Worldcon, who trusted me to make good choices.

I am sorry that I let you all down.

DisCon III is making an anonymous contribution to an organization dedicated to peace, equal to the amount we received from Raytheon. I am also personally contributing to the same organization.

The delay in responding added to the distress that we caused. For this, I ask your forgiveness. We needed to have conversations that were slowed by post-convention travel.

For the past several days, we have read your comments in email and on social media. Thank you for sharing them with us and trusting that you would be heard and taken seriously. Your honesty and sincerity are what make our community a better place.

Future conrunners can avoid our mistakes by:

- Developing a sponsorship policy for your organization that reflects the values and concerns of our community.
- Creating a robust plan for doing due diligence on potential sponsors.
- Creating a mission and value statement against which to measure actions.

We did none of those. Our Code of Conduct says that DisCon III aims to build an inclusive community for all fans. This sponsorship did not achieve that goal.

I cannot erase the harm that my actions caused. This happened on my watch. It is my fault, and I am deeply sorry for the pain I caused.