

The Ethics Supporting Proposition #112 (Westword Newspaper October 18, 2018)

Two relevant stories that relate directly to the ethics of this Proposition came to mind.

The first is *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* by Ursula Le Guin. This is the story of a happy and prosperous town, whose good fortunes depend directly on the suffering a small boy locked away in a windowless cell, given only enough food to survive. In this story, everyone knows about the little boy, and that their happiness depends on his suffering. Some even choose to come and look at him, but quickly leave as his pleas to be released conflict with their happy life. This story asks us to struggle with the idea of how much of another's suffering we can justify for our own happiness.

The other story is John Rawls, who some regard as the premier political philosopher of the 20th century. At its essence, his Original Position is easy to understand. It asks us to consider a pre-existence state, where before our life begins we can choose the kind of world we would like to be born into, with all of the laws and opportunities that we think would be best. The catch is that you don't know beforehand where you will find yourself in this world- a low born immigrant or a prominent family? How would that knowledge influence the kind of society you would accept?

I believe those opposed to Proposition #112 are asking us to accept the suffering of people near fracking wells as the price we have to pay for a relatively modest amount of jobs. More importantly, I believe that they are asking us to accept a situation that they wouldn't accept when designing their own Original Position.

No sane person thinks their happiness, or others, is improved by having a 20 well fracking pad 500 feet from their home. **No job or tax revenue can justify subjecting our neighbors to fracking.**

Colorado is getting dangerously close to how a third world oil kleptocracy would operate. I just read about a small town in Colorado that is fighting a company applying for a variance to drill inside the 500-foot setback rule. The rubber stamp CGOCC will probably approve it.

Under current law gas companies can re-drill any existing but retired gas well with new technology inside the 500-foot setback rule- anywhere in the state. #112 would remove that loophole. I can't prevent the carnage that's coming to Broomfield, but I can vote to keep it from getting worse.

So, I'm voting Yes on Proposition #112 and no on Proposition #74 (which is simply another way for oil and gas companies to extort public money). I hope before you vote you'll examine this question through your own ethical lens, and spend a few minutes thinking about the setback distance you would want in your own Original Position, knowing that you could end up at the edge of that setback.

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