



The New Hollywood?

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It may be the president's goofiest idea yet.

His Monday brainstorm was for the federal government to get into the movie business. In a Truth Social [post](#), Mr. Trump floated the notion of creating a “Federal Production Incentive to create Entertainment Jobs in America.” So this isn’t exactly a socialist proposal — where the government would seize the means of production and go about making movies — it’s a subsidy proposal: tax breaks; to “benefit ALL of America.”

Trump posts as if he has worked the math out, where the booty the government loses in direct taxation “will be made up tenfold by the money pouring into the Treasury’s coffers.”

A familiar rationale. But does it work? Do tax credits incentivize producers so much that taxes downstream of the productions make up for all the bother and paperwork?

Well, no need for theory. States already have such programs.

Tosin Akintola, in his [Reason article](#) — “State Film Subsidies Lose Money. Trump Wants To Try the Idea Nationally.” — found that “the film and TV industry in eight states returned between 3 cents and 31 cents for every dollar.”

Entertainment projects do not create that many jobs.

We used to talk about the states as “laboratories of democracy,” by which we meant “laboratories for policy.”

The point isn’t to take the failed experiments and run them at the federal level, hoping for something different.

Sure, Hollywood is lame. But don’t make Washington the new entertainment capital of the world. It’s doing bad enough as the capital of more serious business.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.