

Legislators, Know Thy Limits

A certain legislator wished to make his state great via technology. My reply:

Technology is hardly the forte of the legislature. There are fundamental differences between a body of random people whose sole qualification is the ability to get voted into office, and entrepreneurs, who risk their own skin in the game, rather than risking the lives and livelihood of millions of others.

Legislators need to absorb a few economic realities, beginning with Public Choice Theory and the Economic Calculation Problem. This might inoculate them from the virus of Magical Thinking.

Or, as a shortcut, ponder the legend of King Cnut, whose courtiers believed him capable of anything; he bade them carry his throne chair to the beach, and there commanded the tides to desist, so that his courtiers might understand that even the king's powers had limits.

Legislators cannot transcend the laws of physics, nor of economics.