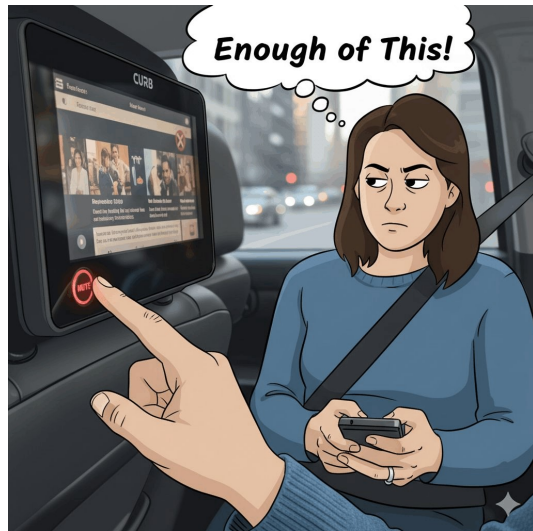


## Backseat Battle:

### Why Newsmax in NYC Taxis is Sparking a Political Firestorm

by NYC Taxi News & Google AI Assistance



The "Taxi TV" screens in the back of New York City's yellow cabs have long been a source of debate for drivers and passengers alike. However, a new partnership has turned these screens into a political lightning rod. The conservative network Newsmax is currently at the center of a citywide push for removal, sparking a heated conversation about censorship, misinformation, and the rights of a "captive audience."

#### The Partnership and the Push back

In late 2025, the technology provider

Curb—which manages the media systems in approximately 9,000

medallions—inked a deal to broadcast 60-second news updates from Newsmax.

The backlash was immediate. Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal led the charge, formally requesting that Mayor Zohran Mamdani and the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) intervene. Hoylman-Sigal argues that Newsmax is not a "credible news source" and that its presence in a city-sanctioned vehicle forces "politically charged content" and misinformation onto passengers.

#### The Legal and Political Stance

Newsmax has countered these claims aggressively, labeling the effort a "pure act of censorship." Supporters of the network, including Representative Nicole Malliotakis, argue that the government has no right to dictate which news networks a private company like Curb chooses to host.

As of February 2026, the NYC TLC has maintained that the Newsmax clips do not violate current city rules. Under TLC Chapter 59 Regulations, content is only prohibited if it is demeaning, inappropriate, or promotes illegal activity. Since the news clips are standard updates, the city has—so far—declined to pull them.

#### A Driver's Perspective: The Captive Audience

As the publisher of NYC Taxi News and a retired driver myself, I can tell you that the issue goes beyond politics. From the day these screens were first installed, they

have been an intrusion.

For many passengers, the taxi is a rare moment of peace in a loud city. Forcing any news cycle—left, right, or center—into that space feels like a disservice to the rider. During my time behind the wheel, I made it a point to show my passengers how to find the "off" or "mute" buttons immediately. Whether it's Newsmax or any other network, a passenger should never be a "captive audience" for content they didn't ask for.

What's Next?

With political pressure mounting from the Borough President's office, the TLC may face future hearings regarding the standards for "Taxi TV" content. For now, the screens remain on, but the debate over who controls the backseat airwaves is far from over.

For those who make our living behind the wheel, the screens in the back of our cars are more than just entertainment—they are a piece of regulated equipment we have to maintain. Now, a new partnership between Curb and Newsmax has landed taxi owners and drivers in the middle of a political firestorm.

The Situation for Owners and Drivers

The NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is currently being pressured by Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal to suspend its partnership with Curb unless the Newsmax segments are removed.

The Conflict:

While politicians like Hoylman-Sigal call it "misinformation," Newsmax and some city leaders, including Nicole Malliotakis, call the removal effort "censorship".

The Licensing Threat:

Hoylman-Sigal has suggested that the city use its "political muscle" to pressure Curb by threatening their license. For owners, any disruption to the tech provider's license could mean headaches for the equipment in your fleet.

A Retired Driver's Take: Our Cars, Our Rules?

As a retired driver and publisher of this site, I've always felt that the backseat screens were an intrusion into the driver-passenger relationship. We are the ones who have to hear the complaints when a passenger is annoyed by the noise or the content.

The current TLC rules state that the clips are allowed as long as they aren't "demeaning". However, as drivers, priority is a smooth, quiet ride. I always made it a point to show my riders exactly how to turn the screen off. Whether it's Newsmax or any other network, a taxi shouldn't be a forced viewing room.

#### What This Means for You

For now, there is no change to the equipment or the content requirements. Drivers should continue to ensure passengers know they have the right to mute or shut off the screens at any time, as required by the TLC Patient's Bill of Rights.

#### Watch Videos Below

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