

## Topic: Should Cars Be Banned from City Centres?

**Moderator:** Good evening, and welcome to tonight's debate. The motion is "this house would ban private cars from city centres." Speaking for the motion is Speaker A. Speaking against is Speaker B. Speaker A, you have three minutes to open.

**Speaker A:** Thank you. The case for banning cars from city centres is straightforward. Cars take up enormous amounts of urban space, they pollute the air for everyone, and they kill pedestrians. A city centre without cars is quieter, safer, and more pleasant to be in. Cities that have done it, Oslo, parts of Madrid, Ghent, report higher footfall, more business activity, and better public health within two years. The evidence is in. The question is why other cities have not followed.

**Moderator:** Speaker B, your three minutes.

**Speaker B:** The cities my opponent named are real, and so are the benefits. What is also real is the cost, and my opponent did not mention it. Restricting cars from city centres does not eliminate the trips. It pushes them to the edges, to ring roads, to suburbs. Pollution moves with them. The people who lose are not the wealthy who live in the city centre. They are the workers who have to commute to it, who now park further away and walk in. The case for the ban looks better in the centre and worse if you stand at the edge.

**Speaker A:** That is fair, and I would respond by pointing out that the cities I mentioned all paired the ban with serious public transport investment. Oslo did not just remove cars. It built the tram network and the bike lanes that replaced them. The ban only works as part of a package, and where the package has been implemented, the workers my opponent described have alternatives.

**Speaker B:** And where the package has not been implemented, the ban makes things worse. My opponent's argument holds in cities that have already invested in transit. In cities that have not, banning cars without the alternative is just punishing people who cannot afford to live close in. The policy is not portable. It is a policy that works for rich cities with rich governments, and we should be honest about that.

**Moderator:** Closing statements, two minutes each.

**Speaker A:** I accept the point that the policy needs the package. I do not accept that this means we should not pursue it. The package is what cities should aim for, and the ban is the part that triggers the rest. Without the ban, cities never invest in transit, because there is no pressure. With the ban, the investment becomes necessary. That is how change happens.

**Speaker B:** I accept the point that pressure produces investment. I do not accept that the people who pay the cost of the pressure should be the ones who can least afford it. A policy that makes things worse for years before it makes them better is a policy designed by people who do not have to live through the years. I oppose the motion.

**Moderator:** Thank you both. The debate is now open to the floor.