Drop all charges against nurse Chloe Freeman!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality at the University of Michigan
22 November 2026

On November 24 at 1 p.m., Chloe Freeman, a 29-year-old Ann Arbor registered nurse, is scheduled to appear for a preliminary examination in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Her "crime": on the night of May 28, 2026, she refused to hand a wounded immigrant worker over to the Border Patrol.

For this act of human compassion and working-class solidarity, the Trump administration is seeking to send her to federal prison for up to a year on a misdemeanor charge of "instigating or assisting escape."

According to the government's own criminal complaint, Border Patrol agents were conducting a "targeted immigration enforcement operation" in Ann Arbor against a Mexican worker identified only by the initials "OBP." According to the government, the man fled when agents approached, "tripped over a curb" and struck his face on the pavement. The bleeding man was taken by ambulance to Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital, where he underwent a CT scan. At approximately 11:30 p.m., Freeman entered the CT room, removed his IV and escorted him out through the ambulance bay doors. He has not been located since.

The government's account of a man who merely "tripped and fell" is not credible. It comes from a paramilitary force notorious for its use of violence. Workers across the country have rightly asked: Does anyone believe that a man fleeing armed agents in the middle of the night simply stumbled over a curb?

And what awaited the worker had Freeman not acted? In the first 500 days of the second Trump administration, through June 4, 2026, 52 people died in ICE custody, according to Human Rights Watch, and the toll has continued to rise. The man Freeman helped was not being taken to safety. He was being taken to a concentration camp.

What is on trial in Detroit is not a criminal act. It is the right of a nurse to treat her patient as a human being rather than as the property of the immigration police. It is the right of every worker to refuse to serve as an instrument of the deportation machine.

Freeman's prosecution is political persecution directed against all workers and youth. Its purpose is to terrorize every worker who would defend an immigrant from police-state operations. It is part of a bipartisan assault on democratic rights, in which the fascistic Trump administration builds on the foundations laid by the Democrats. Here at the University of Michigan, it was Democratic Attorney General Dana Nessel who brought criminal charges against 11 participants in the 2024 Gaza solidarity encampment, at the request of the university's Board of Regents.

On October 30, the same US Attorney's Office that is prosecuting Freeman unsealed a superseding indictment expanding its federal conspiracy frame-up of anti-genocide protesters at the university from eight defendants to 12, the "U-Mich Twelve." US Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon Jr. prosecutes Chloe Freeman for refusing to serve as a jailer and prosecutes students and former students for the "crime" of opposing a genocide.

The same state is also waging a witch-hunt against Chinese researchers on this campus. On March 18 of this year, Homeland Security agents questioned 31-year-old postdoctoral researcher Danhao Wang at his Ann Arbor home. The following night, he took his own life, jumping from the G.G. Brown Laboratory on North Campus. His death came amid the prosecution of five Chinese researchers at the university on charges of smuggling harmless biological materials, a revival of the "China Initiative."

A week later, Interim President Domenico Grasso boasted to a House committee that the university had

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acted “swiftly and decisively,” “promptly terminating student and work visas, and severing all ties with those individuals.” The anti-immigrant offensive that hunts a Mexican worker in Ann Arbor is the same offensive that whips up xenophobia against Chinese scientists in the drive toward war.

The federal charge is not the only weapon the capitalist state can wield. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) holds Freeman’s nursing license. As of this writing, LARA has taken no action against it, but the threat is real. A conviction, or simply the political pressure generated by the prosecution, could be used to strip her of the right to practice.

The same apparatus that disciplines nurses for speaking out about unsafe staffing can be turned against any healthcare worker who refuses to collaborate with ICE. Workers and youth must make clear now that any move by LARA to sanction Freeman, or any other worker who refuses to serve as a jailer, will meet organized opposition.

The working-class response to the Trump administration’s attack on Freeman has been significant. More than $55,000 has been raised for her defense through more than 1,300 donations, accompanied by messages of solidarity from nurses and workers across the country. In October, Will Lehman, the Mack Trucks worker and socialist then running for president of the United Auto Workers, called on workers and youth to demand that all charges against Freeman be dropped. Students here at the University of Michigan have spoken out, drawing the connection between the assault on immigrants and the broader attack on democratic rights.

Not one prominent Democrat has said a word in Freeman’s defense. This includes those who are members of or are supported by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)—such as Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib and Abdul El-Sayed. No trade union, including the unions of healthcare workers and the American Federation of Teachers locals on the Ann Arbor campus, has declared its support.

This silence is no accident. The Democratic Party helped build and fund the deportation machine and has maneuvered with Trump and the Republicans to expand funding for ICE and the Border Patrol while placing no restrictions on their operations. The union apparatuses, integrated into the corporations and the state, have no interest in mobilizing workers or defending democratic rights. Their function is to contain and dissipate the anger expressed in the outpouring of support for Freeman.

The working class is international. The immigrant worker Freeman aided is not a foreigner to be expelled but a fellow worker, exploited by the same corporations and hunted by the same state. The borders that divide workers are the borders of the capitalist nation-state. The defense of Chloe Freeman is inseparable from the defense of every immigrant worker, and from the fight against the entire system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist war that requires a deportation Gestapo to function.

The IYSSE at the University of Michigan calls on students, nurses and all workers to take up this fight in an organized and collective form. We call for building rank-and-file committees, independent of the big-business parties and the trade union bureaucracy, in every hospital, workplace and neighborhood. The support for Freeman must not remain a matter of individual donations and online messages. It must become a political movement.

We demand:

? Drop all charges against Chloe Freeman!

? No action against Freeman’s nursing license!

? Stop the assault on immigrants! Abolish ICE and the Border Patrol!

? Defend the right of workers to live and work in the country of their choosing!



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