”As a healthcare worker, my first duty is to the patients”

# Supporters of victimized Ann Arbor nurse Chloe Freeman attend court hearing in Detroit

**Shannon Jones, Kathleen Martin**
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Supporters of persecuted Ann Arbor, Michigan, nurse Chloe Freeman packed a federal courtroom in Detroit Tuesday for her scheduled appearance.

Freeman has been charged with the misdemeanor of “instigating or assisting escape” of an immigrant worker in her care at Trinity Health Ann Arbor, who had been injured after being accosted by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents. If convicted, she faces up to one year in prison.

According to the prosecution, on May 28, 2026, a Mexican worker they identify only as OBP was running when he supposedly tripped on a curb and fell on his face. He was taken to the hospital for treatment, where Freeman later removed his IV and escorted him out through the ambulance bay doors. The worker has not been located. Freeman is currently free on $10,000 bond.

In a statement to the *Guardian* earlier this year, Trinity Health said Freeman no longer worked for the hospital. Trinity officials said they were unable to comment further “because it was an active legal matter.” There is also the danger that state officials will move to revoke Freeman’s nursing license.

What is on trial is not a criminal act but the right of a nurse to treat her patient as a human being and the right of every worker to refuse to serve as an instrument of the deportation machine. The prosecution of Freeman is part of a government campaign to force healthcare workers and other private citizens to assist the American immigration Gestapo in rounding up those targeted for detention and deportation.

The claim that the worker, OBP, injured himself accidentally is hardly credible. Federal immigration agents are notorious for their brutality, including the killing of American citizens such as Renée Nicole Good and nurse Alex Pretti in Minneapolis in January.

The prosecution’s version of events is contradicted by eyewitnesses. Patch, a healthcare worker in the Ann Arbor area who is involved in a local neighborhood group that monitors ICE activities and assists immigrants, said members of her group saw CBP agents tackle the man from his bicycle. “It happened on Carpenter Road and they threw his bicycle into the bushes.”

*World Socialist Web Site* reporters spoke to those who came to the courthouse to show support for Freeman.

Nurses who attended spoke of their duty to the patient. Osprey, a nurse at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, was among those who helped mobilize healthcare workers to show support for Freeman. “This goes beyond nurse Chloe,” she told the WSWS. “A lot of us have had experience advocating on behalf of patients. As a healthcare worker, my first duty is to the patients. We should not be helping ICE to detain people.”

Megan, a nurse for more than five years at Michigan Medicine in Ann Arbor, came to stand against the intimidation healthcare workers face when dealing with ICE agents in the workplace. She noted that nurses take an oath in their profession to do no harm, and that returning a patient to ICE potentially conflicts with that, given conditions in detention facilities.

“I think Chloe’s really brave for doing this,” she said. “I also agree that people shouldn’t be detained by ICE. The conditions at those detention centers are really terrible. It’s just not safe for people to be there, or to be deported somewhere where they’ve never even lived or haven’t lived in a long time.”

“Nurses and staff in the emergency departments are

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probably seeing the worst of it," she added. "It is emotionally stressful to be bombarded with these hard ethical choices that you have to make, of whether to keep your patients safe or lose your job, which is what Chloe's facing, and maybe even worse. So I really want this to set a precedent for other nurses to be able to help their patients."

Mike, a social worker who came from Ann Arbor, said: "My mom told me about the hearing. I am proud of Chloe Freeman for doing the right thing. No one should be forced to assist immigration officers." He added, "I think ICE should be abolished."

He continued, "I work in a hospital and I completely agree with what Chloe did. I hope that if I were in a similar position, I would have the courage to do the same thing. I feel that mass deportation is inhumane and unjust, and it should never happen in our country that's built on immigrants."

Patch said she was encouraged by the turnout in support of Chloe Freeman. "I hope she knows she is supported." She said immigration agents apprehended a second person after the patient Freeman treated fled. "They handcuffed that individual to his wheelchair and wouldn't leave even when the nurses spoke up. They changed their tactics."

While Freeman's case has resonated with healthcare workers and the broader public, who have donated tens of thousands of dollars to her defense, the healthcare unions have said nothing. The union bureaucracies, embedded with the healthcare conglomerates and the capitalist state, have no intention or desire to defend a militant rank-and-file nurse upholding the basic principles of working-class solidarity by standing by her immigrant brothers and sisters.

The same is true of the Democratic Party, including the Democratic Socialists of America, which upholds the authority of the union apparatus and the capitalist state that is prosecuting Freeman. Of particular note is the silence of *Jacobin* magazine, the house organ of the DSA, as well as Democratic Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayed and the two DSA members of Congress from Detroit—Rashida Tlaib and Congressman-elect Donovan McKinney.

On the failure of the unions and the Democratic Party to issue statements in support of Freeman, Patch said, "The silence is deafening." She noted that she had texted the offices of Rashida Tlaib and Democratic Congresswoman Debbie Dingell about Freeman's case and other ICE abuses. "We don't get responses," she said.

"Those of us who are brave enough to stand up have to have the support of the community. I am afraid it is going to persuade people not to help as much if this case goes badly."

In a statement posted in defense of Chloe Freeman on November 22, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at the University of Michigan declared: "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 defense of Chloe Freeman deserves the support of every worker and young person. It requires an organized and collective form, through the building of rank-and-file committees in every workplace and neighborhood, independent of the bureaucratized unions and the Democratic Party, as part of a broader movement in defense of the working class. The fight to free Chloe Freeman is part of that same international struggle—the fight of workers everywhere against the borders, the police, and the system that requires them.

- 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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