DROP ALL CHARGES AGAINST NURSE CHLOE FREEMAN!

BY WILL LEHMAN
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I demand the dropping of all charges against Chloe Freeman, a registered nurse at Trinity Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan who is being prosecuted by the Trump administration for the "crime" of helping her patient escape ICE thugs who hunted him down while he was receiving medical treatment. Every member of the UAW and all workers and young people should rally to the defense of this courageous nurse and demand the immediate and unconditional dropping of all charges.

On the night of May 28, Border Patrol agents chased a Mexican worker through Ann Arbor. He tripped on a curb, smashed his face on the pavement, and was taken to Trinity Health bleeding from his nose and forehead. Hours later, while he was alone in the CT room, Chloe Freeman took out his IV and walked him out through the ambulance entrance. She later told hospital investigators that she disagreed with ICE tearing families apart. For that, federal prosecutors filed a criminal complaint against her on September 28 for "instigating or assisting escape," and she now faces up to a year in federal prison.

This is a political vendetta. Its purpose is to warn every nurse, doctor, teacher and worker that anyone who defends immigrants will be treated like a criminal.

The prosecution of Chloe Freeman is one front in the largest assault on immigrant workers in American history. Hundreds of thousands of people have been detained and deported since Trump took office again. ICE arrested around 51,000 people in July alone. Congress has committed nearly $250 billion to ICE and the Border Patrol through the end of Trump's term, including $45 billion just for a nationwide network of detention camps, where men, women and children are held without charges. Using the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, the government has shipped immigrants to foreign prisons, including the notorious CECOT camp in El Salvador, without a hearing. The administration has openly threatened to suspend habeas corpus, the basic right to challenge imprisonment before a judge.

At the same time, not a single government agent has been charged for the killings of Renée Nicole Good, a mother of three, or Alex Pretti, a VA nurse and union member, in Minneapolis. Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, a construction worker who spent 35 years building houses in Houston, was shot dead in his work van on the way to a job, and the witnesses, including his brother, were thrown into detention. In Maine, agents fired into the car of Joan Sebastián Guerrero, a young Colombian worker with a valid work permit, and handcuffed him while he bled to death in front of his wife and daughter. Fifty-two immigrants died in ICE custody in the first 500 days of the Trump administration.

One of Trump's first acts was to scrap the rules keeping ICE agents out of hospitals, and now health care workers are routinely forced to choose between caring for their patients and serving the deportation machine. The case against Chloe Freeman comes from the same playbook: punish anyone who stands with immigrants, so that everyone else is intimidated.

But the government's attempt at intimidation is meeting resistance. The killings of Renée Good and Alex Pretti brought 100,000 people into the streets of Minneapolis and set off protests and high school

walkouts across the country. In city after city, neighbors have turned out to confront ICE raids and protect one another. Thousands of people have rallied to Freeman's defense, and a fundraiser for her has already raised more than $30,000. This shows the growing opposition among working people to the raids, the detention camps and the killings carried out by ICE and the Trump administration. An attack on immigrants is an attack on all of us.

The same police-state methods being used against immigrants today, and against those who help them, are being prepared for any worker who strikes, protests or speaks out against war and dictatorship.

The political establishment will not defend Chloe Freeman. The Democrats voted to continue Congressional funding for the ICE gulag and in Minnesota helped smother the mass movement allowing Trump to redeploy his thugs to other cities. Workers also cannot rely on the union bureaucracies which sabotaged the movement for a general strike in Minneapolis and have done nothing to oppose the round up of our immigrant brothers and sisters.

I call on UAW members and workers everywhere to come to Chloe Freeman's defense. Health care workers at Trinity Health and hospitals everywhere should form rank-and-file committees to protect their patients and coworkers from ICE. Autoworkers, nurses and all workers must unite across every workplace to defend all immigrants and stop the deportations and ICE raids. Defend Chloe Freeman. Drop the charges now!

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