

Zoe Samson
Portland
LD 2106

My name is Zoe Samson and I'm a registered nurse living in Portland, Maine. About a year ago, I took a job at Maine Medical Center Portland as a research specialist. My previous nursing experience was in hospital ICUs and step-down ICUs, as well as home healthcare. I'm also the parent of a four-year-old daughter who currently attends daycare in Portland and is enrolled to attend kindergarten this fall at our closest public elementary school in Portland.

As a nurse, a parent and Maine resident, I'm asking that the State of Maine take steps to provide guardrails, clarity and support to people who work and receive services and care from our healthcare facilities, schools and libraries.

Our roles as nurses have always been clear. If you come to us sick or injured, we take care of you as best we can and it doesn't matter who you are. At a recent vigil for Alex Pretti, gunned down by in the act of caring for someone, dozens of nurses repeated pledges, versions of which many of us repeated when we were first credentialed as nurses:

"I will not permit consideration of religion, nationality, race or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient. I am a nurse. I will maintain the utmost respect for human life. I am a nurse. I make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honor. And I will do it again, every day."

It's not part of our work to decide who should feel safe and secure in a hospital - in fact, it's part of our work to not think about it- because we know that everyone should. We need this to remain uncomplicated; nurses and healthcare workers should not be put in positions in which they are the arbiters of immigration enforcement - it distracts and complicates our roles; this line should be clear; and it needs to be very clear.

Healthcare work on a typical day is hard enough. At the very least, we should be able to feel that our coworkers and patients are safe in hospital walls.

Similarly, as a parent, I should feel secure that immigration enforcement won't happen during the school day or on school property; that my daughter's classmates, their families, her teachers and my daughter aren't vulnerable at school.

I don't think this bill guarantees these securities in the current social and political climate, in which procedure is overlooked and enforcement seems animated by animosity and violence. But as a resident of Maine, I want to know that my state is taking the steps that it can to protect our neighbors and to protect us. Let us do our jobs, and let us please try to maintain safe spaces under these persistent threats of violence.