

Oral Testimony:

Support LD 2106

My name is April Carlsen Mahon and I hold a masters degree in nursing and am an active registered nurse in the two emergency rooms in Bangor, one I have been at since moving to Maine in 2022.

My mother was a first generation American and my paternal grandfathers family were immigrants who struggled to assimilate and learn our primary language. Despite their experiences, I was taught to love our country and the constitution it was founded upon.

I was taught to respect the flag, be active in community service and never miss an opportunity to vote. I am currently registered as unaffiliated and a registered Girl Scout.

We moved from the Salt Lake Valley where I had been working at a hospital who served many affected by healthcare disparities whether it was being an immigrant, a minority or of low socioeconomic status.

During Covid I worked in the ICU where I saw more than I ever wanted to see, though through it, I learned to be an advocate and take a stand for what is right for not only our patients but ourselves. We did whatever we could to educate the public and encourage the evidenced based practices to stall this deadly pandemic.

The majority of my community disagreed.

Suddenly there were claims of "medical tyranny," protesters outside of our hospitals, people who made it their mission to disprove what we, "healthcare heros," saw every day and night despite claims of the predominant religion to "Love thy neighbor as thyself," a religion that I am a member of.

The sudden rise in extremism was scary and we no longer felt Utah was a safe place to raise our family. After much thought, prayer, and research, we chose Maine and haven't looked back.

Maine has become our safe space, our refuge. Hospitals are designed by right to be a refuge for people who need help, whether it is medical or psychiatric. For the victim or the perpetrator. One thing I have learned about working in them is nurses have the sacred responsibility to protect patients no matter who they are or where they come from.

People will avoid hospitals if they feel they are not safe, regardless how of how sick they are; a fact I witnessed firsthand through undocumented who eventually sought help during the pandemic, many too sick to survive.

We are now in a different pandemic; a pandemic through vast instances of testimonies, videos, audio recordings shows direct assault to our first, second, fourth and fifth amendments to not only both documented and undocumented immigrants, but now US born citizens.

I have four veterans in my immediate family, countless others further on who have had varied experiences with the VA who need good nurses.

Last Saturday they lost one.

Alex Pretti, by all accounts, lived to serve our veterans at their most vulnerable. The ICU is not an easy place to work and takes not only medical skills but compassion and advocacy as well; attributes exhibited during his final moments while protecting a someone aggressively approached by ICE. Despite constitutionally given right to bear arms, by the second amendment, he did not draw his weapon once and in five seconds was shot ten times face down, unarmed.

As of today, those responsible have not been held accountable on any level.

What message does it send to our communities that we would allow an agency with absolutely NO known real oversight to access nonpublic areas of our hospitals in Maine and other places of refuge?