

STATEMENT ON THE KILLING OF ALEX PRETTI

PALLIATIVE CARE AND NURSING ETHICS HUB
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON HEALTH AND NURSING



On Saturday, January 24, 2026, we were devastated by the killing of Alex Pretti, in Minnesota. This incident reflects an intersection of two broader phenomena. First, the violent death of someone at the hands of law enforcement, which disproportionately happens to people from marginalized communities, including in Canada. Second, the killing of a nurse in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

In the days following Alex Pretti's death, nursing groups across the United States and around the world issued statements that expressed condolence and solidarity, and that demanded accountability. As nursing scholars who specialize in death, grief, and ethics, we echo the sadness and outrage expressed by these groups, and we wish to contribute two specific perspectives to this conversation:

1. The world witnessed Alex Pretti show compassion and care, in his final moments, to a person who had been pushed to the ground.

The world should also understand that from the moment that Alex Pretti chose to participate in observing, documenting, and protesting government actions that, by all reasonable accounts, have been terrorizing, injuring, and killing vulnerable people, he was already enacting a nursing ethic of compassion and care.

As nursing educators, we teach students that nursing's commitment to compassion and care is not limited to the bedside. It extends to our broader communities. It includes political advocacy to protect the safety and wellbeing of all people. Especially people and communities whose opportunity for health is reduced, when unjust social and legislative forces rob them of their ability to live freely, and with dignity.

That a registered nurse would be killed for defending the values that are at the core of our professional ethics, is reprehensible and unforgivable. The need for accountability is non-negotiable.

2. Alex Pretti's practice as an ICU nurse means that he has cared for patients at the end of life. When nurses provide this type of care, they help people to find peace, comfort, and love as they die. Alex Pretti deserved to one day die like this, too. He never will.

Amidst widespread social injustice and countless killings around the world, we refuse to be numb to this plain reality: To violently end the life of any person is always to obliterate an entire human universe. In one horrible instant, it extinguishes both past and future, robbing people of meaning, memory, and relationship. It creates shockwaves of devastation and suffering for families, friends, and communities. Arbitrary markers of social identity, such as citizenship status, political affiliation, or whether someone was 'law abiding', are irrelevant when accounting for the brutality of murder.

We stand in solidarity with Alex Pretti's family, and anyone who knew and cared about him. They will now carry the excruciating grief that follows this kind of death. They must not be left to carry it alone.

We also stand in solidarity with the families and communities of every other person, including and especially those who, because of their ethnicity or other aspects of their personhood, are systematically targeted by this kind of violence.

Signed,

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