

I am a teacher at Linn Benton Community College in Albany, OR. For over 8 years, I studied, researched and practiced our collective history of social movements, and mutual aid. In essence, how our ancestors kept one another safe, well-fed, and cared for in times of great need. One of the moments I ask students to reflect on, is the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of my students grew up in online classrooms, isolated, and scared, now is no different.

We read about how masking kept us and our loved ones safe from infection. To this day, I still wear an N-95 respirator in public. I remind students that when we wear a mask, we keep one another alive, which itself is an act of resistance.

But when I speak of masking in the context of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE), all I see is a lack of empathy. I see no care, no safety, but an abuse of power and privilege to maim, kidnap and murder innocent civilians.

Moving forward, I ask if you too will wear a mask. By which I mean, will you turn away from me? Will you continue to wear your mask of pity, thoughts, and prayers? Or will you go to Eugene, Portland, Salem and Corvallis, and stand with us in the streets, in love, among flashbangs, pepper spray, against an armed, foreign invader?

When you vote on SJR 203, look your constituents in the eye. Know that your job as a public servant is to advocate and protect us. Remember that those in power do not get to hide behind a closed door, a turned cheek or redacted text. And yes, that includes all of you.

Show us your face, and keep all of us safe.