

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur with amendment No. 6552, as amended.

The yeas and nays are requested.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 421 Leg.]

YEAS—68

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Romney
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Blunt	Inhofe	Rounds
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boozman	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Capito	Leahy	Shelby
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	McConnell	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Thune
Cornyn	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Moran	Warner
Cotton	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Ossoff	Wicker
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Graham	Peters	Young
Hassan	Portman	

NAYS—29

Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Crapo	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Daines	Lankford	Sullivan
Ernst	Lee	Tillis
Fischer	Lummis	Toomey
Grassley	Marshall	Tuberville
Hagerty	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Barrasso	Burr	Cramer
----------	------	--------

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 68, the nays are 29.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment No. 4 with an amendment No. 6552, the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SHIREEN ABU AKLEH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the 11th of December marked the 6-month anni-

versary of the violent death of widely respected Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. On May 19, I echoed Secretary of State Blinken's call for an "independent, credible investigation" of her killing. At that time, several Members of Congress called for the FBI to be involved, as did I. That would be appropriate after a tragedy like this involving an American citizen killed overseas under questionable circumstances. Secretary Blinken later said, and I agree, that "[w]hen that investigation happens, we will follow the facts, wherever they lead. It's as straightforward as that."

Unfortunately, there has been no independent, credible investigation, at least not yet. Three months ago, the Israeli Government, after first blaming the Palestinians for Ms. Abu Akleh's death, stated that she was likely shot, by mistake, by an unnamed Israeli soldier. The U.S. Security Coordinator—USSC—also stated, at the time, that gunfire from Israeli Defense Force—IDF—positions was likely responsible, but that there was "no evidence to indicate her killing was intentional." The State Department acknowledges that conclusion was not the result of an investigation, but rather a review of information they were provided by the IDF and the Palestinian Authority. We were told that "the Administration continues to believe that cooperation among Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and the USSC is the best path to support a thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation."

Neither the Palestinian Authority nor the IDF can be relied on to objectively determine and make public all the facts of what happened in this case—nor have they. For the State Department to assert, prematurely, that fatally shooting an unarmed person, and in this case one with "PRESS" written in bold letters on her clothing, was not intentional, without providing any facts to support that conclusion, calls into question the Department's commitment to an independent, credible investigation and to "follow the facts, wherever they lead."

Before I was elected to the Senate, I was a prosecutor. I know a thing or two about homicide investigations, having participated in many. There are intentional, reckless, negligent, and justifiable or excusable homicides. Six months after Ms. Abu Akleh's death, key questions remain unanswered, including:

What specific evidence was the basis for the conclusion that "there is no reason to believe that this was intentional but rather the result of tragic circumstances?" Has everyone—the IDF personnel, Al Jazeera employees, and any others—who were in the proximity at the time of her death been questioned, and if so by whom?

What, specifically, were the "tragic circumstances" the State Department referred to?

Was the soldier who likely fired the fatal shot a trained marksman? Was he

looking through a scope? Was there anything obstructing his vision? If he did not intend to kill Ms. Abu Akleh, what did he intend? Did he have reason to believe that the shot would injure or kill her?

Were the rifle and ammunition he used, or the armored personnel vehicle he was reportedly inside or shielded behind when he fired the fatal shot, supplied by the United States? What IDF unit was he a member of? Is he still a member of the IDF? If so, is he on active duty?

If, as the Israeli authorities may be implying, the IDF soldier missed, who or what he was aiming at and killed Ms. Abu Akleh by mistake, who or what was he aiming at?

There are reports of earlier exchanges of gunfire, although not in the immediate vicinity where Ms. Abu Akleh was standing and not at the time she was shot. Is there any evidence that the shots that killed her and injured Ali Sammoudi, another unarmed Al Jazeera journalist, were fired as a legitimate act of self-defense?

How many shots were fired, and were they all fired by the same soldier? Have any other bullets been recovered, including the one that injured Mr. Sammoudi?

On July 5, the State Department spokesperson said, "We would want to see accountability in any case of a wrongful death. That would especially—and is especially the case in the wrongful death of an American citizen, as was Shireen Abu Akleh." Has anyone been held accountable, and if so, in what manner? What steps does the Department plan to take to ensure such accountability? What steps has the Department taken to determine whether the Leahy Law applies in this case?

Imagine if Shireen Abu Akleh were your sister—or your aunt—or your daughter. Wouldn't you be asking these questions and expect answers? Six months after her death, shouldn't we already know the answers?

Recently, it was reported that the FBI has opened an investigation in this case. I welcome that decision. The Israeli authorities immediately announced they would not cooperate with the FBI. I hope they reconsider, especially given that this involves the untimely death of an American citizen by the actions of a soldier of a country that receives by far the largest amount of U.S. military training and equipment. I have voted for that aid because I believe we should help Israel defend itself, especially with Iran financing anti-Israel terrorist groups and regularly calling for Israel's annihilation. But that does not prevent me from asking relevant questions and calling for a thorough, independent investigation of the violent death of an American journalist, likely by an IDF soldier. In fact, it compels me to do so.

There is an increasing foreboding that, as in so many other cases and like the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, there will never be the independent,

thorough investigation and accountability that Ms. Abu Akleh's family, the Secretary of State, I, and others have called for. That would further jeopardize the safety of journalists everywhere who courageously risk their lives to gather facts and inform the public. This year alone, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 38 journalists have been killed, 294 have been imprisoned, and 64 are missing. Whether Shireen Abu Akleh's killing was a tragic mistake or the result of a reckless or intentional act, there must be a full accounting. And if it was intentional and if those responsible are not brought to justice, then the Leahy Law must be applied.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, throughout my 48 years in the Senate, I worked to uphold the American tradition of a humane immigration policy and fought to advance comprehensive immigration reform. As an advocate for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution around the world, I have been committed to allocating resources to help welcome these vulnerable individuals and families to my home State. And I did my best to directly support the Vermont communities that do so much to help resettle and embrace them.

My office also has directly assisted thousands of Vermonters with visas, refugee resettlement, asylum, and other immigration casework. Over the past 48 years, this work has helped children and adults receive lifesaving medical treatment by enabling nurses, doctors, and dentists to join our short-staffed hospitals and clinics. It has also helped H-2A farmworkers to arrive in Vermont in time for harvest, work that is critical to our food supply and the success of our farms. My office has assisted students, scholars, engineers, musicians, athletes, and so many others to participate in and help grow our educational institutions and workforce, in the process often reuniting families separated for years. My staff and I have had the honor of witnessing Vermonters of all ages and from all walks of life realize their dreams to become citizens of the United States of America.

Working with Vermonters with diverse backgrounds from all across the globe, I have come to know their struggles and hardships as well as their successes and achievements. Some were fleeing war and persecution, others pursuing their own dreams and seeking a better life for their children. With great courage and determination and the assistance of so many caring and generous Vermonters, these New Americans have not only improved their own lives, they have also brought a great and lasting benefit to our State. Vermont, like the rest of this great Nation, is built on the contributions of immigrants.

The stories I hear from Vermonters who call my office has helped to inform

my work in Washington. After countless concerned Vermonters contacted my office as tens of thousands of Afghans fled persecution, I used my position as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure adequate resources were available for resettlement in Vermont and elsewhere in the U.S. And when Ukrainians fled Russian attacks on their country to find safety in Vermont and elsewhere in the U.S., we appropriated funds to help them.

As former chair and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I played a central role in shaping Federal immigration policy. At the forefront of my immigration priorities was passing legislation that incorporated the needs of Vermont agriculture and industry because I have long recognized the value immigration reform can have on state and local economies.

I also sponsored the H-2A Improvement Act, a bill to include dairy workers in the agricultural work visa program. And I have been a lead sponsor of the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act to legalize the existing undocumented agricultural workforce in order to help America's farmers stay a productive and a vital part of the American economy.

While the reforms I believe are needed across our entire immigration system have not yet been completed, I am proud that during the 113th Congress, the Senate made significant progress toward this goal by passing S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. This legislation sought to enhance border security, create a workable and accurate electronic workplace verification system, reform some of the legal immigration system, and provide a tough but achievable pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country. It contained important long-standing initiatives that would directly benefit Vermont agriculture and industry, including important improvements to the agricultural temporary worker visa program, and reforms that both streamlined and strengthened oversight of the job-creating immigrant investor EB-5 Regional Center Program.

Nearly a decade ago, I re-introduced the Refugee Protection Act. This bill would improve protections for refugees and asylum seekers and fulfill the U.S. obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. And I was a leading voice to demand an end to the expanded use of family detention for mothers and children fleeing violence in Central America. Beginning in 2003, I fought to end discrimination based on sexual orientation in our immigration laws through the Uniting American Families Act, legislation that would allow U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to petition for their foreign same-sex partners to come to the United States through the family im-

migration system. In June 2013, the Supreme Court decided *United States v. Windsor*, which held that the Federal Government cannot discriminate against married same-sex couples for the purpose of Federal benefits and responsibilities. The result was the fulfillment of my goal to ensure that married same-sex couples have full immigration rights.

Thirty years ago, I visited a refugee camp. I brought my camera, as I do everywhere, so that I could show people back in Washington the human toll of an issue. A man there encouraged me to take his picture. I looked at his worn and weary face through the range finder. We sat and talked afterward, and he said simply: "Don't forget people like me." The black and white photo hung above my desk for 30 years; every day I came to work, he looked at me, saying, "You don't know my name, you don't speak my language, there's nothing I can do to help you—but what are you doing for people like me?" That photo and the question it provokes helped guide my approach to immigration legislation and other policy areas over the years.

So much more needs to be done, but we must also remember our accomplishments and always honor the immigrants who have made this country a great nation.

AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have been a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee for 48 years, since I was elected in 1974. I have helped to write nine farm bills, and I have overseen the creation of programs that have helped farmers, food systems, and consumers alike. Throughout the years, I have been proud to bring born-in-Vermont ideas back to DC.

I was warned when I first came to the Senate not to get on the Agriculture Committee because I would never be able to get off. And they were right. But that has been just fine with me because the work we have done on this committee and in the farm bills has always been so important, and the work has been bipartisan, in the best tradition of the Senate.

I have always worked to make healthy food accessible to everyone. In 1988, I authored the Hunger Prevention Act, which improved child nutrition and SNAP programs and provided other hunger relief. In 1994, I worked to provide funding for WIC, provide milk to low-income students, fund school breakfast programs, encourage organic foods at school lunches, and expand WIC at farmers markets, and promote healthy eating habits for children through the better Nutrition and Health for Children Act. And in 2010, I authored the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, which created the Farm to School Program, which brings locally grown food into schools.

I have been proud to advocate for small- and mid-sized dairy farms,