LOS ANGELES - Representative Xavier Becerra (CA - 30) today issued the following statement upon learning of the death of United States Senator Paul Wellstone, his wife Sheila, their daughter Marcia, and three staff members and two aircraft pilots.

"What a tragic and sudden loss of one of the most dedicated and patriotic public servants this country has known. Paul Wellstone was a giant of progressive politics. He fought hard but cleanly to elevate the average American and to protect those less fortunate.

"Senator Wellstone left us much too soon. His contributions to Minnesota and our nation will always be remembered. Carolina, my wife, and I extend our deepest sympathies to the loved ones and survivors of the Wellstone family and the families of the deceased staff members and pilots."