

## Rep. Xavier Becerra (D–Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles



**Residence:** Los Angeles

**Born:** Jan. 26, 1958; Sacramento, Calif.

**Religion:** Roman Catholic

**Family:** Wife, Carolina Reyes; three children

**Education:** Stanford U., A.B. 1980 (economics), J.D. 1984

**Military Service:** None

**Career:** State prosecutor; state legislative aide; lawyer

**First Elected:** 1992 (11th term)

**Latest Election:** 2012 General (85.62%)

**Note:** Caucus Chairman

**Political Highlights:** Calif. Assembly, 1990-92; candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, 2001

**Committees:**

- Ways & Means (Social Security - ranking member)

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## Rep. Xavier Becerra (D–Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

### CQ Politics in America Profile

(Updated: March 1, 2013)

Becerra runs with some of the most powerful House Democrats, but it remains to be seen if he overcomes his weaknesses to reach the highest rungs on the party's leadership ladder.

He is renowned as a policy expert and has been a close ally of fellow California Democrat Nancy Pelosi, the former speaker and current minority leader. She has trusted Becerra to protect the party's interests in fiscal debates. Becerra was appointed to both President Barack Obama's 2010 special fiscal commission (widely known as Simpson-Bowles) and the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, or "supercommittee," created by the August 2011 deal to raise the debt limit.

But Becerra didn't play a particularly visible role on either panel. He voted against the deficit reduction plan drafted by the commission, saying it did not do enough to address the "drivers of our economic crisis" — according to Becerra, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Medicare prescription drug benefit enacted in 2003 and the George W. Bush-era tax cuts. The supercommittee never even considered a plan before disbanding.

Still, Becerra secured a promotion from vice chairman of the Democratic Caucus to chairman in the 113th Congress (2013-14). (Former Chairman John B. Larson of Connecticut reached a

term-limit restriction.) In Democratic leadership meetings he represents the views of the party's liberal Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus, which he once led.

Becerra's policy chops, closeness to Pelosi and Hispanic background have helped his rise into leadership. But colleagues have faulted him for arrogance, and he can be somewhat stiff when delivering the party's message in public. "I understand the politics," Becerra once told the Los Angeles Times. "I'm not the best at playing the game."

He keeps trying, however. In opening months of the 113th, Becerra was revealed as a member of a bipartisan working group trying to generate legislation to overhaul immigration law.

Becerra favors plans that emphasize keeping families together and providing a route to permanent U.S. residency for illegal immigrants already in the country. He applauded Obama's policy directive to halt deportations on some immigrants who entered the country illegally as children.

Taxes and entitlement programs will also occupy the 113th Congress, and Becerra has a voice on such matters as a member of the Ways and Means Committee. The first Hispanic to serve on the panel, Becerra sees himself as a guardian of lower-income taxpayers. Several times he has introduced a "taxpayer's bill of rights" measure that would expand filing assistance to lower-income taxpayers and boost oversight of private tax preparation services.

Becerra is the top Democrat on the Social Security Committee. He put distance between himself and Pelosi in early 2013 by telling C-SPAN that he would oppose fiscal measures that include cuts to Social Security benefits — both Pelosi and Obama had indicated that they might be OK with indexing benefits to a "chained consumer price index," which would mean smaller growth in payouts over the long term than under the current system.

Democrats also chatter about whether he harmed his relationship with Pelosi by tacking to her left in the health care battles of 2010. That year, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Democrats' health care overhaul, saying the measure would "lay the groundwork for a more just and prosperous America." But he supported a government-run "public option" insurance plan, which was not included in the final version of the bill. He subsequently became a co-sponsor of legislation to create one.

Becerra sometimes goes along with Republicans on free trade — one of the nation's largest seaports sits near his downtown Los Angeles district. He opposes trade agreements that Democrats criticize as having inadequate protections for workers, such as the 2005 Central America Free Trade Agreement and a 2011 pact with Colombia.

But Becerra did break with the majority of his party in 2011 to vote for pacts with South Korea and Panama. In December 2008, he turned down an offer to become Obama's U.S. trade representative.

Beyond trade, he's almost always a soundly liberal vote. An opponent of the Iraq War, he voted repeatedly against supplemental funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; in 2011 he

expressed reservations about the cost of U.S. intervention in Libya. In 2008 he joined other liberals in opposing two \$700 billion measures — the second of which became law — to assist the ailing financial services sector. He said the legislation didn't do enough for taxpayers or businesses.

Becerra sought the caucus vice chairmanship in 2006 but backed out when Larson, also a Pelosi ally, decided to keep the post. Pelosi responded by creating an “assistant to the speaker” slot that gave Becerra a seat in leadership meetings. When Larson became the caucus chairman in late 2008, Becerra beat the more centrist Marcy Kaptur of Ohio for the vice chairmanship.

Becerra was born in Sacramento. But his mother was born in Mexico, and his American-born father spent much of his early life moving back and forth across the border to earn money by shining shoes, canning tomatoes and working on highway construction crews. Becerra still wears his father's wedding ring as a reminder of his humble origins.

He earned a bachelor's in economics and a law degree from Stanford, paying his way in part by working summers on road construction crews in Sacramento and tutoring students in the community during the school year. A state Senate fellowship cemented his interest in advocacy and policy work. He then worked with a legal services firm in Worcester, Mass., that specialized in helping mentally ill clients. After returning to California, Becerra was an aide for a state senator and worked for the state attorney general.

In 1990, he ran a successful race for a state Assembly seat. Two years later, his interest in the “bigger-picture issues” of national and foreign policy led him to run for Congress.

He easily outdistanced nine other candidates in the 1992 primary, then bested a Republican and three minor-party candidates in November with 58 percent of the vote. He has been re-elected handily since.

In 2001, Becerra ran for mayor of Los Angeles, finishing fifth in a field of 14 candidates.

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## Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

### **CQ Politics in America: District Description**

(Updated: March 17, 2013)

An urban center of thriving business and entertainment as well as some persistent poverty, the Hispanic-majority 34th District takes in the heart of Los Angeles. Centered on a portion of downtown skyscrapers and City Hall, the crescent-shaped district's western wing takes in Koreatown, while its northern edge stretches to residential communities farther from the city center and Occidental College in the Eagle Rock neighborhood.

The district is home to city government and white-collar financial services firms. Farmers Insurance Group, one of Los Angeles' largest employers, has its headquarters just beyond the district's west side. The east-west artery of Wilshire Boulevard, on the southern edge of Koreatown, includes a cluster of professional schools and colleges amid corporate high rises.

Sports and entertainment are also key to the local economy and culture. To the north is baseball's Dodger Stadium, and to the south is the Staples Center, home to basketball's Lakers, Clippers and Sparks and hockey's Kings. Developers hope to build a stadium at the convention center to bring an NFL team back to the city. Other destinations include Walt Disney Concert Hall, home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, home of the Los Angeles Opera.

Transportation hub Union Station and the terminus of the 20-mile Alameda Corridor rail link connecting the city to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are also here. To the southeast are warehouses and wholesalers, as well as poverty- and crime-ravaged areas. Upscale residential communities make up the district's northern half, bordering Glendale and Pasadena.

The relatively compact and downtown-oriented 34th is more than 65 percent Hispanic. Asians — mostly Koreans — account for about 20 percent of the population. The district is one of the most liberal in the state, and less than 13 percent of voters register as Republicans.

### **Major Industry**

Government, entertainment, financial services

### **Cities**

Los Angeles (pt.)

### **Notable**

Dodger Stadium has largest seating capacity of any baseball park in the world, accommodating 56,000 fans.

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## **Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.)**

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

### **Largest Companies**

(Updated: January 2014)

<b>Company</b>	<b>Parent Company</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Total Employees in the District</b>
1 Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.		metals service center	\$8,442,300,000	82
2 Aecom		engineering & architectural	\$8,153,495,000	400

	<b>Company</b>	<b>Parent Company</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Total Employees in the District</b>
	Technology Corporation		services		
	Los Angeles				
3	Unified School District		elementary/secondary school	\$6,131,000,000	1000
	Southern California Gas Company	Pacific Enterprises	natural gas distribution transportation storage and sale	\$3,282,000,000	0
	Los Angeles				
5	Department of Water and Power		water supply service electric services	\$3,081,680,000	0
6	Guess , Inc.		mfg men's and boy's wearwomen's and misses' wearchildren's and infants' apparel	\$2,658,605,000	700
7	Grifols Inc.		whol drugs/sundries mfg pharmaceutical preparations	\$1,264,400,000	0
8	City National Corporation		national commercial bank	\$1,244,154,000	0
9	City National Bank	City National Corporation	national commercial bank state commercial bank	\$1,138,917,000	300
10	American Apparel, Inc.		mfg apparel and accessories	\$617,310,000	0

Notes:

- Only primary industries are listed for any company, although a company may be active in others.
- Annual figures for privately-held companies (including privately-held subsidiaries) are estimated.

Source: Dun & Bradstreet (D&B)

## Rep. Xavier Becerra (D–Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

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(Updated: February 2014)

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34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

### **Committees, Leadership Positions and Caucus Memberships**

(Updated: March 2013)

#### **Committee and Subcommittee Assignments**

- Ways & Means (6th of 16 Democrats)
  - Social Security (ranking member)

## Leadership Positions and Party Committee Assignments

- Caucus Chairman
- House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee (Democratic Caucus Chairman)

## Selected Caucus and Special Organization Memberships

- Congressional Arts Caucus
- Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus
- Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans
- Congressional Children's Working Group
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus
- Congressional Progressive Caucus
- Congressional Wine Caucus
- Democratic Study Group (Executive Committee) (secretary)

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### Elections & Vote for President

(Updated: May 2013)

<b>Election</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Percent</b>
2012 General	Xavier Becerra (D)	120,367	85.6%
	Stephen C. Smith (R)	20,223	14.4%
2012 Primary (Open)	Xavier Becerra (D)	27,939	77.3%
	Stephen C. Smith (R)	5,793	16.0%
	Howard Johnson (PFP)	2,407	6.7%
2010 General <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	76,363	83.8%
	Stephen C. Smith (R)	14,740	16.2%
	write-in (WRI)	3	.0%
2010 Primary <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	20,550	88.0%
	Sal Genovese (D)	2,795	12.0%
2008 General <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	110,955	100.0%
2008 Primary	Xavier Becerra (D)	18,127	100.0%



*CA-31 representative*

2006 General <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	64,952	100.0%
2006 Primary <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	26,904	89.5%
	Sal Genovese (D)	3,227	10.5%
2004 General <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	89,363	80.2%
	Luis Vega (R)	22,048	19.8%
2004 Primary <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	26,308	89.4%
	Mervin Leon Evans (D)	3,103	10.6%
2002 General <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	54,569	81.2%
	Luis Vega (R)	12,674	18.8%
2002 Primary <i>CA-31 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	24,231	100.0%
2000 General <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	83,223	83.3%
	Tony Goss (R)	11,788	11.8%
	Jason Heath (LIBERT)	2,858	2.9%
	Gary Hearne (NL)	2,051	2.0%
2000 Primary (Open) <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	53,145	83.4%
	Tony Goss (R)	6,919	10.9%
	Jason Heath (LIBERT)	1,922	3.0%
	Gary Hearne (NL)	1,718	2.7%
1998 General <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	58,230	81.2%
	Patricia Jean Parker (R)	13,441	18.8%
1998 Primary (Open) <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	38,925	79.8%
	Patricia Jean Parker (R)	9,856	20.2%
1996 General <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	58,283	72.3%
	Patricia Jean Parker (R)	15,078	18.7%
	Pam Probst (LIBERT)	2,759	3.4%
	Shirley Mandel (PFP)	2,499	3.1%
	Rosemary Watson-Frith (NL)	1,971	2.4%
1996 Primary <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	21,310	100.0%

1994 General <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	43,943	66.2%
	David A. Ramirez (R)	18,741	28.2%
	R. William Weilburg (LIBERT)	3,741	5.6%
1994 Primary <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	18,790	81.5%
	Oscar C. Valdes (D)	4,263	18.5%
1992 General <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	48,800	58.4%
	Morry Waksberg (R)	20,034	24.0%
	Blase Bonpane (GREEN)	6,315	7.6%
	Elizabeth A. Nakano (PFP)	6,173	7.4%
	Andrew Consalvo (LIBERT)	2,221	2.7%
1992 Primary <i>CA-30 representative</i>	Xavier Becerra (D)	10,417	31.8%
	Leticia Quezada (D)	7,089	21.7%
	Albert C. Lum (D)	5,128	15.7%
	Jeff J. Penichet (D)	4,136	12.6%
	Gonzalo Molina (D)	2,320	7.1%
	Helen Hernandez (D)	1,908	5.8%
	Roland R. Mora (D)	611	1.9%
	Esca W. Smith (D)	444	1.4%
	Mark Calney (D)	336	1.0%
Ysidro "Sid" Molina (D)	325	1.0%	

[Political Party Abbreviations](#) | [Explanation of Primary Elections](#)

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## Vote for President

**Note:** AP recalculated the 2008 district vote for president to reflect new, post-redistricting boundaries.

Year	Republican		Democratic		Independent	
2012	21,739	14%	127,510	83%	--	--
2008	27,670	20%	108,129	80%	--	--

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## Rep. Xavier Becerra (D–Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

### Interest Group Ratings

(Updated: May 2013)

<b>Year</b>	<b>AFL-CIO</b>	<b>ADA</b>	<b>CCUS</b>	<b>ACU</b>
2012	100%	100%	25%	0%
2011	93%	85%	25%	4%
2010	100%	95%	13%	0%
2009	100%	100%	33%	4%
2008	100%	100%	50%	8%
2007	96%	95%	58%	0%
2006	100%	95%	21%	4%
2005	92%	100%	37%	0%
2004	93%	95%	29%	0%
2003	87%	95%	31%	16%
2002	88%	100%	32%	0%
2001	100%	95%	40%	0%
2000	90%	90%	45%	8%
1999	78%	100%	22%	0%
1998	100%	90%	35%	0%
1997	100%	90%	30%	0%
1996	89%	85%	23%	0%
1995	100%	85%	9%	9%
1994	78%	100%	36%	0%
1993	92%	95%	20%	4%

Source: Compiled by Congressional Quarterly based on information provided by each participating group.  
[Interest Group Descriptions](#)

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