Rep. Peter Welch issued the following statement Saturday in response to the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, a fellow member of the House class of 2006.

"Gabby Giffords is one of my closest friends in Congress. A persistent and effective legislator, she stands out for her warmth, genuine attentiveness and concern for all. Gabby is one of the best listeners I know. Her kindness and graciousness know no bounds.

"As this tragic situation develops, Margaret and I are keeping Gabby, her family, her staff and the many others involved in this horrific episode in our thoughts and prayers."