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Rail Coalition Mourns Passing Of Paul M. Weyrich

WASHINGTON, DC — The States for Passenger Rail Coalition today mourned the passing of Paul M. Weyrich.

Mr. Weyrich was one of the early founders of The Heritage Foundation and a leading force in the conservative movement in America, most recently serving as chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation. He was also a leading proponent of expanding the federal government's role in improving all modes of transportation.

Mr. Weyrich was a Congressional appointee to the bipartisan National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission. The commission in January released a comprehensive plan to increase investment, expand services, repair infrastructure, demand accountability and refocus federal transportation programs.

Mr. Weyrich was among a majority of the commission's members who voted for an increase in the federal gasoline tax by 25 to 40 cents a gallon as one way to fund the needed improvements. He explained that, although he generally opposed increases in federal taxes, he recognized the transportation system's needs were so great that the gas tax had to be increased.

"I admired Paul Weyrich's courage, and his ability to think independently," Frank Busalacchi, chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, said. Mr. Busalacchi, who is also Wisconsin Secretary of Transportation, served on the commission with Mr. Weyrich.

"Paul Weyrich was a conservative who knew when the country's best interests departed from his ideology," Mr. Busalacchi said. "He certainly showed that independence of mind in the transportation arena, and he will be greatly missed."

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