

TRIBUTE TO RICH HANSON

<bullet> Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, I rise today to honor the distinguished service of Richard ``Rich'' Hanson, a Hoosier who has dedicated his life to aviation and public service.

After an extraordinary career in aviation and law enforcement, Rich is retiring as president of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, AMA, after 9 years of distinguished leadership. Headquartered in Muncie, IN, AMA is the Nation's premier organization dedicated to model aviation, a community that inspires innovation, education, and a lifelong passion for flight.

Rich's love of aviation began early in the Civil Air Patrol from 8th through 12th grades. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, trained as a helicopter pilot, and served with distinction in Vietnam. He later continued his service in the Army National Guard, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In 1973, Rich joined the Arizona Department of Public Safety as a helicopter pilot, embarking on another chapter of service. He advanced through the ranks, ultimately commanding aviation operations and leading the department's Criminal Justice Support Bureau. Even during his days off, Rich continued to share his love of flying by piloting tours over the Grand Canyon.

Alongside his public service career, Rich devoted decades to advancing the hobby and science of model aviation through AMA. Rich's efforts have strengthened aviation safety, expanded STEM education opportunities, and inspired countless young people to pursue careers in aviation and aerospace.

Rich's leadership has guided AMA through some of the most significant transitions in its history, particularly the emergence of drone technology and the evolving regulatory landscape surrounding unmanned aircraft systems. Through his steady advocacy, he helped others appreciate the strong safety record and educational value of model aviation, a legacy that will endure for generations.

On behalf of Hoosiers, I extend my thanks and congratulations to Rich Hanson on an impactful career of service and dedication to the field of aviation and his country.<bullet>
