CIVIL AIR PATROL
U.S. AIR FORCE AUXILIARY

**2025 National George Texido Legislative Officer of the Year**

Lt. Col. Adrian Cuarta, Florida Wing

Civil Air Patrol volunteer Lt. Col. Cuarta transformed Florida Wing's approach to government relations by developing a structured legislative engagement program that helped secure state funding for the wing for the first time in its history.

Recognizing that Florida Wing lacked a formal state legislative program and had limited success obtaining financial support from state sources, Cuarta volunteered to serve as both the State Government Relations Advisor and Commander of the State Legislative Squadron. Upon his appointment, he immediately began learning Florida's legislative process while building relationships with elected officials across the state.

During his first 18 months in the role, Cuarta met with 25 Florida legislators and successfully recruited both House and Senate sponsors to support future state appropriation requests. His efforts included meetings within legislators' home districts as well as visits to the State Capitol in Tallahassee during the 2024 legislative session. His goal was to increase awareness of Civil Air Patrol's missions and the value Florida Wing provides to communities throughout the state.

As part of that outreach, Cuarta organized a Civil Air Patrol display during Military-Veterans Week at the Capitol. Staffed by cadets and senior members from the Tallahassee Squadron, the exhibit introduced legislators, staff members, and visitors to the organization's emergency services, aerospace education, and cadet programs. While the 2024 legislative session did not result in an appropriation request because Florida Wing's funding needs had not yet been fully defined, the experience provided valuable insight and helped shape a more comprehensive approach to legislative engagement.

Understanding that meaningful statewide advocacy would require participation beyond a single individual, Cuarta developed the Florida State Legislative Program. Approved by the Wing Commander, the program established State Legislative Group Liaison Officers within each group across the wing. To ensure that legislators received a consistent and coordinated message, Cuarta created and delivered a formal training program for the liaison officers and made the training available to group commanders and wing staff.

He also assembled resource packets containing district-specific legislative information, sample correspondence, and Civil Air Patrol briefing materials. These resources enabled liaison officers to effectively engage legislators within their districts, support local units in developing relationships with elected officials, and strengthen awareness of Civil Air Patrol throughout the state. Through this structure, Florida Wing significantly expanded its ability to engage members of the Florida Legislature and build support for its missions.

As State Government Relations Advisor, Cuarta maintained regular communication with liaison officers and wing leadership, ensuring a coordinated statewide effort. His recruiting initiatives also increased membership in the State Legislative Squadron from three members to fifteen, substantially expanding the program's reach and effectiveness.

To support future funding requests, Cuarta established the State Appropriations Work Group, bringing together leaders from across Florida Wing's directorates to identify mission requirements and document associated costs. The information developed by this group provided the foundation for a formal appropriations request and helped clearly define the wing's funding priorities.

The impact of Cuarta's efforts was demonstrated during Florida's challenging and extended 2025 legislative session when Florida Wing received $62,500 in state funding for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, marking the first state appropriation received by the wing. In addition, he was instrumental in restoring a Florida Division of Emergency Management grant totaling $49,500 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, providing critical funding for much-needed equipment to support Florida Wing operations.

Through initiative, persistence, and strategic leadership, Lt. Col. Cuarta established a coordinated legislative engagement program that strengthened relationships with state leaders, expanded advocacy efforts across Florida Wing, and positioned the organization to pursue continued state support in the years ahead.