

# ASCF Advanced Studies in Culture Foundation



**GERARD ROBINSON** is Vice President for Education at the Advanced Studies in Culture Foundation in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that finances and utilizes basic and applied research produced at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. Robinson has often advanced ideas in the public marketplace, having coedited *Education for Liberation: The Politics of Promise and Reform Inside and Beyond America's Prisons* (2019) and *Education Savings Accounts: The New Frontier in School Choice* (2017). He also cohosts *The Learning Curve Podcast*. Robinson has been published or quoted in *AEI Ideas*, *Gallup News*, *Newsweek*, *the Hill*, *the New York Times*, *the Washington Examiner*, *the Washington Post*, *the Wall Street Journal*, and *US News & World Report*.

From 2017 to 2020, prior to his work at the Foundation, Robinson was Executive Director of the Center for Advancing Opportunity (CAO). CAO is a Washington, DC-based research and education initiative created by a partnership with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, the Charles Koch Foundation, and Koch Industries. The mission of CAO is to develop evidence-based solutions to the most pressing education, entrepreneurship, and criminal justice issues in fragile communities throughout the United States by working with faculty and students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other postsecondary institutions. Prior to CAO, Robinson worked as a Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC.

From 2011 to 2012, Robinson served as Commissioner of Education for the State of Florida, where he managed 3,000 employees dispersed over several divisions. In addition to supporting the education initiatives of Governor Rick Scott, Robinson assisted in the development of a \$16 billion education budget and instituted for the first time in a decade new achievement level scores for grades three through ten in reading and grades three through eight in mathematics. He also chaired a task force to improve opportunities for English learners and students with special needs, adopted new competency and skill standards for STEM teacher certification, developed new pre- and post-assessment measures for the voluntary pre-K program, and approved several new degree programs for Florida's colleges. Robinson also managed several federally funded programs and partnered with the Florida Chamber of Commerce and Council of 100 to strengthen career and college readiness.

Before working for the State of Florida, Robinson served as Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition to supporting the education initiatives of Governor Bob McDonnell, he provided guidance to 16 public universities, the community college system, five higher education and research centers, the Department of Education, and state-supported museums. Robinson managed the governor's Opportunity to Learn agenda in 2010, which produced new laws for traditional public schools, virtual schools, charter schools, and college laboratory schools. In 2011, he directed the Top Jobs for the 21st Century agenda, which produced the *Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011* to support conferral of 100,000 additional degrees by 2025.

Between 2005 and 2010, Robinson was Director and President of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, which was a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization that supported parental choice policies empowering low-income and working-class black families. He has spoken to university audiences at Oxford University in England, the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and universities throughout the United States. His international education tours also include travel to China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Gambia, Germany, Haiti, Israel, and Senegal.

Robinson earned an EdM from Harvard University, a BA from Howard University, and an AA from El Camino Community College. He is married and has three daughters.