

# *National Rifle Association Member Blames Charleston Victims for Own Deaths*

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Washington, June 22 (RHC)-- A board member of the National Rifle Association (NRA), the most powerful gun lobby in the world, has suggested that the victims of a mass shooting at an historic African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina, "might be alive" if they had been carrying guns.

Board member Charles Cotton posted a comment on-line blaming Clementa Pinckney, the pastor at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church and a state senator, for his own death as well as those of his congregants in Wednesday's rampage.

"Eight of his church members who might be alive if he had expressly allowed members to carry handguns in church are dead," Cotton wrote on a Texas gun forum. "Innocent people died because of his position on a political issue."

As a state legislator, Pinckney had voted against a law allowing gun owners to carry concealed weapons in South Carolina. Clementa Pinckney was among the nine victims of the Charleston church shooting.

The National Rifle Association has repeatedly blasted Congress for denying Americans the ability to carry loaded guns. Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president and CEO of the NRA, urged lawmakers earlier

this year to pass legislation allowing gun owners to carry concealed weapons across the United States.

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