Contingency Planning/
Crisis Management-
Connecticut’s Response
How to Address the Media
NASED – Winter Meeting 2016
November 2010 – High profile race for governor in Connecticut involving a very wealthy businessman from Greenwich and a former mayor of Stamford.

More than a dozen polling places in the largest city of Connecticut- Bridgeport – ran out of ballots. No contingency planning; voters were sent away or turned away on their own when they saw the long lines. Court ordered polls to remain open for two additional hours, to allow time for voters to return.

New administration at the Secretary of the State’s office in 2011 vowed that this would never happen again.
Contingency Planning/Crisis Management

› Our office proposed legislation, passed by the General Assembly, (C.G.S. Sec. 9-174a) and drafted regulations for a model emergency plan to cover any emergency that could occur during or leading up to an election.

› The registrars of voters in consultation with the town clerk were required to create a similar plan for their respective municipality, with approval by the town’s legislative body. If the municipality failed to create and approve an emergency plan within six months of our model plan, the municipality shall be deemed to have adopted the Secretary of the State’s plan.
This plan must cover at least the following contingencies:

1. Solutions for ballot shortages;
2. Strategies to implement in the event of
   - A shortage or absence of poll workers,
   - A loss of power,
   - A fire or the sounding of an alarm within a polling place,
   - Voting machine malfunctions,
   - A weather or other natural disaster, a security threat, and a nuclear disaster.
   - The need to remove a poll worker or moderator and to replace such worker or moderator, and
   - Disorder in and around the polling place.
Halloween Weekend, October 29, 2011

Freak snow/ice storm left 1 to 2 feet of snow and 850,000 homes without power and, in many cases, without water.

Unprecedented coordination with CT Light and Power to restore electricity to all 800 polling places.
Superstorm Sandy hit Connecticut on October 29, 2012.
Downed power lines, severe flooding and damage to homes and polling places.
Presidential election less than a week away.
Look to emergency plans to be sure absentee ballots continue to be issued and received in time to be counted and that polling places are operable.
How to Address the Media

› Speak in one voice, not multiple voices.

› Role of Communications Director: Know what your message is - tell your story; stick to basics; anticipate the questions and frame answers; work with social media and other groups that will help you promote the work of the office.

› Okay to be the subject expert, but let Communication Director speak for Elections Division in public and over the telephone, especially in managing a crisis.