

Statement in support of Ranked-Choice Voting

If democracy in our country faces severe challenges, that is partly because it is so imperfectly practiced. In presidential elections, the Electoral College makes a travesty of the one-person-one-vote ideal, yet the National Popular Vote Compact is struggling to reach critical mass. And in elections at all levels, the system of victory by simple plurality encourages tactical voting, forcing many voters to painfully abandon their preferred candidate so as not to enable the least favored rival to win. With ranked-choice voting, the true level of support for each candidate can be shown without fear of playing the spoiler. And the eventual winner will be the most broadly acceptable candidate. (Maine's leading role in instituting ranked-choice voting, let us remember, is traceable to the gubernatorial victory of Paul LePage in a three-way race where a large majority of the voters would have been happier with either of his opponents.)

Our Constitution does not call for a two-party system. Multiple voices should be given a fair chance to earn public support, honestly expressed in the voting booth.

At a time when vitriol in politics is high and growing, ranked-choice voting also discourages negative campaigning. The candidate who wants to be more voters' first or alternate choice will avoid insults and mudslinging, as well as extremist positions. Consensus is served, and civility.

For these reasons and more, I support instituting ranked-choice voting in all possible elections.

Ann Marlowe, New Haven

Marlowe2x@aol.com