Ranked-choice voting is a game-changer

To the editor:

In all the focus on last year’s presidential election, people may have forgotten something remarkable that happened right here in Maine. We passed the ranked-choice voting referendum. This is not just some technical change to how we fill out a ballot - this is a game-changer. And the game that we have changed is the two-party system that everyone is so sick of, and that proved so toxic in 2016.

The two-party system isn’t a conspiracy or a law - it evolved because our electoral rules result in the spoiler phenomenon: when voters don’t stick together behind one of the two big-party candidates, they run the risk of handing the election to the side that does.

Ranked-choice voting eliminates the spoiler effect, and thereby eliminates that risk. Voters are now free to vote for third-party and independent candidates without fear of electing the candidate they like the least. The logical outcome of this change is that voters will do just that, giving third parties greater portions of the vote in elections, more victories, and greater power and relevancy.

This is a triumph for democracy and the voters, who can now vote their consciences and will have more choices. Unfortunately, some legislators, including state Sen. Dana Dow, R-Waldoboro, don’t see it that way and are throwing up roadblocks by requesting a court opinion on the constitutionality of the law.

The Maine Supreme Judicial Court will have the final say sometime this spring, and I hope they will do the right thing by either denying this unnecessary request or, failing that, backing up the will of Maine voters to do away with the limiting and discouraging twoparty system that has dominated our politics for far too long.

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The worst of obscenities

To the editor:

As I always do, I read with interest comments in last week’s LCN. I admonished letter writer about what 1930s Italians called obscenities. Let’s stop using it.

Now, if we’re concerned about what 1930s Italians called