

Bye week
comes at key
moment for
Nebraska

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New ads
target
Ricketts,
Osborn

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FISCHER VISITS COLUMBUS



JARED BARTON, COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., is pictured at The Columbus Telegram office on Oct. 13, 2026. Fischer visited Columbus to tour the Dorothy Lynch plant in Duncan, talk to administrators at Central Community College and meet the staff at the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce.

Senator sees promise in local economy

JARED BARTON
Columbus Telegram

Everyone loves a good field trip, including senators.

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., got to check out some spots in the Columbus area last week, including a tour of the Dorothy Lynch plant in Duncan, a stop at Central Community College, conversations with the crew at the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce and an interview at The Columbus Telegram.

The diversity of businesses across the state impresses her every time she gets to do a tour of an area, Fischer said.

“When you are able to look at all the different entrepreneurs out there and what they’re developing, and you look at an established company like Dorothy Lynch in

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Duncan and what they provide for their community, that’s fascinating,” she said.

Touring educational institutions like Central Community College and seeing the way administrators work with students and the community impressed her.

After meeting the women at the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Fischer said she sees great things ahead for the organization.

“We had a good visit about leadership and working for communities and service, and they’re a great bunch. They’re going to do a great job at the chamber,”

Fischer said.

In her other travels, Fischer has seen a lot of programs that show a bright future for the state, particularly in child care and Head Start-like programs. Those are exactly the kinds of things she works on in the Senate, such as a recent bill she introduced with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., the Child Care Modernization Act.

The bill reauthorizes the Child Care Development Block Grant, rebalances cost estimation models based on actual cost and not market rates, expands supply options and allows for more flexibility in fund usage.

“It’s childcare, it’s job training, it’s housing. That’s in every single community,” Fischer said.

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Who funded Working People, America First parties?

Law doesn’t require
disclosure

ZACH WENDLING
Nebraska Examiner

LINCOLN — Candidates and ballot-measure campaigns petitioning to appear on Nebraska’s ballot must disclose how much is spent on signature gathering. But Nebraska law doesn’t require new political parties to disclose their finances until they are qualified to have candidates on the ballot.

For 2026, that leaves a gap of at least two months of reporting for the new Nebraska Working People Party and America First Party that likely will never be disclosed for signature gathering or litigation, unless party officials voluntarily disclose the information.

The Working People Party said it won’t, and one party official cited the lack of transparency in his resignation. By an Oct. 5 reporting deadline, neither party had filed a state disclosure report.

“This cycle has shown us that absolutely this is an area where money is going to be spent to impact politics in meaningful ways that Nebraskans want to know about, but they can’t right now. They can’t do anything,” Gavin Geis, executive director of Common Cause Nebraska, told the Nebraska Examiner.



Geis

‘Law doesn’t really
contemplate this’

Geis said he’s fielded questions “again and again” about who funded the creation of the two new state political parties this summer.

“I have to tell them time and again, ‘I’m sorry, but the law doesn’t really contemplate this,’” Geis said.

Laws regulating campaign finance are different for the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, for the state, and the Federal Election Commission, for federal candidates.

In Nebraska, the reporting threshold is \$5,000 raised or spent toward the goal of being elected and/or supporting or opposing ballot questions.

An Examiner review of petitions for the two new political parties showed most of the thousands of signatures, if not all, came from paid circulators.

Some circulators were from Nebraska, but a few dozen hailed from out of state, including Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee and Texas.

Geis said he can understand why this issue wasn’t pondered sooner. The tactic of forming new political parties as a strategy could be new, he said, and it remains to be seen whether the tactic is successful this November or whether it will be repeated in Nebraska or elsewhere.

“You can’t really wave it aside and say, ‘Oh, it doesn’t have any impact.’ It clearly does,” Geis said. “People are clearly watching and curious and want to know more.”

Parties certified Aug. 26

The NADC, the state agency overseeing campaign finance for Nebraska candidates and issues, confirmed in a July 21 email that under state law, a political party is only considered a “committee” for campaign finance disclosure purposes once it qualifies for the ballot.

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