By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Deb Fischer told supporters Tuesday in Imperial she wasn't taking anything for granted in her efforts to become Nebraska's next U.S. Senator.

During an hour-long stop at the Larry and Dianne Radcliffe home, Fischer, a Republican, conceded the polls are tightening between her and Democratic challenger Bob Kerrey.

"I know I have great support from rural Nebraska. I never trust polls, but I feel good and believe we will win this," she said.

Fischer said Kerrey's $2 million in negative ads have been a factor in the race that she led by double digits a couple of months ago.

She specifically noted her challenger's ads in recent weeks regarding a land deal involving her neighbors and the Fischers' ranch in Cherry County.

"When bashing my ranch, he is bashing my family and I don't like that," she said.

A supporter in the audience responded, "He's desperate."

Fischer said she believes Nebraskans respond better to positive campaigning "and we'll continue to do that" until the election next week.

She said she's happy the majority of her support is from within the state, noting 70 percent of contributions to her campaign have been from Nebraskans.

Seventy percent of Kerrey's contributions have come from outside the state, she added, including New York where he had served as a college president. Just this week, she said, Kerrey endorsed Sen. Harry Reid's re-election.

Fischer has had recent newspaper endorsements from the Omaha World-Herald, Grand Island Independent and Scottsbluff Star Herald.

Other groups who have endorsed her in the campaign, she told supporters, include Farm Bureau, Nebraska Cattlemen, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Business, National Right to Life and the NRA.

On a question about her interest in Senate committees, she said she would talk with Nebraska's other U.S. senator, Mike Johanns, to determine what would be best for the state.

She said three of her interests for committee work would be on the armed services, commerce and energy committees. Johanns already serves on the ag committee, so she would not be able to serve on it.

About 30 people were at the mid-morning campaign event.

From Imperial, she was traveling on to Benkelman, Trenton and McCook on Tuesday.