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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 1/19/97
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CONFIDENCE STRONG;
CLINTON BENEFITS

Extraordinarily strong consumer confidence ushered Bill Clinton into his second term this week, boosting the public's mood - and along with it, the president's popularity, a new ABC News/Money magazine poll has found.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index rebounded after losing ground last week, gaining four points to -3 on its scale of +100 to -100. That's back to its best level at the start of a new year since the poll began in late 1985.

The index is based on views of the economy, personal finances and the buying climate. Best is personal finances: Today 60 percent of Americans rate theirs positively, two points short of the record, set Dec. 20, 1987.

INDEX - The index peaked at -1 on Dec. 1, a level last seen (fleetinglly) in September 1988. It averaged -11 last year, its best since 1989. It averaged a dismal -30 from 1990-95, compared to -9 in pre-recession 1986-90.

	ABC/Money Index
Today	-3
1996 average	-11
1990-95	-30
1986-90	-9
Full average	-20

CLINTON - To the extent that Americans approve of Clinton's performance in office - and 60 percent do - the main reason is economic. In an ABC News poll last week, 61 percent approved specifically of Clinton's handling of the economy, a record for this president.

Moreover, nearly eight in 10 said they're doing as well or better financially now than four years ago. Fifty-eight percent gave Clinton credit for the economy's improvement. And the number who cited economic issues as the nation's main problem was half what it was when he first took office.

The only danger to Clinton is that if the economy turned sour again, so could his ratings. Absent war, economic sentiment is the strongest factor in presidential approval. And expectations are high: Sixty percent expect more "substantial progress" on the economy from Clinton in his second term.

INDICES - As usual, ratings of personal finances are the only positive part of the index. Fifty-two percent call the economy "not so good" or "poor" - a majority, but far fewer than the index average of 69 percent negative. Sixty-three percent of Americans call the buying climate "not so good" or "poor."

Ratings of the buying climate have lagged - they're three points worse than their pre-recession average - while views of the economy have powered the recent

resurgence of confidence; they're seven points better than their pre-recession average. Views of personal finances are three points better.

All three are far above their average from 1990-93, when faith in the economy was at its worst.

Positive ratings for...	Today	1990-93	1986-90
National economy	48	15	41
Buying climate	37	26	39
Personal finances	60	49	57

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, blacks, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +10 among men but -15 among women; +1 among whites but -35 among blacks; +29 in higher-income households but -42 in the lowest; and +16 among people who have attended college but -30 among high school dropouts.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-two percent rate the economy negatively, up one point this week. It averaged 61 percent last year, compared to 85 percent from 1990-93 and 59 percent from 1986-90. The best, 52 percent positive, was Dec. 1, 1996. The worst, 93 percent negative, was in late 1991 and early 1992. The average for the life of the index is 69 percent negative.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty percent rate their finances positively, up four points this week. It averaged 57 percent last year, compared to 49 percent in the 1990-93 slump and 57 percent before the recession. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993; the best, 62 percent positive Dec. 20, 1987. The full average is 54 percent positive.

BUYING CLIMATE - Sixty-three percent call this a bad time to buy things, down two points this week. It averaged 63 percent last year, compared to 74 percent during the 1990-93 slump and 61 percent before the recession. The worst is 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986. The full average is 66 percent negative.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	52% neg	60% pos	63% neg
1996 Average	61% neg	57% pos	63% neg
Recession Average (mid-1990 to 1993)	85% neg	51% neg	74% neg
Pre-Recession Avg. (1986 to mid-1990)	59% neg	57% pos	61% neg
Full Average (1986-1995)	69% neg	54% pos	66% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	52% pos	62% pos	52% pos

METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. Interviewing by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,042 interviews in the month ending Jan. 19 and have an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The ABC/Money index is derived as follows: The negative response to each index question is subtracted from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are then added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online.

01/19/97	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg

Group	-----							
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-3	-7	-6	-5	-15	-1	-18	-10
State of Economy	-4	-2	-6	-14	-36	4	-36	-20
Personal Finances	20	12	14	20	18	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-26	-30	-26	-22	-28	-18	-30	-25

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	10	7	4	-1	-8	10	-9	1
Women	-15	-19	-15	-8	-23	-8	-31	-19
Age:								
18 - 34	-6	-5	-3	-7	-12	-1	-23	-9
35 - 44	0	-2	-10	-18	-18	0	-23	-12
45 - 54	1	-6	0	12	-22	12	-27	-9
55 - 64	-10	-17	-11	5	-19	12	-40	-12
65 +	-2	-9	-8	-6	-15	9	-22	-8
Income:								
Under \$15K	-42	-45	-45	-42	-53	-32	-58	-47
\$15K To \$24.9K	-26	-31	-26	-22	-24	-12	-40	-29
\$25K To \$39.9K	-1	-8	5	-18	-13	5	-26	-11
\$40K To \$49.9K	8	8	-4	4	-23	26	-23	5
Over \$50K	29	32	31	31	18	37	12	24
Region:								
Northeast	-3	-8	-9	-14	-24	-3	-34	-16
Midwest	-3	-7	-7	9	-7	10	-15	-1
South	-5	-7	-5	-2	-17	1	-24	-11
West	-1	-4	-5	-16	-17	6	-23	-11
Race:								
White	1	-1	-2	-3	-10	4	-14	-6
Black	-35	-42	-24	-24	-51	-10	-51	-34
Politics:								

Republican	7	4	1	-2	1	12	-12	1
Democrat	-8	-9	2	-6	-27	10	-27	-11
Independent	-4	-10	-15	-11	-17	-4	-25	-15
Education:								
< High School	-30	-36	-32	-28	-43	-20	-47	-37
High Sch. Grad.	-17	-19	-15	-7	-20	-4	-26	-16
College +	16	12	10	5	-3	16	-4	5
Home:								
Own	4	2	-4	2	-10	5	-11	-3
Rent	-21	-25	-13	-18	-29	-11	-37	-26
Marital Status:								
Single	-7	-8	-7	-16	-12	0	-26	-12
Married	4	-1	-3	2	-12	4	-12	-4
Sep/Wid/Div	-24	-25	-19	-18	-32	-9	-43	-27
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	5	6	6	1	-11	11	-11	-1
Part-Time	3	-13	-16	-15	-22	3	-35	-18
Not Employed	-15	-21	-20	-9	-31	-5	-33	-19