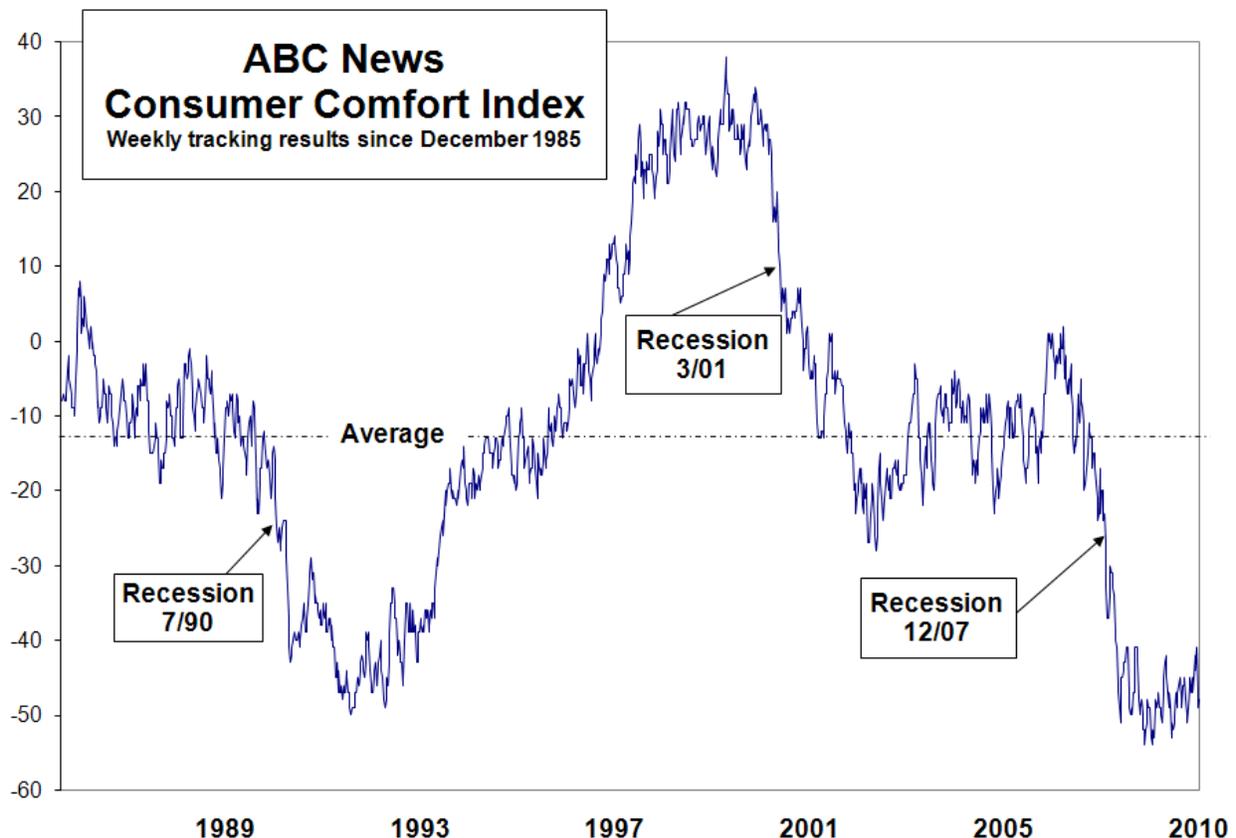


## Confidence Lays Low

To find Barack Obama's woes in advance of his first State of the Union address, look no further than consumer confidence: A year to the week after hitting its record low in the past generation, it's barely any better.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -48 on its scale of +100 to -100, essentially flat the past three weeks after a steep start-of-year dive. It's within sight of its all-time low, -54 this week last year. That compares to a long-term average of -13 in 24 years of weekly polls.

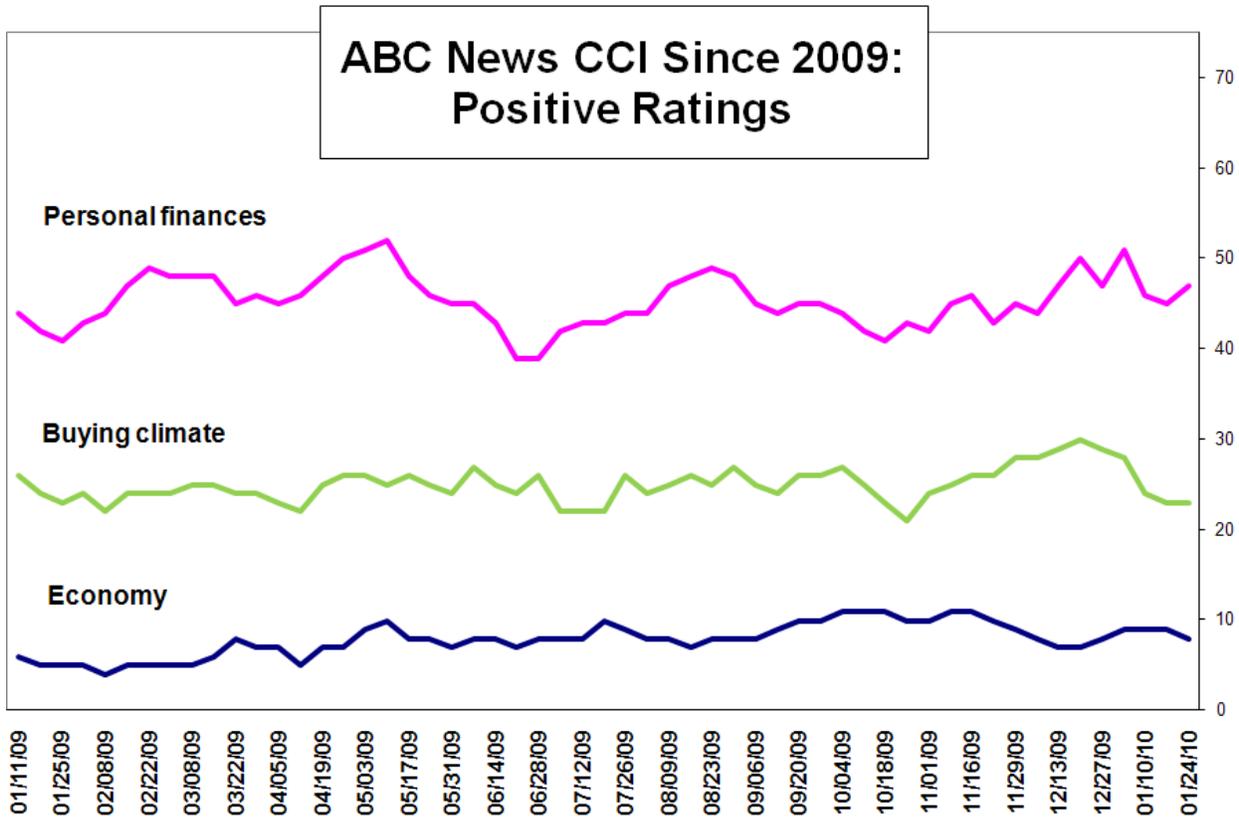
Views of the national economy are the chain around confidence's ankle; more than nine in 10 Americans continue to say the economy's in bad shape. The other two components of the index aren't quite so dire, but hardly good: More than three-quarters rate the buying climate negatively and more than half say the same of their own finances.



Confidence is closely aligned with unemployment, now in double digits for three months, a first since 1982-1983. Housing prices don't help; the latest Case-Shiller Home Price Index reports home values down by 5.3 percent since last year in 20 of the nation's largest cities.

INDEX – Forty-seven percent of Americans rate their personal finances positively, down from 51 percent three weeks ago; it’s 10 points below its long-term average and has been below a majority for 76 of the last 79 weeks, a record.

Twenty-three percent call it a good time to spend money, down 7 points since the peak of the holiday shopping season and 14 points worse than average. And only 8 percent rate the national economy positively, 30 points below average and in single digits for nine weeks straight.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	09/10	'85-'10
National economy	8%	9	8	38
Buying climate	23	23	25	37
Personal finances	47	45	45	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-48	-49	-48	-13

TREND – The index has taken a turn for the worse after a brief run-up. It reached -41 Jan. 3, a 16-month high, only to fall back sharply to -47 a week later – a very unusual 6-point one-week slide. This week’s rating of -48 matches its average since 2009.

The CCI has been below -40 for a record 92 consecutive weeks. And this week the long-term average inched down a point, to -13, a number that rarely moves given over 1,250 weeks of data.

	ABC News CCI	
This week	-48	
Last week	-49	
2009 high	-42	Dec. 20 and May 10
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-48	Worst full year
2000 average	+29	Best full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Average since 12/85	-13	

**GROUPS** – The index as usual is higher among better-off Americans, but has been negative across the board for 48 weeks straight, the longest such run in available data since 1990.

It's -12 among those with the highest incomes (their lowest since late November) but -75 among those with the lowest, -34 among people who've attended college vs. -61 among those who never finished high school, -44 among homeowners but -58 among renters and -48 among whites while -60 among blacks.

Notable this week is the lack of difference between men and women, -47 each; it's just the 13<sup>th</sup> time since 1990 the index hasn't been numerically higher among men.

Likewise, the usual partisan gap has disappeared. This week the index is -50 for Republicans vs. -48 for Democrats (and -46 for independents). The insignificant 2-point gap in the Democrats' favor is very unusual; this is only the 12<sup>th</sup> time it's occurred. The index usually is distinctly higher among Republicans – by an average 18 points last year, 41 points in 2008 and 32 points long-term.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC News CCI:

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Eight percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 9 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 4 percent Feb. 8, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	8	1	7	92	44	48
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	34	62	40	23

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Forty-seven percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 45 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 39 percent June 28 and 21, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	47	4	43	53	35	18
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	51	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-three percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things, the same as last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent, last reached Oct. 19, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	23	2	21	77	47	30
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	34	63	42	21

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for the ABC News Consumer Comfort Index are reported in a four-week rolling average. This week’s results are based on telephone interviews among a random national sample of 1,000 adults in the four weeks ending Jan. 24, 2010. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are 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.

ERRATA – A programming problem at ICR created errors in crosstabulated results by income group. The CCI overall and in other crosstabulations was not affected. This report has been updated with corrected results by income group.

Analysis by Peyton M. Craighill.

ABC News polls can be found online at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

01/24/10	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	-48	-49	-44	-51	-54	-41	-54	-48
State of Economy	-84	-82	-84	-80	-90	-78	-92	-84
Personal Finances	-6	-10	-6	-14	-18	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-54	-54	-42	-58	-54	-40	-58	-50
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	-47	-44	-31	-42	-49	-28	-49	-41
Women	-47	-52	-54	-57	-57	-45	-60	-52
Age:								
18 - 34	-39	-49	-37	-44	-58	-31	-61	-43
35 - 44	-51	-47	-53	-55	-52	-35	-62	-49
45 - 54	-56	-52	-39	-51	-53	-36	-65	-48
55 - 64	-48	-46	-45	-49	-54	-39	-65	-51
65+	-45	-46	-42	-52	-46	-40	-56	-48

Income:								
Under \$15K	-75	-74	-68	-80	-78	-57	-84	-73
\$15K To \$24.9K	-64	-63	-66	-63	-76	-40	-81	-65
\$25K To \$39.9K	-57	-60	-54	-58	-71	-49	-73	-59
\$40K To \$49.9K	-46	-51	-40	-41	-52	-27	-68	-47
Over \$50K	-25	-26	-27	-32	-33	-19	-35	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-38	-45	-37	-46	-37	-24	-54	-38
\$75K To \$99.9K	-11	-19	-40	-23	-49	-11	-52	-29
Over \$100K	-12	-3	-8	-18	-12	5	-31	-14
Region:								
Northeast	-45	-49	-43	-56	-48	-38	-62	-49
Midwest	-53	-55	-45	-52	-56	-41	-57	-48
South	-49	-50	-40	-54	-59	-39	-59	-48
West	-40	-39	-44	-35	-46	-19	-58	-42
Race:								
White	-48	-46	-40	-50	-49	-38	-52	-46
Black	-60	-65	-57	-59	-66	-41	-68	-55
Politics:								
Republican	-50	-54	-40	-35	-37	-28	-54	-37
Democrat	-48	-52	-50	-51	-65	-40	-65	-53
Independent	-46	-41	-37	-55	-50	-37	-59	-48
Education:								
< High School	-61	-57	-55	-80	-67	-49	-82	-65
High Sch. Grad.	-64	-62	-51	-55	-60	-46	-65	-55
College +	-34	-39	-34	-39	-46	-30	-46	-38
Home:								
Own	-44	-46	-40	-45	-49	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-58	-56	-49	-61	-67	-47	-71	-59
Marital Status:								
Single	-54	-58	-42	-52	-59	-34	-66	-50
Married	-37	-37	-38	-45	-45	-33	-47	-40
Sep/Wid/Div	-65	-64	-53	-59	-66	-50	-70	-60
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-37	-34	-33	-40	-45	-28	-45	-37
Part-Time	-52	-66	-53	-42	-62	-31	-67	-50
Not Employed	-55	-55	-48	-60	-59	-48	-64	-56

\*\*\*END\*\*\*