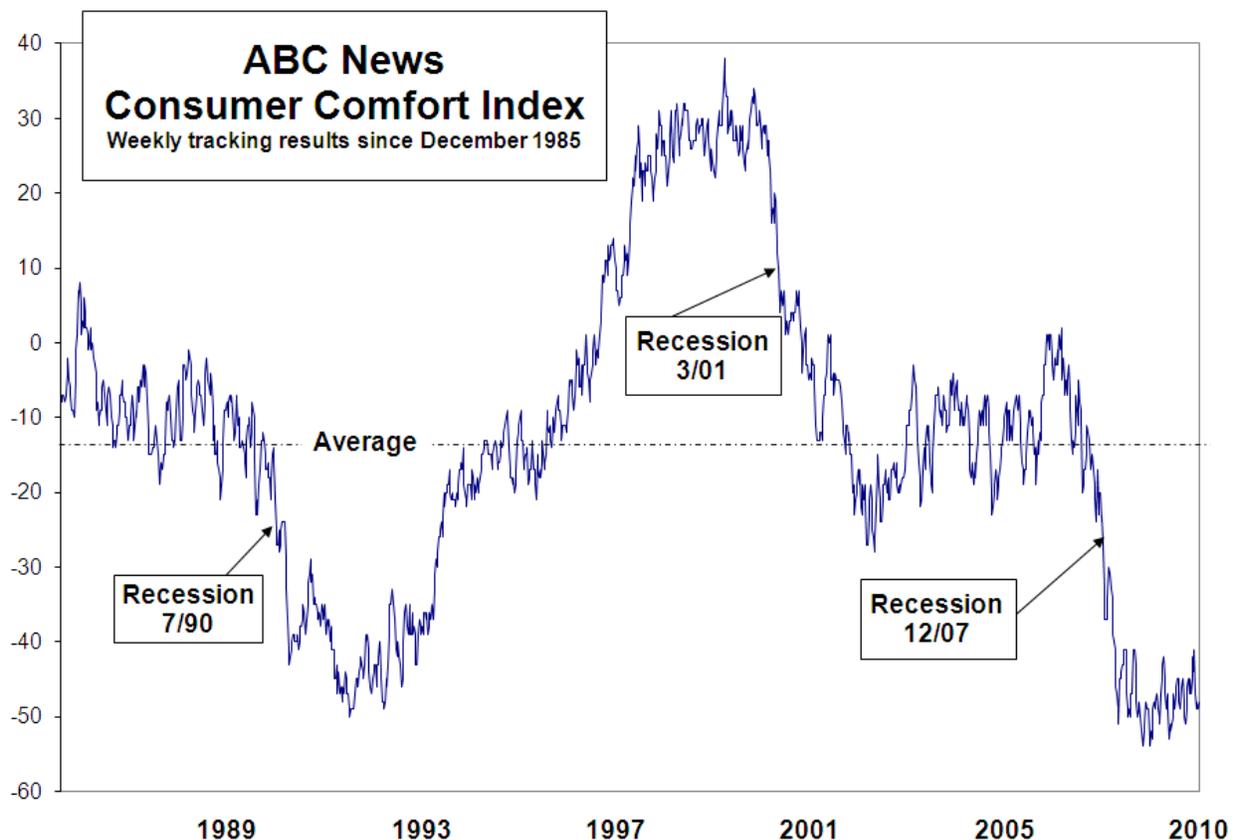


Consumer Confidence: Start Shoveling

Like Washington D.C., consumer confidence is impressively snowed in.

More than nine in 10 Americans say the economy's in bad shape, more than three-quarters call it a bad time to spend money and more than half say their own finances are in the freezer. The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index, based on these, stands at an icy -48 on its scale of +100 to -100.

The gale's been blowing a long while. While the CCI inched up to -41 at the start of the year, its best in over a year, that's awful by historical standards. And it's worsened since, buried at around its current level for five weeks straight. The index is 6 points from its all-time low just over a year ago, and a world away from its long-term average, -13, in 24 years of weekly polls.



Unemployment, which is closely linked to consumer sentiment, did ease a bit in January. But 9.7 percent is hardly a number to rally around.

Last week	-49	
2010 high	-41	Jan. 3
2010 low	-49	Jan. 17 and 31
2010 average	-47	
2009 average	-48	Worst full year
2000 average	+29	Best full year
Jan. 25, 2009	-54	Record low
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 50 weeks straight, the longest such run in available data since 1990.

It's -4 among those with the highest incomes but -67 among those with the lowest, -37 among people who've attended college vs. -64 among those who never finished high school, -45 among homeowners but -58 among renters and -41 among men vs. -53 among women.

The usual racial gap essentially has disappeared, with the index at -48 among whites and -49 among blacks; long-term, by contrast, blacks have been less positive by an average 28 points. Relatedly, the Republican-Democratic gap is narrower than usual, with Republicans 9 points more positive, compared with 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; it was 22 percent 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	1	22	77	49	28
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 Feb. 8, 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.

Analysis by Peyton M. Craighill.

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

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02/08/10	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	-47	-46	-53	-41	-53	-48
State of Economy	-84	-82	-82	-78	-92	-78	-92	-84
Personal Finances	-6	-10	-8	-10	-12	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-54	-56	-52	-50	-56	-40	-58	-50

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-41	-47	-42	-41	-46	-28	-47	-41
Women	-53	-52	-51	-50	-59	-45	-60	-52
Age:								
18 - 34	-48	-50	-49	-41	-58	-31	-61	-43
35 - 44	-43	-47	-49	-50	-39	-35	-62	-49
45 - 54	-50	-52	-41	-47	-52	-36	-65	-48
55 - 64	-51	-51	-47	-48	-63	-39	-65	-51
65+	-47	-47	-45	-45	-51	-40	-56	-48
Income:								
Under \$15K	-67	-75	-74	-78	-84	-57	-84	-73
\$15K To \$24.9K	-72	-70	-66	-47	-72	-40	-81	-65
\$25K To \$39.9K	-64	-61	-64	-50	-66	-49	-73	-59
\$40K To \$49.9K	-48	-49	-44	-42	-59	-27	-68	-47
Over \$50K	-28	-29	-24	-30	-31	-19	-35	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-57	-55	-37	-40	-48	-24	-57	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-14	-11	-28	-26	-44	-11	-44	-28
Over \$100K	-4	-6	-1	-25	-2	5	-31	-14
Region:								
Northeast	-48	-48	-46	-46	-53	-38	-62	-49
Midwest	-50	-52	-50	-42	-53	-41	-57	-48
South	-46	-47	-51	-50	-57	-39	-57	-48
West	-47	-52	-37	-41	-44	-19	-58	-42
Race:								

White	-48	-51	-43	-46	-49	-38	-52	-46
Black	-49	-47	-63	-53	-68	-41	-68	-55
Politics:								
Republican	-42	-46	-49	-35	-33	-28	-54	-37
Democrat	-51	-51	-50	-50	-63	-40	-63	-52
Independent	-49	-49	-43	-42	-53	-37	-59	-48
Education:								
< High School	-64	-70	-54	-65	-66	-49	-82	-65
High Sch. Grad.	-60	-61	-57	-56	-62	-46	-65	-55
College +	-37	-39	-38	-35	-44	-30	-46	-38
Home:								
Own	-45	-46	-44	-42	-49	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-58	-61	-56	-52	-65	-47	-71	-58
Marital Status:								
Single	-49	-53	-56	-46	-59	-34	-66	-50
Married	-39	-40	-37	-43	-43	-33	-47	-40
Sep/Wid/Div	-66	-68	-59	-55	-67	-50	-70	-60
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-34	-37	-33	-36	-41	-28	-45	-37
Part-Time	-59	-57	-60	-53	-56	-31	-67	-50
Not Employed	-57	-58	-56	-52	-64	-48	-64	-56

END