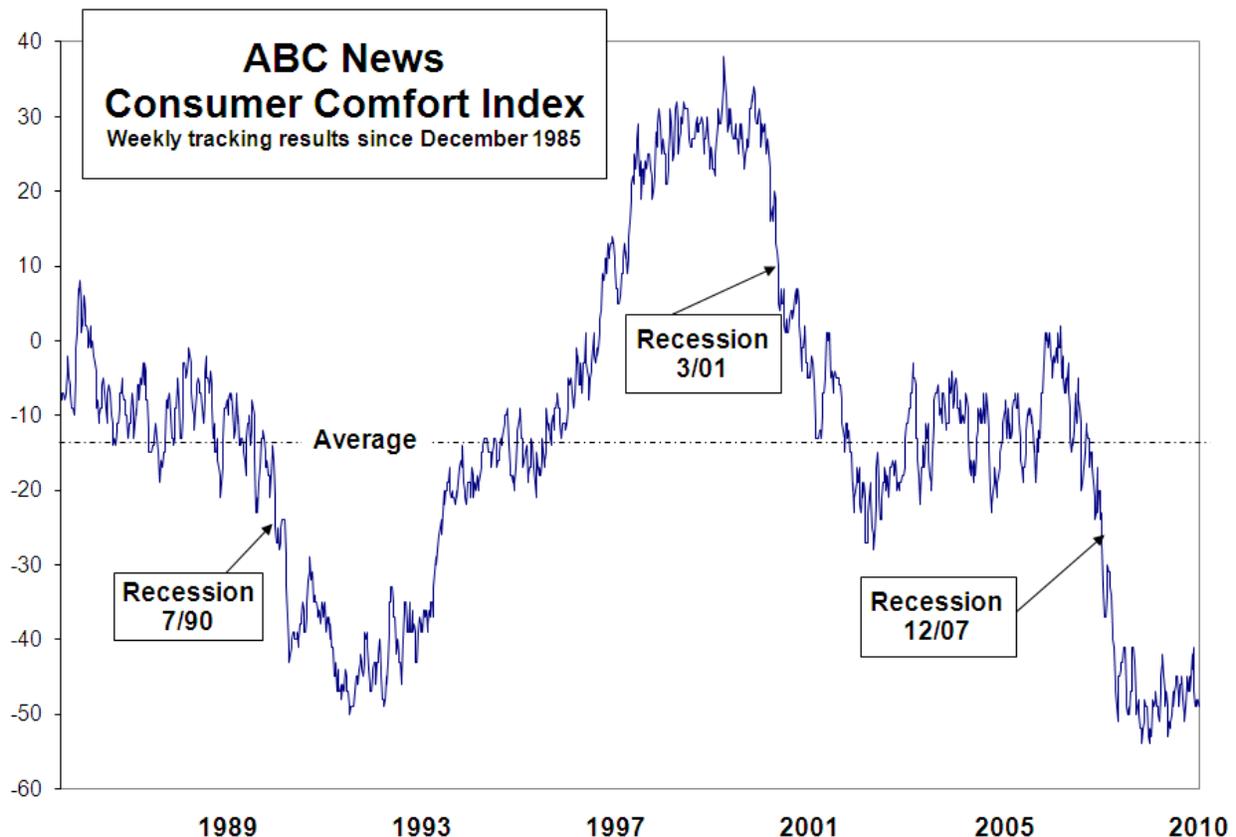


Consumer Confidence Near Low Point, With Little Optimism About Economy

Consumer confidence is on a cold streak, locked in place since the beginning of the year at very near its worst-ever rating – and more than three in four think the economy is stalled or will decline in coming months.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, in a 2-point range and without significant movement for the past six weeks. It is hovering just 5 points from its all-time low, -54 last January, and is far worse than its long-term average, -13 in 24 years of weekly polls.

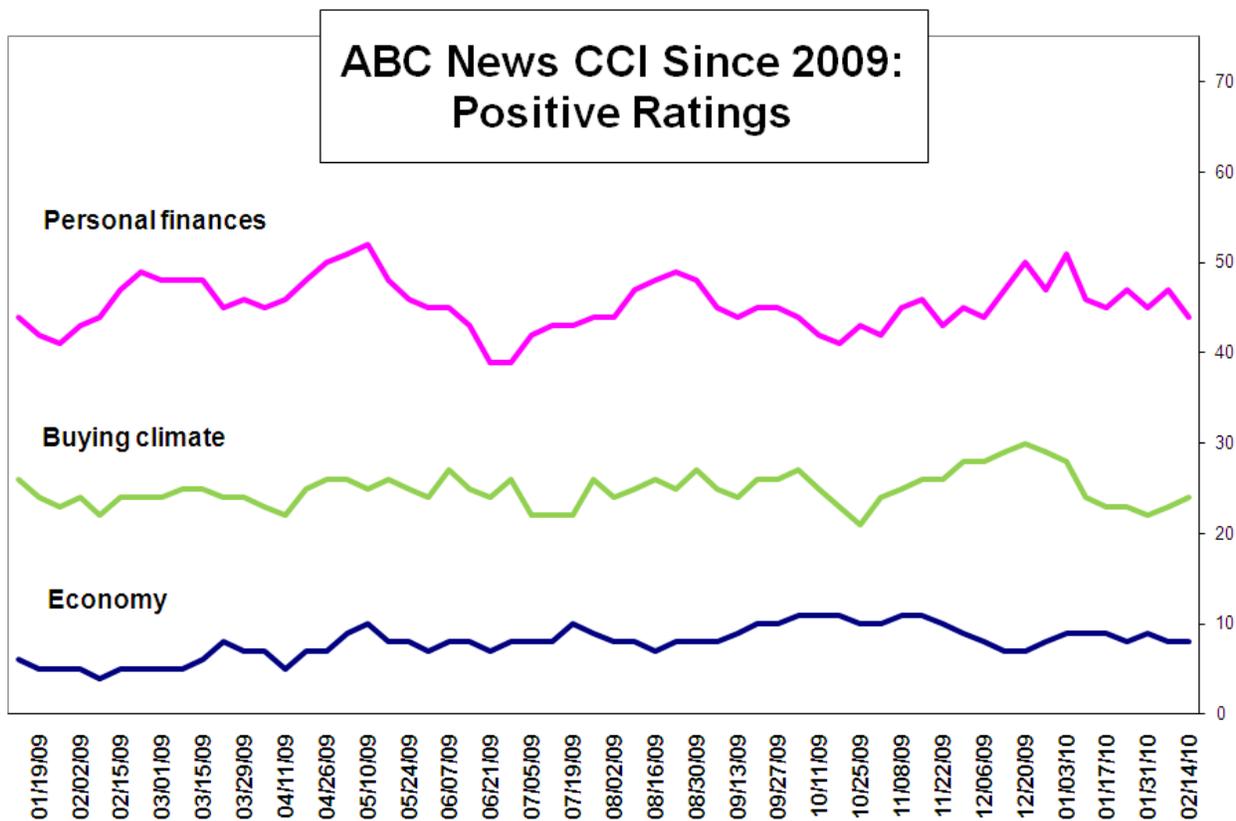
A separate, forward-looking measure finds little in the way of optimism for the economy's future. Just 23 percent think things are getting better and 77 percent say the economy is staying the same or getting worse – a chilling assessment given the very low ratings of current sentiment.



A key indicator from last week's ABC News/Washington Post poll underscores these persistent negative feelings. Eighty-eight percent think that the economy, despite what economists say to the contrary, is still in a recession. And on a more personal note, 53 percent say that based on their experience the economy has not begun to recover.

CURRENT INDEX – The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. Current views of the economy are the worst of the three measures; only 8 percent rate it positively, 30 points below the long-term average and in single digits for 12 weeks straight.

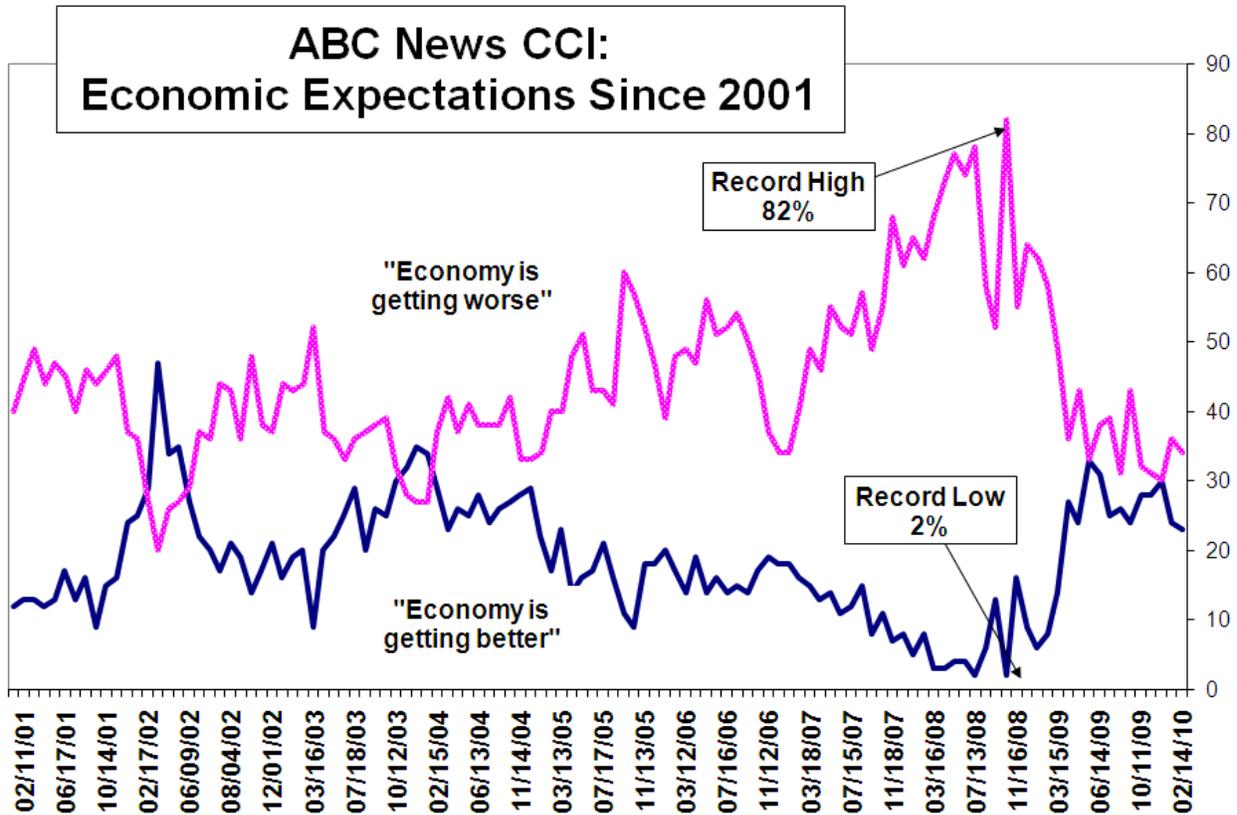
Just 24 percent call it a good time to spend money, 13 points worse than average. And 44 percent rate their personal finances positively, 3 points worse than last week and 13 points below average.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	2010	'85-'10
National economy	8%	8	9	38
Buying climate	24	23	24	37
Personal finances	44	47	46	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-48	-47	-13

BETTER/WORSE – As noted, the separate, forward-looking measure of the direction of the economy finds 23 percent saying things are getting better and 34 percent worse, basically unchanged from last month. Economic optimists are numerically at their lowest level since last March, albeit not significantly so.

The number who say things are staying the same is up to 43 percent, the highest number to say so in more than three years. Saying things are holding steady is a decidedly negative place to be, considering how low consumer confidence has been this year.



	Economy's direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
2/14/10	23%	34	43
1/17/10	24	36	39
12/13/09	30	30	37
11/16/09	28	31	38
10/11/09	28	32	38
9/13/09	24	43	31
8/16/09	26	31	41
7/12/09	25	39	35
6/14/09	31	38	29

TREND – The CCI has been at -49 for three of the last five weeks and hasn't seen significant movement since early January, when it dropped 6 points, an unusually big one-week shift. Since then it's been stuck in a 2-point range, teetering just above the -50 mark, last reached in October.

The index has been below -40 for a record 95 consecutive weeks. It's averaged -47 this year, compared with -48 last year, its worst year on record. Its best year was +29 in 2000, its best week, +38 in January that year.

	ABC News	CCI
This week	-49	
Last week	-48	
2010 high	-41	Jan. 3
2010 low	-49	Jan. 17 and 31, Feb. 14
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 51 weeks straight, the longest such run in available data since 1990.

It's -1 among those with the highest incomes but -68 among those with the lowest, -39 among people who've attended college vs. -66 among those who never finished high school, -45 among homeowners but -63 among renters (their lowest since October) and -44 among men vs. -55 among women (their lowest since November).

The usual racial gap has been smaller this year and this week, with the index at -50 among whites and -46 among blacks; long-term, by contrast, blacks have been less positive by an average 27 points.

The Republican-Democratic gap, which has been narrower than usual this year, is wider this week, with Republicans at -39 vs. -54 for Democrats and -52 for independents. The 15-point gap this week compares with a 5-point gap this year, 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, the same as 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	43	49
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	34	62	40	23

PERSONAL FINANCES – Forty-four percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 47 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	44	4	40	56	36	20
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	51	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-four percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 23 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	24	2	22	76	46	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 Feb. 14, 2010. The results have a 3-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents Feb. 3-14, 2010; that result has a 4.5-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>.

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

02/14/10	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	-49	-48	-49	-45	-49	-41	-53	-47
State of Economy	-84	-84	-82	-78	-90	-78	-90	-84
Personal Finances	-12	-6	-10	-8	-6	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-52	-54	-54	-48	-52	-40	-58	-50
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	-44	-41	-44	-39	-45	-28	-47	-41
Women	-55	-53	-52	-48	-51	-45	-60	-52

Age:									
18 - 34	-50	-48	-49	-40	-52	-31	-61	-43	
35 - 44	-45	-43	-47	-49	-35	-35	-62	-49	
45 - 54	-45	-50	-52	-41	-49	-36	-65	-47	
55 - 64	-59	-51	-46	-51	-55	-39	-65	-51	
65+	-51	-47	-46	-41	-49	-40	-56	-48	
Income:									
Under \$15K	-68	-67	-74	-74	-80	-57	-80	-73	
\$15K To \$24.9K	-79	-72	-63	-42	-69	-40	-81	-65	
\$25K To \$39.9K	-72	-64	-60	-50	-63	-49	-73	-59	
\$40K To \$49.9K	-40	-48	-51	-47	-56	-27	-68	-46	
Over \$50K	-29	-28	-26	-27	-27	-19	-35	-27	
\$50K To \$74.9K	-55	-57	-45	-32	-54	-24	-57	-39	
\$75K To \$99.9K	-21	-14	-19	-27	-39	-11	-43	-27	
Over \$100K	-1	-4	-3	-24	5	5	-31	-14	
Region:									
Northeast	-48	-48	-49	-38	-54	-38	-62	-49	
Midwest	-48	-50	-55	-44	-48	-41	-57	-48	
South	-50	-46	-50	-48	-51	-39	-56	-48	
West	-50	-47	-39	-42	-40	-19	-58	-42	
Race:									
White	-50	-48	-46	-41	-46	-38	-52	-46	
Black	-46	-49	-65	-56	-58	-41	-68	-54	
Politics:									
Republican	-39	-42	-54	-30	-28	-28	-54	-37	
Democrat	-54	-51	-52	-47	-59	-40	-62	-52	
Independent	-52	-49	-41	-42	-51	-37	-59	-48	
Education:									
< High School	-66	-64	-57	-53	-63	-49	-82	-65	
High Sch. Grad.	-58	-60	-62	-50	-57	-46	-65	-55	
College +	-39	-37	-39	-37	-40	-30	-46	-38	
Home:									
Own	-45	-45	-46	-40	-43	-35	-47	-42	
Rent	-63	-58	-56	-52	-65	-47	-71	-58	
Marital Status:									
Single	-53	-49	-58	-41	-56	-34	-66	-50	
Married	-41	-39	-37	-42	-39	-33	-47	-40	
Sep/Wid/Div	-66	-66	-64	-54	-63	-50	-70	-60	
Employ. Status:									
Full-Time	-36	-34	-34	-36	-40	-28	-45	-37	
Part-Time	-59	-59	-66	-49	-31	-31	-67	-50	
Not Employed	-58	-57	-55	-49	-62	-48	-64	-56	

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	No opinion
2/14/10	23	34	43	0
1/17/10	24	36	39	1
12/13/09	30	30	37	3
11/16/09	28	31	38	3
10/11/09	28	32	38	2
9/13/09	24	43	31	2
8/16/09	26	31	41	2
7/12/09	25	39	35	1
6/14/09	31	38	29	1

5/17/09	33	33	33	1
4/11/09	24	43	32	2
3/29/09*	27	36	36	1
3/15/09	14	48	36	2

*ABC News/Washington Post poll
Call for full trend.

END