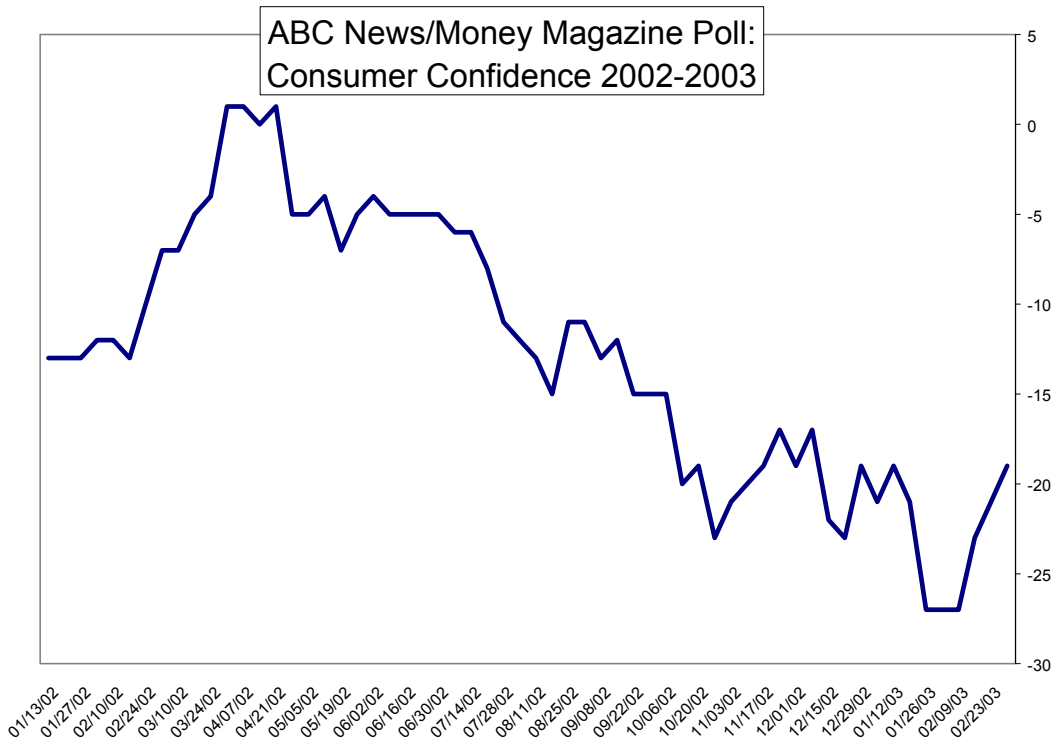


## Confidence Up in Last Three Weeks

Consumer confidence is gaining ground, with ratings of the national economy creeping up to a five-month high and the overall ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index up eight points in the last three weeks.

The ABC/Money index fell six points in one week in mid-January to its lowest since December 1993, and stayed there through Feb. 2. But it's rebounded in more recent interviews, conducted in the last three weeks and as recently as Sunday night.

The index, based on ratings of the economy, personal finances and the buying climate, stands at -19 on its scale of +100 to -100, up from -27 on Feb. 2. After its mid- to late January stumble, the index is now back to its level at the start of the year.



INDICES – Thirty percent of Americans now say the economy's in excellent or good shape - still far from a positive rating, but up six points in the last three weeks to its most since September 2002. Thirty-five percent call it a good time to buy things and 56 percent say their own finances are OK, each unchanged from last week.

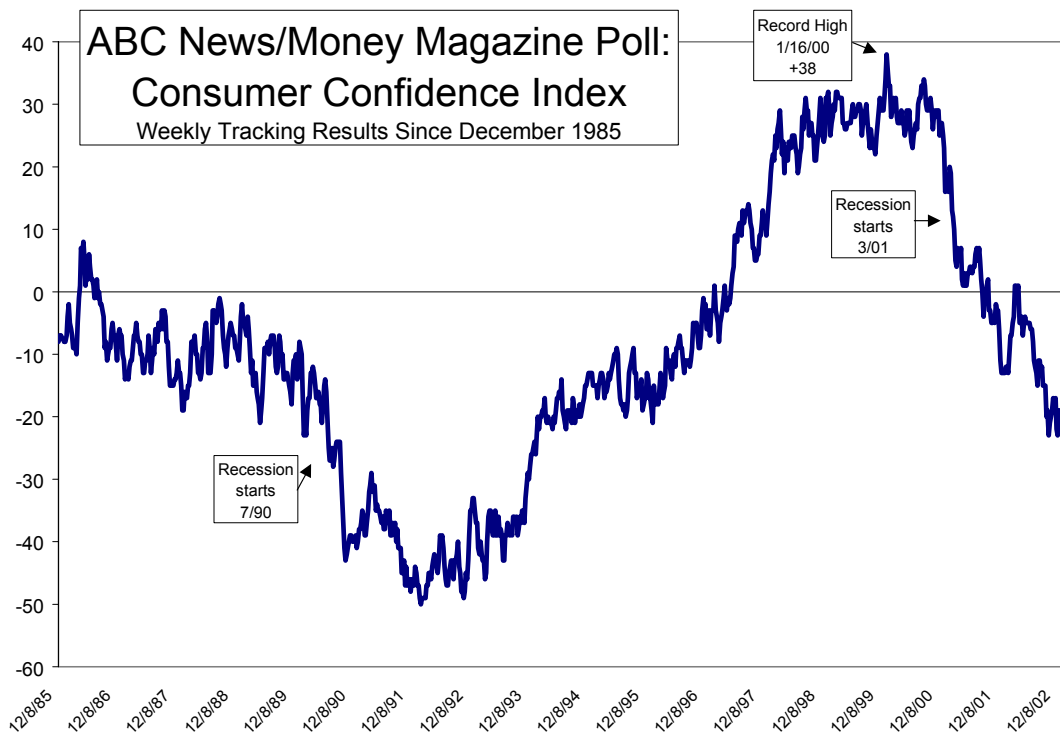
ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	2/2/03	2002 high	2002 low	17-yr. avg.
National economy	30%	24	45	25	41
Buying climate	35	33	45	36	39
Personal finances	56	52	63	52	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-19	-27	+1	-23	-9

As reported last week, expectations for the future, measured separately each month, remain glum. Forty-four percent of Americans think the economy is getting worse while just 20 percent think it's improving. The rest, 36 percent, say it's holding steady.

A report today from the Conference Board had consumer confidence at its lowest since October 1993, near the same place the ABC/Money poll had it on Feb. 2. Most of the Conference Board's interviews are collected, by mail, early in the month.

TREND – The ABC/Money index has averaged -9 over its 17-year history, ranging from a high of +38 in January 2000 to a low of -50 in February 1992. Last year it averaged -11, its worst year since 1996.

ABC/Money Index	
Today	-19
Three weeks ago	-27
2002 high	+1 March, April
2002 low	-23 Oct. 20, Dec. 15
2002 average	-11
2001 average	+4
2000 average	+29 Best full year
1992 average	-44 Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38 Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50 Record low
Average since 12/85	-9



GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +1 among people in higher-income households compared to -47 in the lowest, -11 among college graduates while -23 among high-school dropouts and -8 among men while -30 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good; it was 28 percent last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

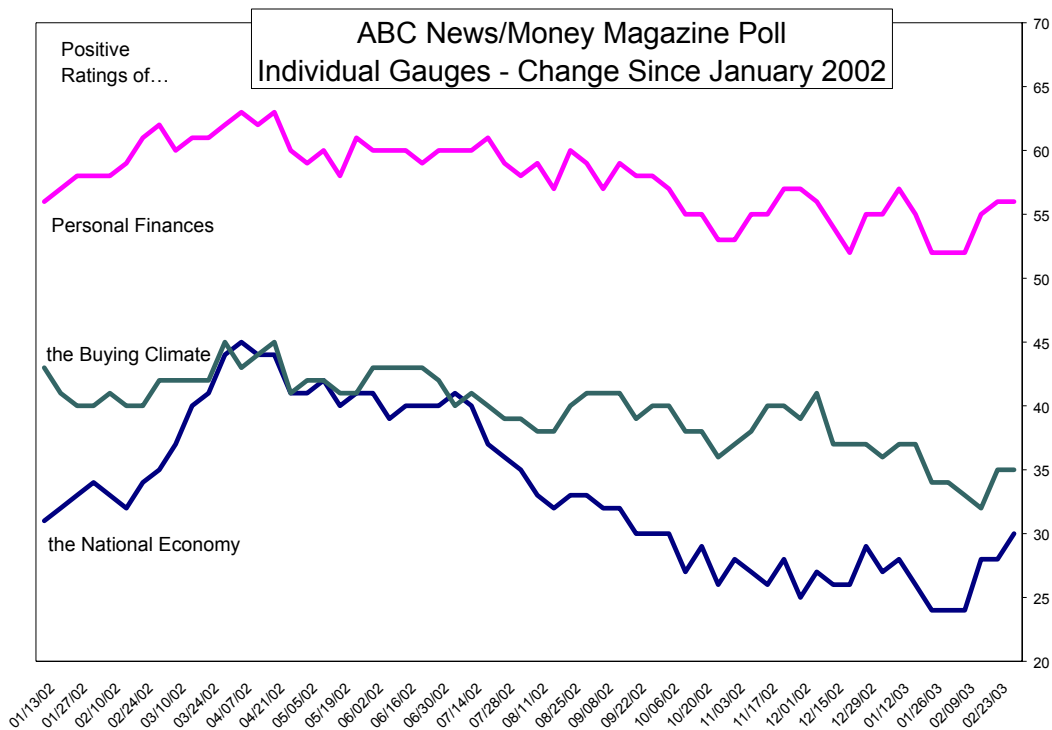
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	30	2	28	70	43	27
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	19

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-six percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	56	6	50	44	29	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE - Thirty-five percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, unchanged from last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	35	3	32	65	44	21
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	20



METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with a random sample of about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,003 interviews in the month ending Feb. 23, 2003, and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

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 Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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

02/23/03	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	-19	-21	-27	-19	-7	1	-27	-13
State of Economy	-40	-44	-52	-50	-30	-10	-52	-33
Personal Finances	12	12	4	14	24	26	4	15
Buying Climate	-30	-30	-32	-22	-16	-10	-36	-21
-----								
OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-8	-13	-18	-11	4	9	-18	-5
Women	-30	-28	-34	-27	-17	-4	-38	-19
Age:								
18 - 34	-11	-11	-24	-8	2	10	-25	-6
35 - 44	-13	-17	-27	-20	-13	3	-31	-14
45 - 54	-28	-25	-23	-21	-7	6	-37	-14
55 - 64	-38	-39	-34	-26	-16	20	-39	-14
65 +	-27	-28	-28	-33	-12	-5	-36	-21
Income:								
Under \$15K	-47	-49	-56	-48	-50	-26	-61	-45
\$15K To \$24.9K	-41	-37	-43	-40	-28	-19	-55	-34
\$25K To \$39.9K	-28	-25	-34	-23	-6	1	-43	-20
\$40K To \$49.9K	-19	-16	-12	-20	10	12	-30	-6
Over \$50K	1	1	-7	3	15	33	-15	10
Region:								
Northeast	-16	-22	-31	-32	-6	2	-32	-16
Midwest	-24	-25	-22	-14	-15	4	-27	-12
South	-26	-23	-28	-24	-2	4	-29	-14
West	-9	-11	-24	-6	-7	9	-25	-7
Race:								

White	-20	-21	-21	-16	-2	7	-23	-9
Black	-23	-28	-60	-45	-43	-18	-60	-38
Politics:								
Republican	7	5	4	6	8	34	0	12
Democrat	-38	-38	-42	-34	-19	-14	-42	-27
Independent	-20	-20	-37	-22	-7	-2	-38	-17
Education:								
< High School	-23	-29	-48	-51	-29	-12	-59	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-32	-33	-38	-24	-5	-3	-40	-18
College +	-11	-9	-10	-5	-1	13	-18	-1
Home:								
Own	-17	-18	-23	-16	-3	9	-24	-8
Rent	-25	-27	-36	-26	-17	-9	-40	-24
Marital Status:								
Single	-15	-13	-19	-14	-9	10	-20	-9
Married	-16	-18	-25	-17	1	11	-27	-9
Sep/Wid/Div	-37	-37	-40	-30	-37	-14	-42	-29
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-10	-8	-19	-13	0	12	-20	-4
Part-Time	-20	-30	-30	-9	-2	14	-39	-11
Not Employed	-32	-33	-36	-31	-17	-13	-40	-25

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