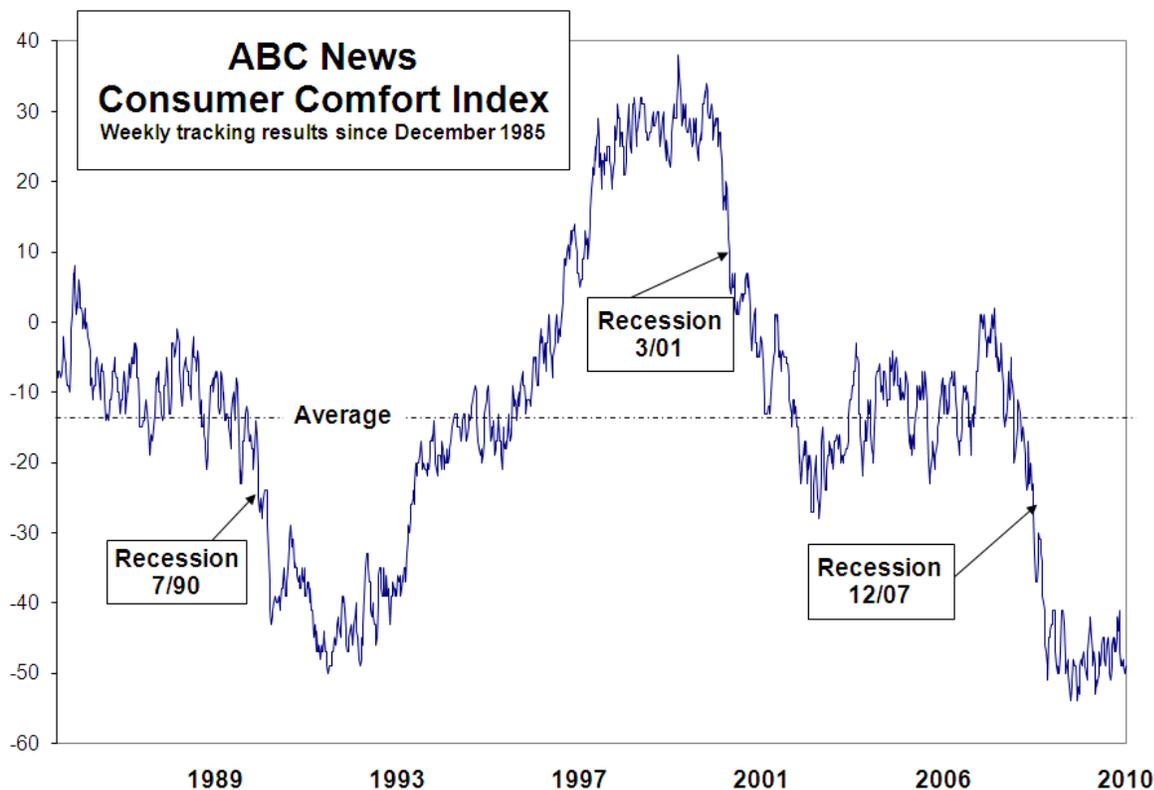


No Early Thaw for Consumer Confidence

Despite some early signs of spring on the East Coast, consumer confidence is remarkably frozen.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index, -49 this week, has been iced in a 3-point range since early January, averaging -48 on its scale of +100 to -100 this year. That ties last year's average, the worst on record in weekly polls since late 1985.

Indeed the CCI has averaged a dismal -47 the past two years, and in the past 15 months it's held within one of its narrowest long-term bands on record. It's shown less deviation from its average in a five-quarter period just once, under very different circumstances: that was in 1998-99, near the height of the tech boom.



The index's individual components tell the story: Half or more Americans have rated their personal finances negatively in 91 of the last 97 weeks. Fewer than one-third have rated the buying climate positively steadily since November 2007, about when the recession began. And at

least eight in 10 have rated the economy negatively since late March 2008, stuck in a 4-point range since last April.

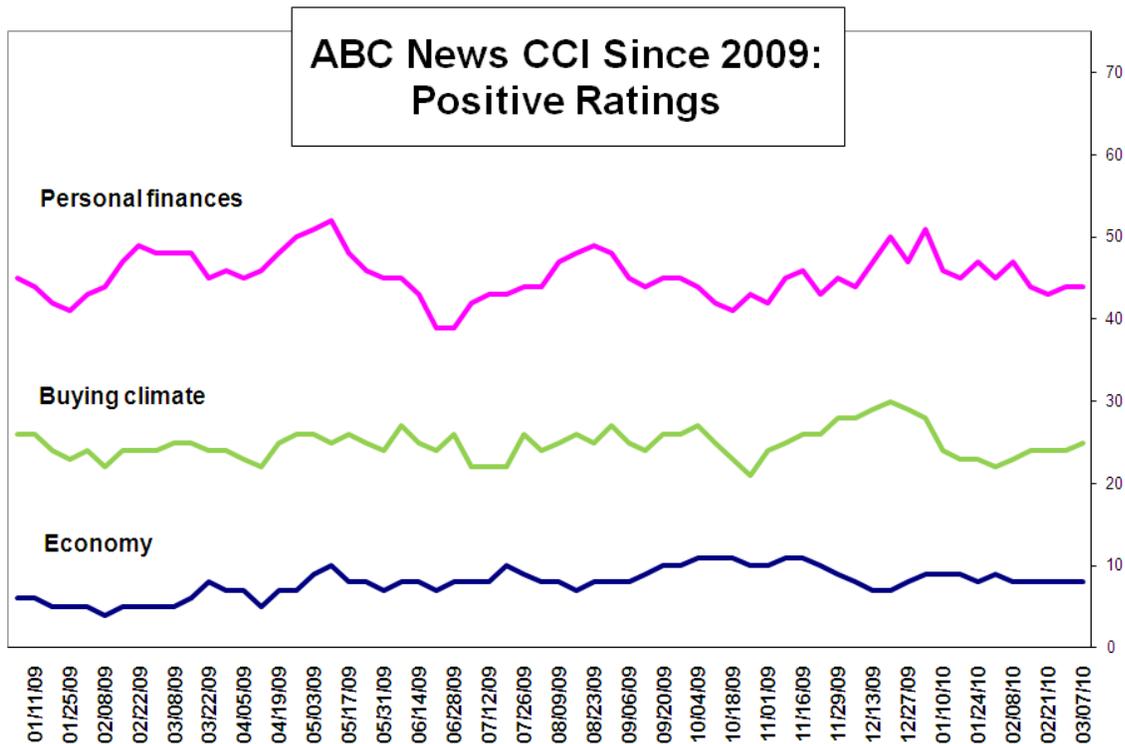
The government last week reported fewer new job losses than expected, heralded by some economists as a positive sign. Nonetheless the unemployment rate held steady at 9.7 percent, and the buildup of unemployed workers, including the long-term jobless, is a daunting one.

INDEX – The CCI has been below the -40 mark for a record 98 weeks. It’s now 36 points below the long-term average, -13, and has been below that average for a remarkable 125 consecutive weeks – well over two years. It languished longer below its long-term average just once before, in a more than four-year stretch from April 1990 to December 1994.

Among the individual components of the index, just 8 percent of Americans view the economy positively, the fifth straight week at this level, the 15th straight week of single-digit ratings and 29 points below its long-term average.

For nine weeks straight at least half of Americans have rated their own finances negatively, and a quarter or fewer have called it a good time to spend money.

ABC News CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	Averages	
			2010	'85-'10
National economy	8%	8	8	37
Buying climate	25	24	24	37
Personal finances	44	44	46	56
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-49	-48	-13



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-49	
Last week	-49	
2010 high	-41	Jan. 3
2010 low	-50	Feb. 21
2010 average	-48	
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 CCI is -11 among the highest-income Americans vs. -65 for those with the lowest incomes; however this 54-point spread is the narrowest it's been since November. Among other groups, the index is -41 among people who've attended college vs. -71 among those who never finished high school, -43 among homeowners but -67 among renters, and -57 among Democrats vs. -47 among Republicans. The index is closer than usual among men and women, -45 vs. -51. And it's notably low, -52, among 18- to 34-year-olds.

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 for the fifth straight week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000; the worst, 4 percent Feb. 8, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	8	1	7	92	45	47
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	34	63	40	23

PERSONAL FINANCES – Forty-four percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was the same 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	6	38	56	39	17
Avg. since 12/85	56	5	51	44	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-five percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; the highest it's been since the first week of the year. 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	25	4	21	75	44	31
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 Mar. 7, 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 Andrew Rabinowitz and Amanda Rohaly.

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

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

03/07/10	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	-49	-48	-47	-48	-41	-53	-47
State of Economy	-84	-84	-84	-84	-90	-78	-90	-83
Personal Finances	-12	-12	-6	-12	-4	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-50	-52	-54	-44	-50	-40	-58	-50

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-45	-43	-41	-41	-43	-28	-47	-41
Women	-51	-55	-53	-50	-51	-45	-60	-52
Age:								
18 - 34	-52	-47	-48	-43	-43	-31	-61	-43
35 - 44	-50	-50	-43	-56	-46	-39	-62	-50
45 - 54	-39	-42	-50	-40	-49	-36	-65	-47
55 - 64	-56	-59	-51	-49	-50	-39	-65	-51
65+	-46	-50	-47	-44	-53	-40	-56	-47
Income:								
Under \$15K	-65	-66	-67	-72	-72	-57	-80	-72
\$15K To \$24.9K	-78	-73	-72	-68	-73	-40	-81	-65
\$25K To \$39.9K	-50	-67	-64	-53	-66	-49	-74	-60
\$40K To \$49.9K	-44	-45	-48	-42	-50	-27	-68	-45
Over \$50K	-33	-27	-28	-29	-30	-19	-35	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-52	-45	-57	-46	-46	-24	-57	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-31	-32	-14	-38	-30	-11	-43	-27
Over \$100K	-11	-2	-4	-3	-6	-1	-31	-14
Region:								
Northeast	-52	-51	-48	-40	-61	-38	-61	-49
Midwest	-52	-51	-50	-49	-45	-41	-57	-48
South	-44	-51	-46	-47	-43	-39	-56	-48
West	-49	-42	-47	-45	-44	-19	-58	-43
Race:								
White	-46	-47	-48	-45	-47	-38	-52	-46

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

END