

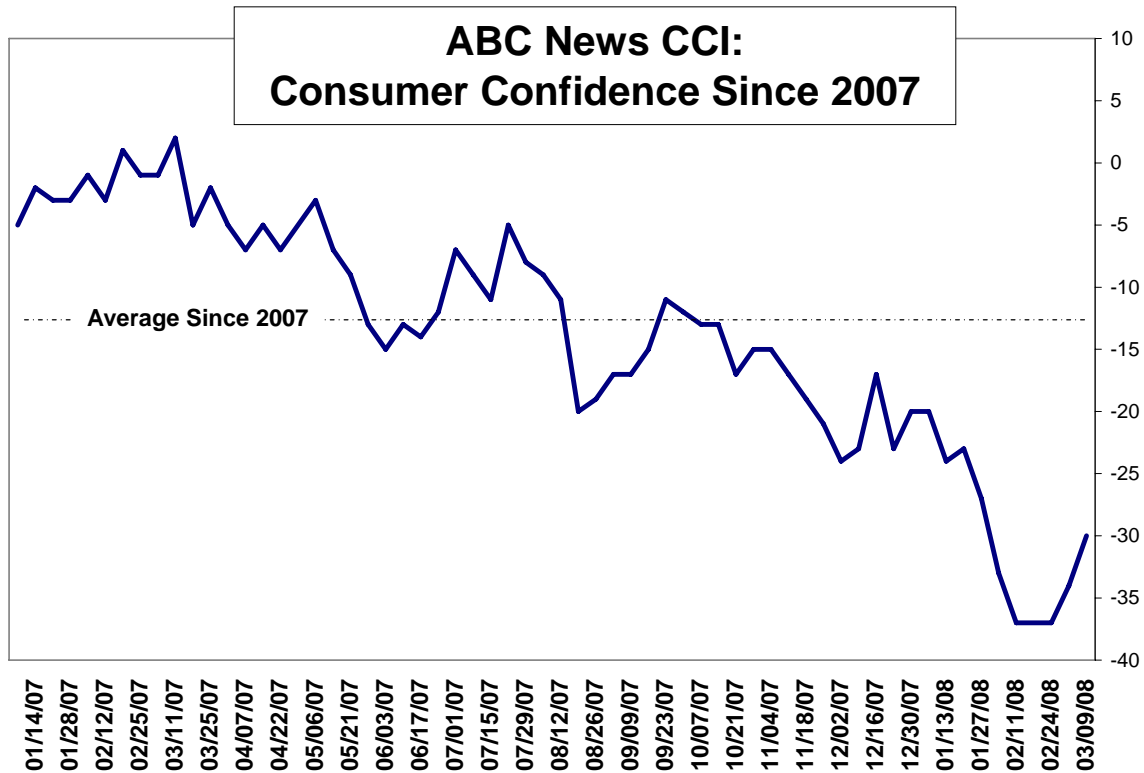
Confidence Gains, Though Still Troubled

Despite the economy's woes, consumer confidence has advanced to its best since late January, thanks to an improved outlook on the buying climate and personal finances.

It's hardly good: The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -30 on its scale of +100 to -100, far below its 22-year average of -10. But it gained 4 points this week and a net of 7 points in the last two weeks, after dropping by 17 points in January and February.

The shift is unusual: The CCI has gained 7 or more points in two weeks just 21 times in 22 years of weekly polls. At the same time, its 17-point fall was its second-steepest on record, and it's been at or below -30 for six weeks straight, unseen since 1993.

Oil and gas prices set records in the past week and February saw a loss of jobs for the second straight month.

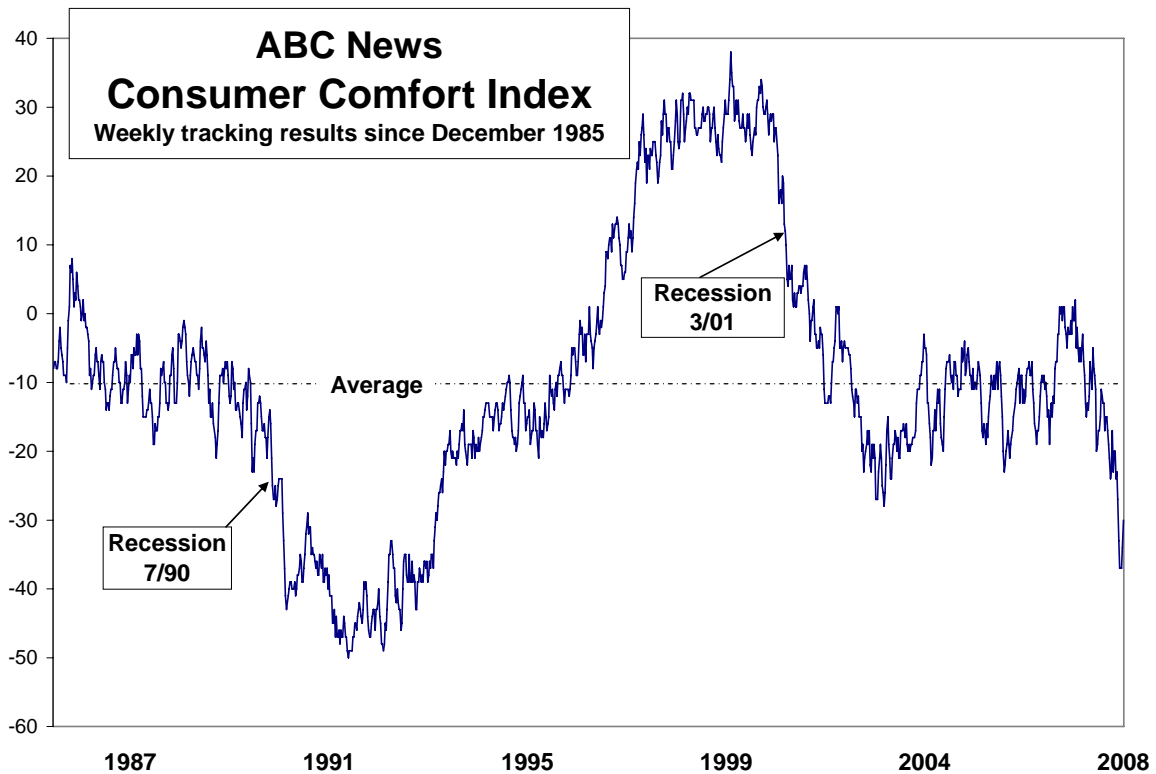


INDEX – The ABC index is based on Americans’ ratings of their current finances, the national economy and the buying climate. The last two weeks’ improvement has most to do with a better outlook on personal finances and the buying climate.

Thirty percent rate the buying climate positively, up 5 points in two weeks; still it’s been at or below this level for nine weeks straight, the longest stretch since 23 weeks from June through November 1993. It’s 6 points below the 2007 average and 8 points off the long-term average.

Fifty-three percent rate their personal finances positively – up 4 points in two weeks – but 6 points below the 2007 average and 4 points off the long-term average, 57 percent.

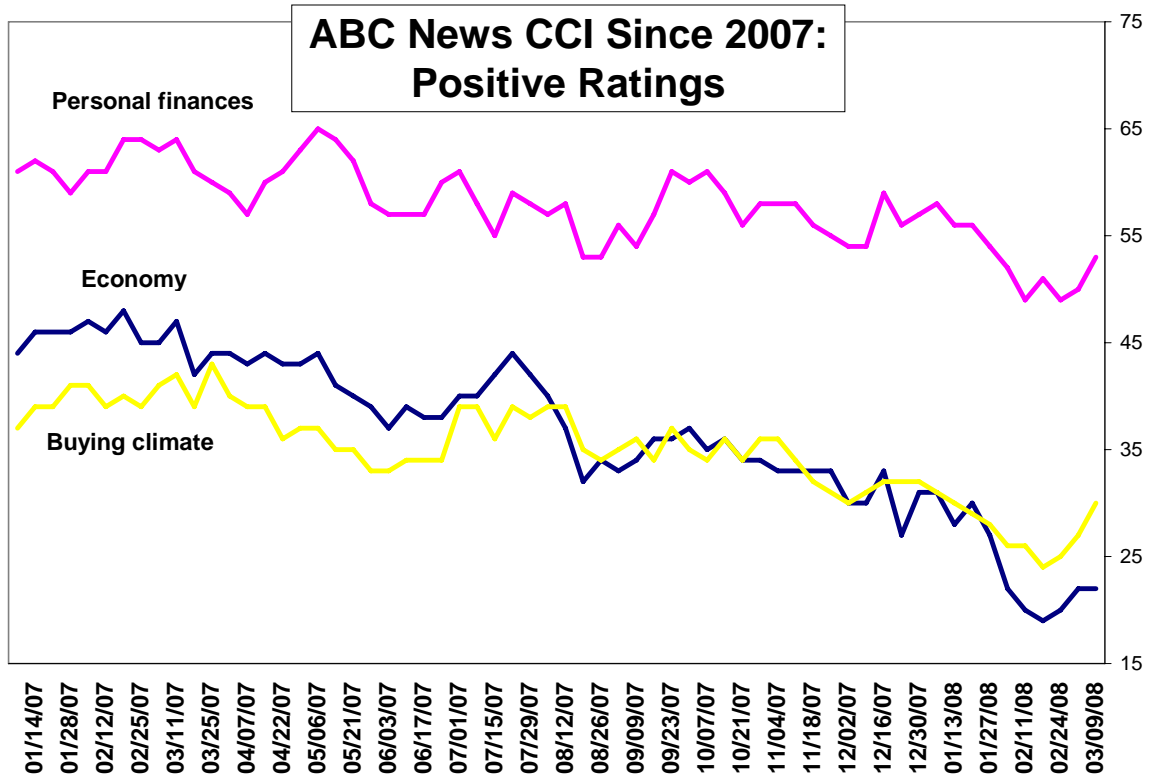
In the lowest of the three gauges, just 22 percent rate the national economy positively this week. It was 19 percent just three weeks ago, its worst since November 1993. Positive ratings of the economy are down 9 points since January; they’ve averaged 24 percent this year, well below the 2007 average, 39 percent, and the long-term average, 40 percent.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI			
	This week	Last week	2007	Averages '85-'08
National economy	22%	22	39	40
Buying climate	30	27	36	38
Personal finances	53	50	59	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-30	-34	-11	-10

TREND – At -30, the CCI has now been in negative double digits for 31 consecutive weeks, a stretch last seen five years ago. It sustained significant falls in four out of five weeks in January and February; that happened just once before, in September to October 1990.

The index is averaging -30 for 2008, well below its 2007 average, -11, and its long-term average of -10. It's far below its record high, +38 in January 2000, and much closer to its all-time low, -50 in February 1992.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-30	
Last week	-34	
2007 high	+2	March 11
2007 low	-24	December 2
2007 average	-11	
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	-10	

GROUPS – Though the index has improved among most demographic groups in the last two weeks, this trend is most pronounced among the wealthiest and the youngest. It's

-13 among those 18-34 and +7 among those with household incomes over \$100,000, up by 17 and 15 points, respectively.

The index is far lower among people with the lowest incomes, -67. It's -43 among seniors, -16 among those who've been to college while -56 among high-school dropouts, -28 among whites but -50 among blacks and -20 among men while -39 among women.

Partisan differences remain; the index is -3 among Republicans, compared with -34 among independents and -47 among Democrats.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty-two percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 22 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was 7 percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	22	2	20	78	42	36
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	36	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-three percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 50 percent last week. The best was 70 percent last reached in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	53	8	45	47	32	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 27 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	30	4	26	70	45	25
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	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 March 9, 2008. 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 Scott F. Clement.

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

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

03/09/08	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	-30	-34	-37	-23	2	2	-27	-13
State of Economy	-56	-56	-60	-40	-6	-6	-46	-26
Personal Finances	6	0	-2	8	28	30	6	16
Buying Climate	-40	-46	-48	-38	-16	-14	-44	-30

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-20	-27	-30	-12	11	12	-19	-5
Women	-39	-41	-43	-33	-7	-6	-35	-20
Age:								
18 - 34	-13	-22	-34	-15	-1	6	-32	-9
35 - 44	-27	-28	-32	-20	-3	3	-31	-13
45 - 54	-33	-30	-39	-28	-3	2	-29	-15
55 - 64	-49	-50	-39	-22	22	22	-36	-14
65+	-43	-53	-43	-37	1	1	-37	-18
Income:								
Under \$15K	-67	-73	-59	-42	-34	-21	-70	-51
\$15K To \$24.9K	-43	-39	-47	-58	-43	-16	-58	-40
\$25K To \$39.9K	-45	-52	-62	-35	-18	-15	-49	-28
\$40K To \$49.9K	-41	-40	-35	-19	-5	7	-47	-18
Over \$50K	-10	-10	-18	-4	30	30	-9	11
\$50K To \$74.9K	-33	-25	-36	-8	29	29	-28	-3
\$75K To \$99.9K	-4	0	-9	-14	20	25	-19	7
Over \$100K	7	-4	-5	5	37	49	1	29
Region:								
Northeast	-32	-34	-39	-24	11	11	-38	-20
Midwest	-21	-26	-36	-24	-8	2	-30	-18
South	-32	-42	-36	-24	0	7	-31	-13
West	-31	-28	-36	-18	6	10	-21	-3
Race:								
White	-28	-33	-35	-22	5	5	-25	-10
Black	-50	-61	-46	-35	-20	-11	-54	-37
Politics:								
Republican	-3	-6	-8	18	36	44	4	22
Democrat	-47	-49	-50	-47	-20	-15	-47	-30
Independent	-34	-39	-41	-25	-1	0	-40	-21
Education:								
< High School	-56	-59	-46	-45	-26	-13	-57	-38
High Sch. Grad.	-34	-43	-47	-29	-3	-3	-38	-22
College +	-16	-17	-25	-11	13	17	-14	1
Home:								
Own	-29	-32	-32	-14	9	9	-23	-7

Rent	-32	-39	-49	-44	-17	-12	-44	-30
Marital Status:								
Single	-22	-29	-36	-23	-9	-6	-39	-16
Married	-26	-30	-26	-12	17	17	-18	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-49	-53	-61	-52	-23	-20	-56	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-18	-22	-34	-13	13	13	-24	-4
Part-Time	-27	-33	-29	-30	-7	-4	-39	-15
Not Employed	-46	-51	-42	-33	-12	-7	-43	-23

END