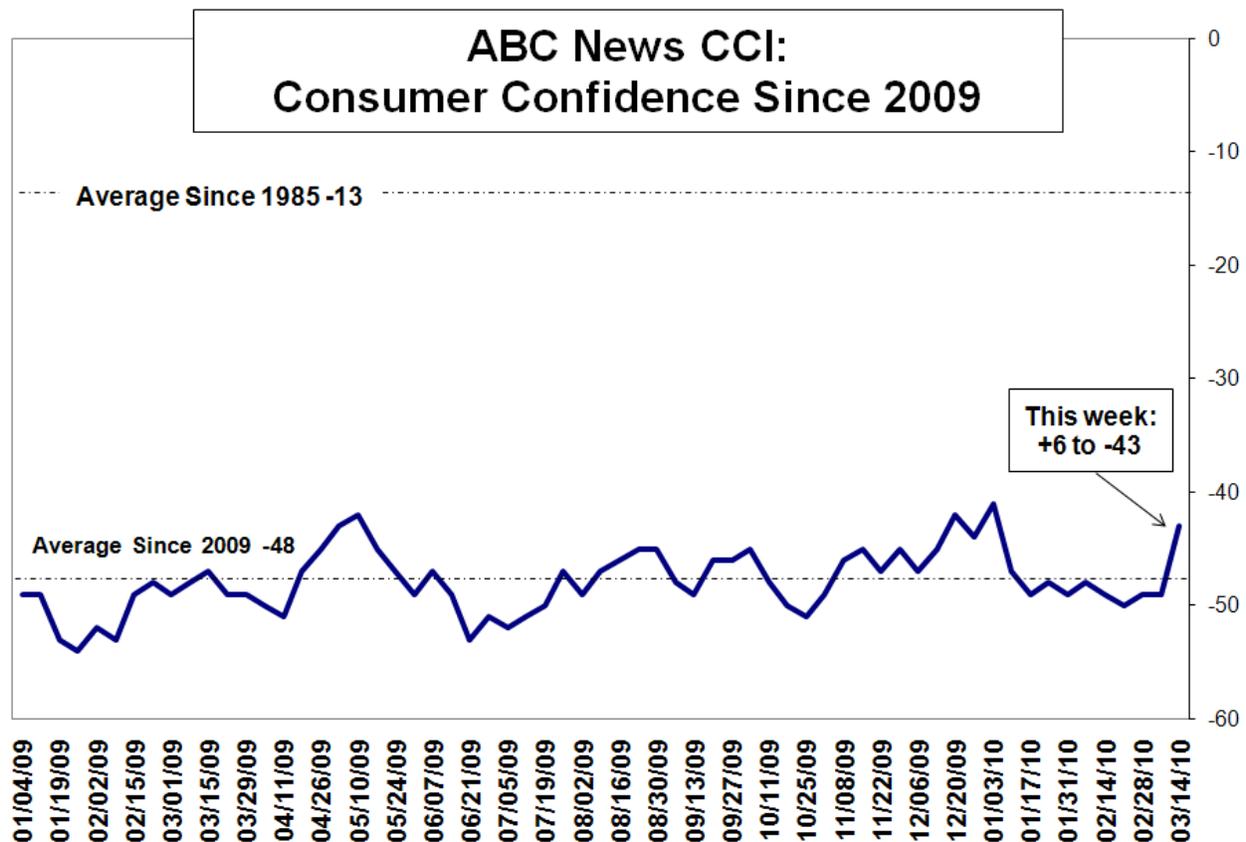


Consumer Confidence Spikes; The Question: Will it Hold?

Consumer sentiment took a highly unusual positive spike this week, improving to its best since early January. The question: whether it can hold and build.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index jumped by 6 points to -43 on its scale of +100 to -100. While the index still is grim, its advance is impressive: The CCI has improved by 6 or more points in single week just 11 times in 1,264 weekly polls since late 1985.

As good as the gain is, a one-week boost does not make it party time. Confidence is just a little less awful: Ninety percent of Americans still rate the economy negatively (27 points more than average), 54 percent rate their own finances negatively (10 points more than average) and 71 percent call it a bad time to spend money.

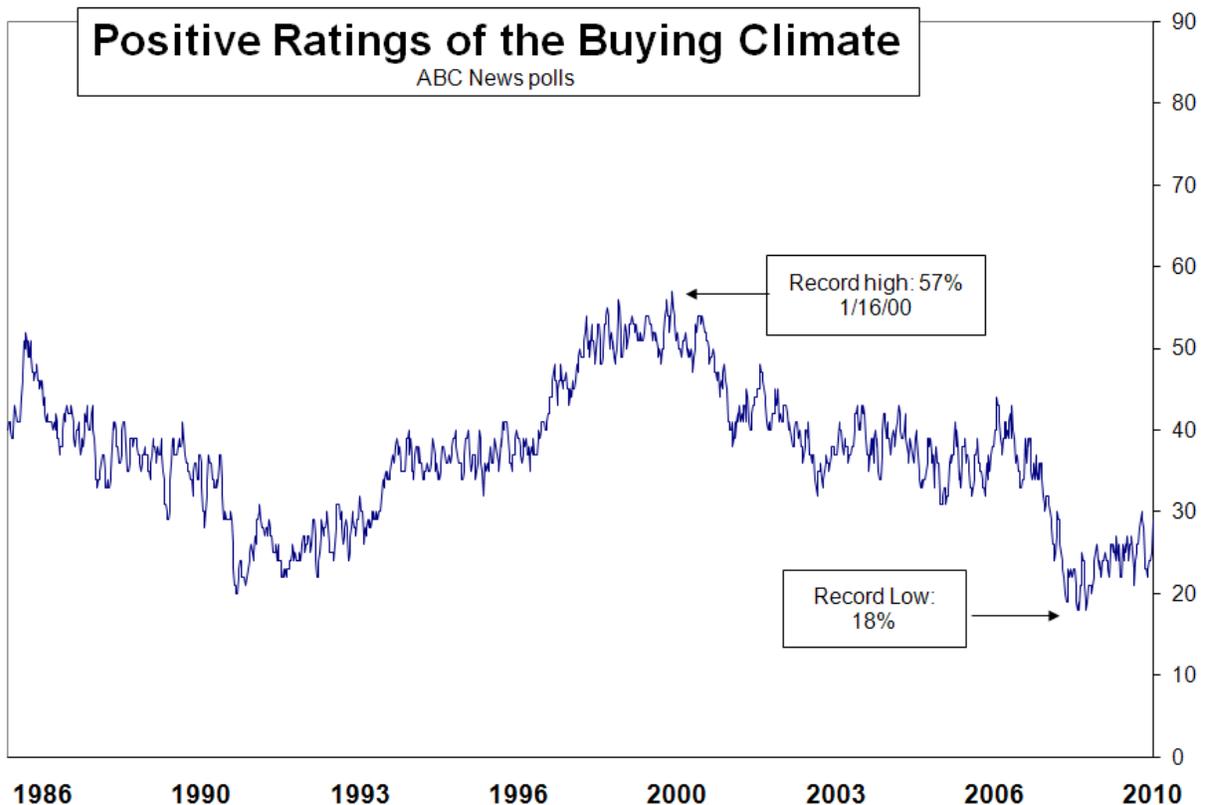


The CCI, based on these measures, remains 30 points below its long-term average. Its last attempt at a rally, a 10-point gain in November and December, crashed to a halt with an equally unusual 6-point drop Jan. 10. It's been below -40 for 99 weeks, a record for time spent in the doldrums.

Still, even if caution is in order, up is up. The CCI spent the last nine weeks a mere 4 to 7 points above its record low, -54 in January 2009; this week's gain moves it away from that horror show. And it's reached -43 or higher only five times since October 2008.

Other indicators have pointed tentatively up. Last week's unemployment figures were less bad than expected, and estimates of GDP growth in Q4 2009 were revised for the better.

INDICES – Ratings of the buying climate led the way this week with a 4-point gain to their best since the start of the year, 29 percent positive; they're now 5 points better than their 2010 average. On the other hand, fewer than a third of Americans have called it a good time to spend money for 122 weeks straight, second only to a run in 1990-93.

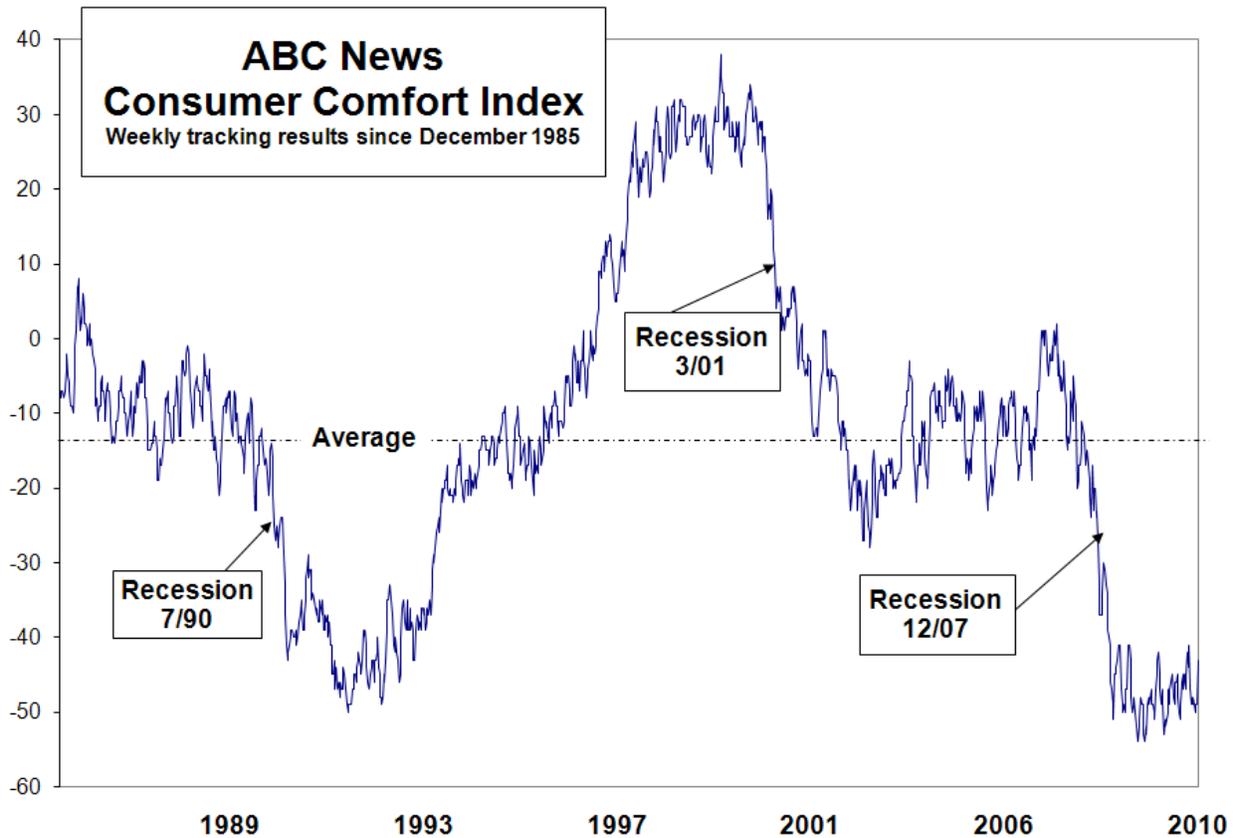


Positive views of the economy, meanwhile, cracked into double digits – 10 percent – for the first time in 17 weeks. Ratings of personal finances as usual are the best of the three measures – but at 54 percent negative, hardly bright.

ABC News CCI

Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	Averages	
			2010	'85-'10
National economy	10%	8	9	37
Buying climate	29	25	24	37
Personal finances	46	44	46	56
Consumer Comfort Index	-43	-49	-47	-13

BETTER/WORSE – In another measure, 28 percent say the economy’s getting better, but 34 percent say it’s getting worse – and 37 percent say it’s staying the same, which for most by far is not good at all. These have been at about this level since October.



ABC News CCI	
This week	-43
Last week	-49
2010 high	-41 Jan. 3
2010 low	-50 Feb. 21
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 – As usual, the CCI is highest, -8, among the highest-earning Americans, vs. -71 for those with the lowest incomes. It's -37 among people who've attended college vs. -69 among those who never finished high school, -39 among homeowners but -59 among renters and -37 among men vs. -49 among women. The partisan gap, -48 among Democrats vs. -38 among Republicans, is smaller than its long-term average.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Ten percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 8 percent the past five weeks. 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	10	1	9	90	42	48
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	34	63	40	23

PERSONAL FINANCES – Forty-six percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 44 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	46	5	41	54	37	17
Avg. since 12/85	56	5	51	44	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-nine percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things, the most since the end of last year. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent, last reached Oct. 19, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	29	3	26	71	45	26
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. 14, 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 Amanda Rohaly.

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

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

03/14/10	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	-43	-49	-49	-45	-47	-41	-53	-47
State of Economy	-80	-84	-84	-86	-88	-78	-90	-83
Personal Finances	-8	-12	-12	-6	-4	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-42	-50	-52	-42	-50	-40	-58	-50

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-37	-45	-44	-36	-41	-28	-47	-41
Women	-49	-51	-55	-51	-51	-45	-60	-52
Age:								
18 - 34	-43	-52	-50	-37	-40	-31	-61	-43
35 - 44	-43	-50	-45	-53	-48	-39	-62	-50
45 - 54	-36	-39	-45	-41	-46	-36	-65	-47
55 - 64	-52	-56	-59	-46	-52	-39	-65	-51
65+	-45	-46	-51	-45	-51	-40	-56	-47
Income:								
Under \$15K	-71	-65	-68	-73	-66	-57	-80	-72
\$15K To \$24.9K	-76	-78	-79	-67	-74	-40	-81	-66
\$25K To \$39.9K	-46	-50	-72	-52	-61	-46	-74	-59
\$40K To \$49.9K	-25	-44	-40	-34	-46	-25	-68	-45
Over \$50K	-30	-33	-29	-29	-31	-19	-35	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-44	-52	-55	-38	-43	-24	-57	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-32	-31	-21	-43	-31	-11	-43	-27
Over \$100K	-8	-11	-1	-8	-14	-1	-31	-14
Region:								
Northeast	-41	-52	-48	-41	-56	-38	-61	-48
Midwest	-48	-52	-48	-49	-46	-41	-57	-48
South	-44	-44	-50	-42	-44	-39	-56	-48
West	-40	-49	-50	-42	-43	-19	-58	-43
Race:								
White	-40	-46	-50	-44	-45	-38	-52	-46
Black	-58	-55	-46	-43	-61	-41	-68	-54
Politics:								
Republican	-38	-47	-39	-42	-32	-30	-54	-38
Democrat	-48	-57	-54	-41	-58	-40	-62	-52
Independent	-38	-39	-52	-47	-43	-37	-59	-47
Education:								
< High School	-69	-71	-66	-55	-51	-49	-82	-66
High Sch. Grad.	-42	-51	-58	-52	-46	-42	-65	-55
College +	-37	-41	-39	-35	-45	-30	-45	-37
Home:								
Own	-39	-43	-45	-41	-43	-35	-47	-42
Rent	-59	-67	-63	-47	-56	-47	-71	-59
Marital Status:								
Single	-51	-60	-53	-44	-34	-34	-66	-51
Married	-36	-41	-41	-39	-45	-33	-47	-40
Sep/Wid/Div	-55	-54	-66	-52	-68	-50	-70	-60

Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-28	-36	-36	-32	-39	-28	-45	-36
Part-Time	-60	-66	-59	-54	-38	-33	-67	-51
Not Employed	-53	-55	-58	-50	-57	-48	-64	-56

END