

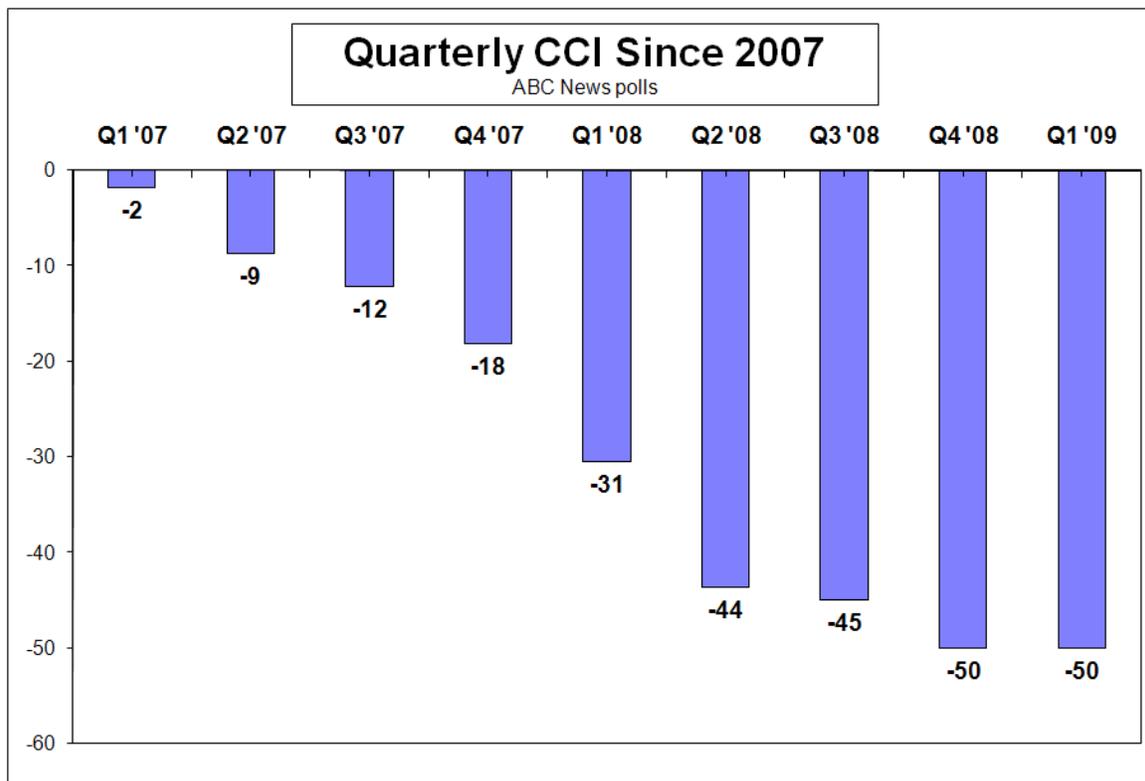
Q1 2009: A Confidence Sourball

Consumer confidence ends March in dismal condition, matching its lowest quarterly average on record in 23 years of weekly polls.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index, based on public views of current economic conditions, stands at -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, 5 points from its all-time low and without a significant change in seven weeks.

Its Q1 average, -50, ties Q4 2008 for the worst.

Still, while ratings of current conditions are dire, optimism for the future has gained. In a separate ABC News/Washington Post poll this week, 27 percent say the economy's getting better, the most in more than four years. More, 36 percent, say things are getting worse, but that's down from 82 percent at the peak of pessimism in October.



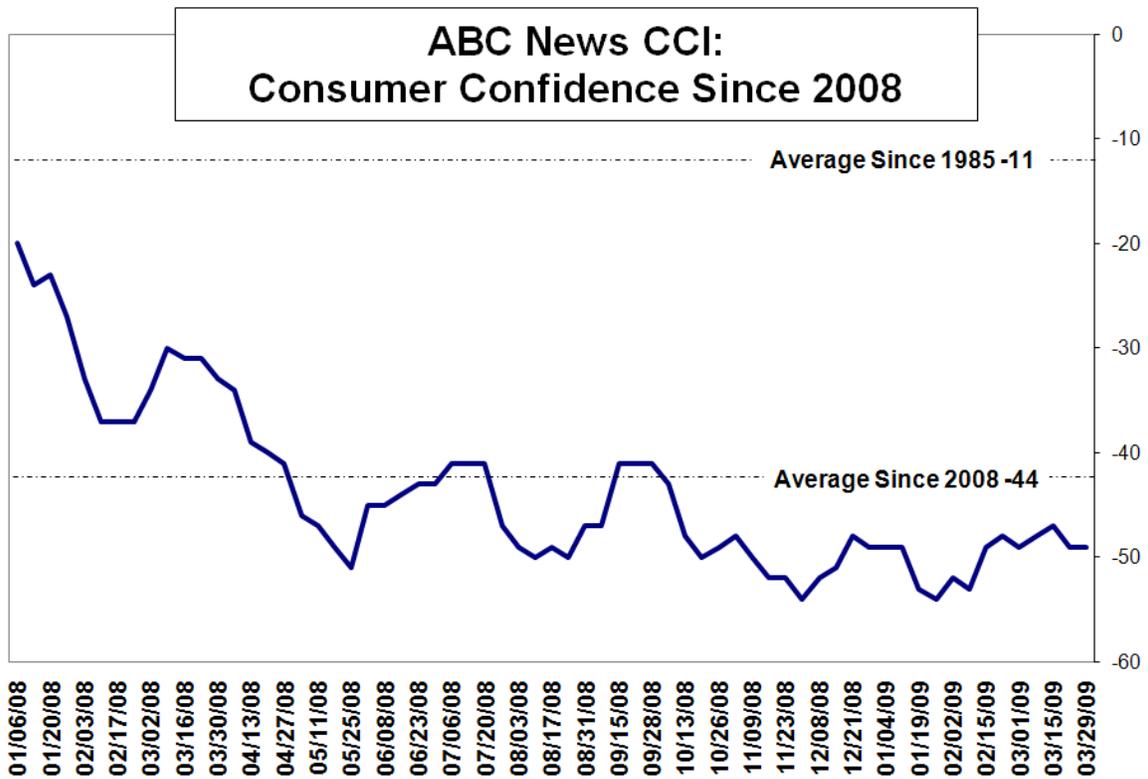
While hopes for the Obama administration's efforts are helping expectations, there's plenty of bad news to keep current sentiment in the tank. Home prices fell a record 19 percent the past year in the latest Case-Shiller index in 20 metro areas. Gas prices are

averaging over \$2 a gallon for the first time since November. And unemployment's at a 25-year high.

INDEX – ABC's index is based on Americans' ratings of the economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. Ratings of the economy are the weakest – only 7 percent positive, in single digits for a record 21 weeks and 32 points below average.

Twenty-four percent say it's a good time to buy things, 14 points below the long-term average and just 6 points from the low reached in October and August. A quarter or fewer have rated the buying climate positively for 11 weeks straight.

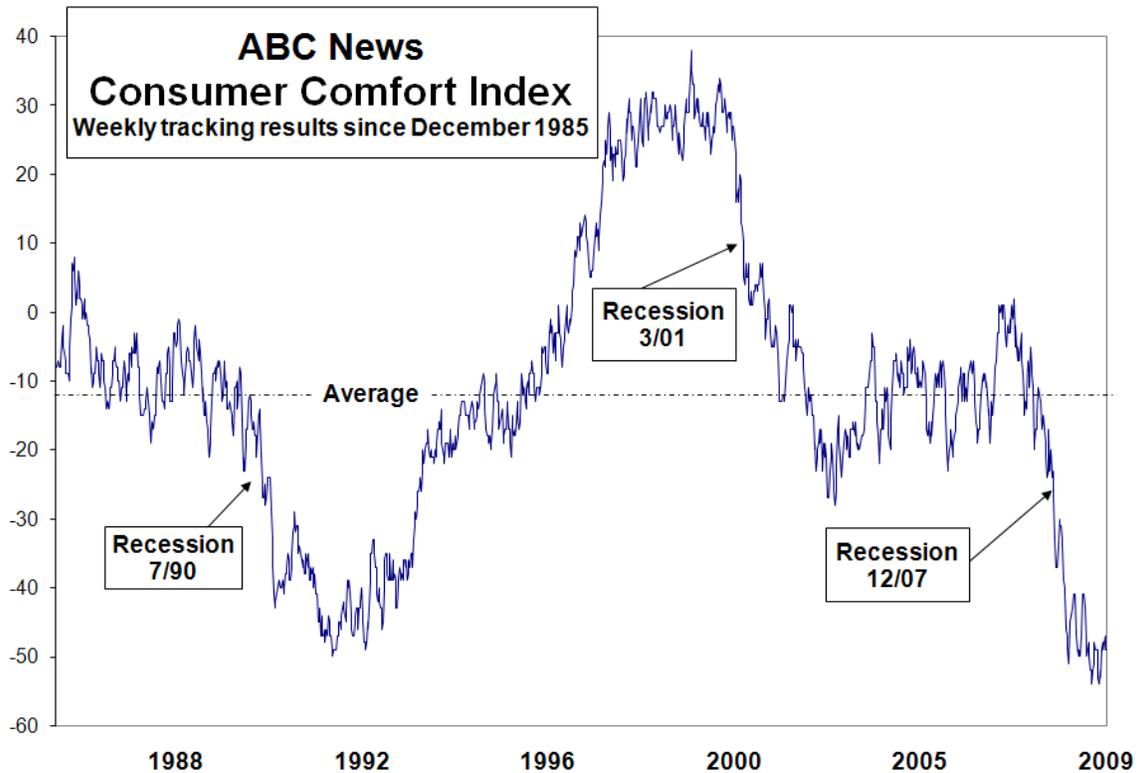
And 46 percent rate their personal finances positively – less than a majority for 36 weeks straight, the longest such stretch since 1993.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	2009	'85-'09
National economy	7%	8	6	39
Buying climate	24	24	24	38
Personal finances	46	45	45	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-49	-50	-11

TREND – A dismal 2008's been followed by an equally rough start to 2009 for the CCI: It hit its record low, -54 in late January, during its worst four-week stretch on record. It hasn't been better than -47 this year.

The index has been below -40 for a record 49 weeks and hasn't seen positive territory in more than two years. It's 38 points below its long-term average, -11, and light years from its best yearlong average, +29 in 2000, and all-time best, +38 in January 2000.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-49	
Last week	-49	
2009 high	-47	March 15
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-50	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Average since 12/85	-11	

GROUPS – As usual, the CCI is higher among better-off groups, but negative across groups for the fifth week straight.

It's -18 among those with the highest incomes but -75 among those with the lowest, -40 among those who've attended college vs. -63 among high school dropouts, -41 among

men while -53 among women, -42 among homeowners (their best since November) compared with -64 among renters and -45 among whites vs. -67 among blacks.

Partisan differences remain: The index is -32 among Republicans vs. -58 among Democrats and -49 among independents. That's less of a gap, though, than recently – it's averaged 27 points this year, compared with 41 points in election-year 2008.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Seven percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 8 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 4 percent Feb. 8.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	7	1	6	93	32	61
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	35	61	40	22

PERSONAL FINANCES – Forty-six percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 45 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 41 percent Jan. 25.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	46	5	41	54	36	18
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-four percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things, the same as last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent Oct. 19, Aug. 10 and Aug. 24, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	24	2	22	76	44	32
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 29, 2009. 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 Patrick Moynihan.

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

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

03/29/09	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	-49	-49	-33	-33	-54	-47
State of Economy	-86	-84	-90	-88	-62	-62	-92	-79
Personal Finances	-8	-10	-4	-10	12	14	-18	-5
Buying Climate	-52	-52	-52	-50	-48	-48	-64	-56

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-41	-42	-45	-37	-27	-27	-49	-42
Women	-53	-54	-51	-59	-35	-35	-59	-51
Age:								
18 - 34	-44	-44	-45	-47	-17	-17	-60	-45
35 - 44	-55	-50	-46	-53	-38	-27	-58	-45
45 - 54	-44	-54	-49	-53	-37	-31	-61	-48
55 - 64	-53	-52	-54	-53	-42	-32	-64	-49
65+	-45	-45	-52	-40	-35	-31	-55	-45
Income:								
Under \$15K	-75	-77	-72	-62	-60	-51	-87	-74
\$15K To \$24.9K	-70	-68	-74	-70	-59	-44	-83	-68
\$25K To \$39.9K	-64	-65	-57	-59	-41	-41	-71	-58
\$40K To \$49.9K	-45	-45	-58	-60	-47	-16	-62	-48
Over \$50K	-31	-32	-30	-37	-17	-17	-41	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-46	-47	-46	-47	-48	-28	-57	-42
\$75K To \$99.9K	-26	-30	-33	-36	-19	-17	-52	-31
Over \$100K	-18	-19	-7	-31	18	18	-34	-11
Region:								
Northeast	-50	-55	-62	-49	-34	-34	-62	-52
Midwest	-46	-45	-45	-53	-44	-31	-58	-46
South	-50	-47	-44	-50	-28	-28	-59	-46
West	-42	-49	-47	-42	-22	-14	-56	-41
Race:								
White	-45	-48	-48	-48	-30	-30	-50	-44
Black	-67	-57	-57	-53	-51	-47	-81	-63
Politics:								
Republican	-32	-32	-34	-35	-2	-2	-40	-24
Democrat	-58	-59	-57	-59	-42	-42	-70	-60
Independent	-49	-51	-48	-47	-41	-36	-55	-47
Education:								
< High School	-63	-62	-59	-61	-37	-37	-77	-62
High Sch. Grad.	-53	-47	-49	-50	-35	-35	-62	-51
College +	-40	-45	-46	-44	-27	-27	-50	-39
Home:								
Own	-42	-43	-45	-44	-28	-28	-49	-41
Rent	-64	-67	-56	-64	-43	-43	-80	-62
Marital Status:								
Single	-46	-44	-48	-48	-27	-27	-69	-50
Married	-40	-42	-44	-43	-24	-23	-46	-38

Sep/Wid/Div	-70	-70	-61	-65	-58	-52	-70	-63
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-38	-42	-39	-41	-26	-24	-47	-38
Part-Time	-35	-33	-40	-53	-19	-19	-66	-47
Not Employed	-60	-61	-60	-57	-42	-42	-66	-56

END