

## **Confidence Holds Steady**

Consumer confidence was unchanged this week, remaining at its lowest level since November, but still strong from a historical standpoint.

Seventy-one percent of Americans say the economy is in good shape, down nine points from its record high in January but 32 points above its average in 14 years of weekly polls. Fifty-one percent say it's a good time to buy things, down six points from its peak in January. Ratings of personal finances have been more stable; 68 percent say their own finances are in good shape – near its record high, and close to where it's been all year.

Positive ratings:	----- Since 12/85 -----			Average
	Today	Highest	Lowest	
National Economy	71%	80	7	39
Personal Finances	68	70	42	56
Buying Climate	51	57	20	38

Interviews for this week's survey were completed Sunday, before the stock market's latest gyrations. In recent years, however, rises and falls in the market have not had any lasting impact on consumer confidence.

**INDEX** - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, remains unchanged at +27 on its scale of +100 to -100. So far this year the index has averaged a robust +31, three points above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average, stunted by dismal levels in the early '90s, is only -11.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+27	
Last week	+27	
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record High
2000 average	+31	
1999 average	+28	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-11	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the ABC/Money index over time.

**GROUPS** – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +63 in higher-income households compared to -22 in the lowest; +50 among college

graduates but -13 among high-school dropouts; +32 among whites but -6 among blacks; and +32 among men compared to +21 among women.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY-** The poll asks: Would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Seventy-one percent say excellent or good, down two points from last week. The record, 80 percent, was set on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	71%	15	56	29	21	8
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	40	21

**PERSONAL FINANCES -** The poll asks: Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Sixty-eight percent say excellent or good, the same as last week. The record, 70 percent, was originally set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in Jan. 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	68%	6	62	32	22	10
Avg. since 12/85	56	5	52	44	31	13

**BUYING CLIMATE -** The poll asks: Considering the cost of things today and your own personal finances, would you say now is an excellent time, a good time, a not so good time or a poor time to buy the things you want and need? Fifty-one percent say excellent or good, up two points from last week. The record, 57 percent, was set on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst rating, 20 percent, was set in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	51%	4	47	49	33	16
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	21

**METHODOLOGY -** The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,049 interviews in the week ending April 2 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Fieldwork 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 Bobbi Jo Fuller.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:  
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

04/02/00	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	27	27	29	31	31	38	22	28
State of Economy	42	46	54	52	54	60	38	47
Personal Finances	36	36	32	34	36	40	28	34
Buying Climate	2	-2	0	8	4	14	-4	4
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	32	30	32	43	41	45	30	36
Women	21	22	24	21	22	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	19	16	29	27	28	37	16	25
35 - 44	28	26	21	35	30	37	13	28
45 - 54	22	26	21	34	36	45	11	28
55 - 64	44	40	35	31	30	48	16	31
65 +	31	35	39	32	30	45	17	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-22	-23	-12	-25	-11	-11	-42	-24
\$15K To \$24.9K	-9	-9	-9	14	-8	26	-15	1
\$25K To \$39.9K	18	22	31	32	38	38	8	24
\$40K To \$49.9K	60	51	34	44	56	60	27	43
Over \$50K	63	59	60	60	60	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	28	20	20	42	31	48	20	31
Midwest	30	31	32	30	37	41	20	31
South	23	22	26	24	24	31	14	24
West	27	32	33	34	36	43	13	28
Race:								
White	32	30	30	38	33	43	26	33
Black	-6	-1	25	-10	14	25	-11	2
Politics:								
Republican	37	42	43	53	46	55	32	42
Democrat	32	28	25	29	33	38	15	27
Independent	20	16	22	24	23	29	13	22
Education:								
< High School	-13	-13	-7	-10	-5	9	-27	-9
High Sch. Grad.	13	13	15	32	31	32	8	20
College +	50	49	49	45	44	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	33	35	36	38	40	44	28	35
Rent	8	2	6	15	6	22	-3	9
Marital Status:								
Single	23	21	26	30	21	36	8	24
Married	32	32	33	38	37	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	6	7	10	5	14	18	-9	8
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	34	29	30	39	38	44	29	36
Part-Time	18	20	30	24	25	38	7	22
Not Employed	17	23	25	22	22	28	8	18