

Confidence Holds Stable Amid Rising Fuel Costs

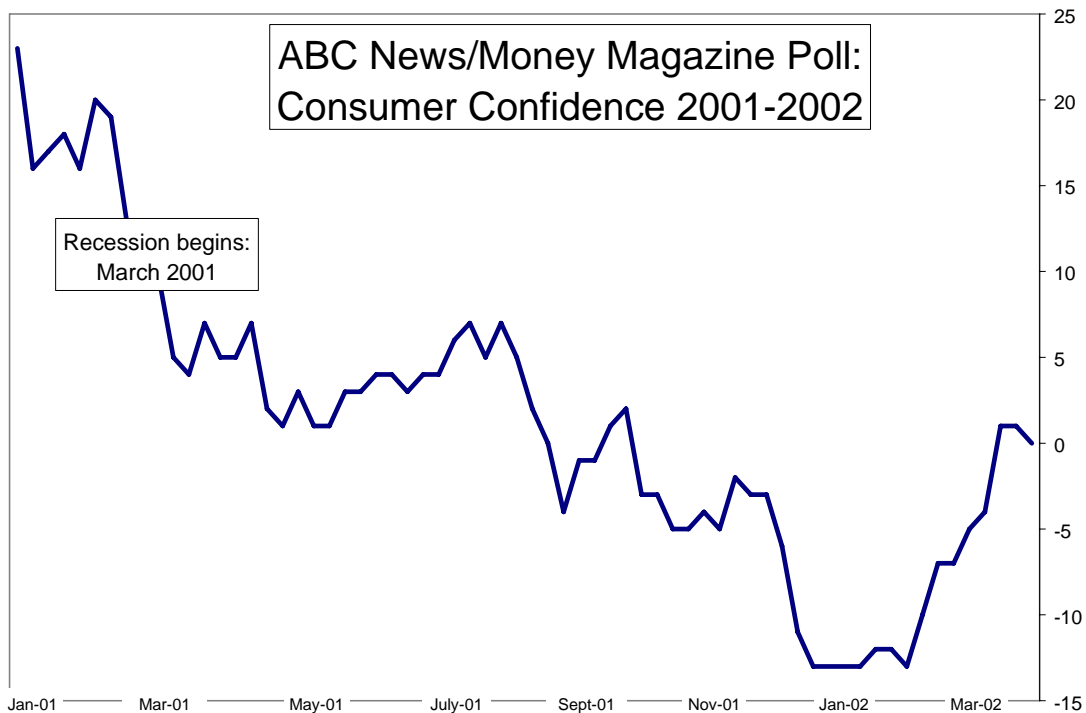
Consumer confidence remained steady this week, with public ratings of the buying climate continuing to hold tough in the face of rising gasoline prices.

Forty-four percent of Americans say it's a good time to buy things, near where it's been all year. It's a gauge that bears watching because in the past it's worsened when fuel costs have risen; last year, for example, positive ratings of the buying climate fell by 10 points from February to April as gasoline prices rose by 18 cents.

This year, amid Mideast unrest, the price of gasoline has risen by 26 cents a gallon since early March. However, it's still nine cents below its April 2001 level, and 27 cents below the peak it reached last May (\$1.66 for a gallon of regular).

In another measure of current economic sentiment, 44 percent of Americans rate the economy positively – far from its peak of 80 percent in January 2000, but up 13 points since the start of the year. And in the strongest gauge, 62 percent say their own finances are in good shape, eight points from the record high.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these gauges, stands at 0 on its scale of +100 to –100. The index has been essentially stable since a rare five-point advance the week of March 24, its largest surge since January 1999. That gain followed a mid-March rise in expectations, to their best in 18 years.



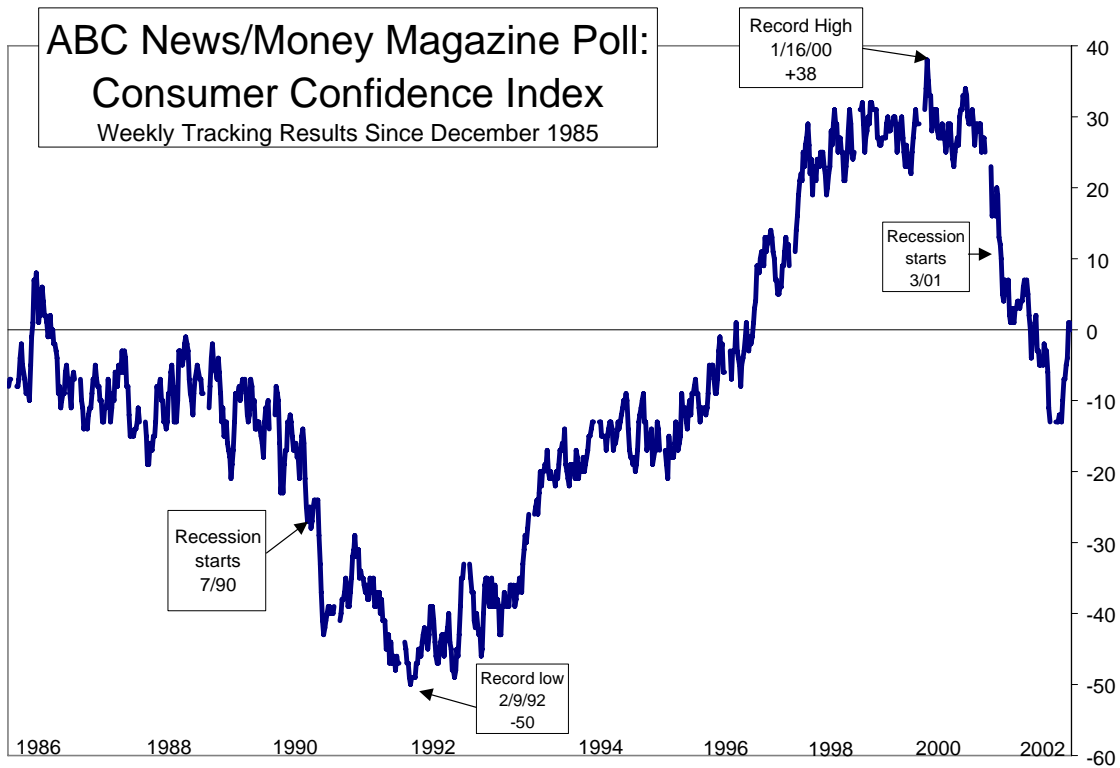
ABC News/Money Magazine Poll

	4/7/02	1/6/02	16-year average
Positive ratings of:			
National economy	44%	31	42
Buying climate	44	43	39
Personal finances	62	56	57
Consumer Comfort Index	0	-13	-8

TREND – The weekly index of current sentiment dropped throughout 2001, starting the year at +23 and finishing it at –13, then started recovering in mid-February this year. (Expectations, tracked separately on a monthly basis, started to improve last fall, then accelerated this spring.)

The index peaked at +38 on Jan. 16, 2000; its lowest was –50 on Feb. 9, 1992.

ABC/Money Index		
Today	0	
Last week	+ 1	
Four weeks ago	- 5	
Eight weeks ago	-13	
2002 average	- 8	
2001 average	+ 4	
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	- 8	



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +27 in higher-income households compared to -43 in the lowest, +12 among college graduates while -15 among high-school dropouts, +5 among whites but -26 among blacks and +6 among men while -5 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-four percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, down one point from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	44	2	42	56	44	12
Avg. since 12/85	42	4	38	58	39	19

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-two percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, down one point from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	62	7	55	38	28	10
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-four percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, up one point from last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	44	4	40	56	40	16
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21

METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with a random sample of about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,009 interviews in the month ending April 7, 2002 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work 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 Dalia Sussman.

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

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04/07/02

This Last 4 Wks 3 Mo. 1 Yr. 12 Mo 12 Mo 12 Mo
 Week Week Ago Ago Ago High Low Avg

Group

GENERAL POPULATION:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	0	1	-5	-13	5	7	-13	-2
State of Economy	-12	-10	-20	-38	6	10	-38	-13
Personal Finances	24	26	22	12	30	32	12	23
Buying Climate	-12	-14	-16	-14	-20	-4	-24	-15

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:

Men	6	7	6	-5	10	13	-6	5
Women	-5	-4	-15	-20	1	6	-21	-8

Age:

18 - 34	7	1	-6	-6	13	21	-8	4
35 - 44	-3	-1	-12	-10	3	9	-16	-2
45 - 54	-5	2	4	-17	8	10	-22	-5
55 - 64	7	19	-3	-17	-2	20	-30	-3
65 +	-5	-10	-6	-21	-5	9	-22	-8

Income:

Under \$15K	-43	-41	-47	-48	-38	-22	-54	-40
\$15K To \$24.9K	-31	-31	-23	-24	-22	-14	-40	-25
\$25K To \$39.9K	1	-8	-10	-19	-7	11	-24	-8
\$40K To \$49.9K	3	10	11	-3	21	21	-14	4
Over \$50K	27	33	23	10	31	39	3	23

Region:

Northeast	-3	-2	-5	-11	-8	9	-17	-4
Midwest	-4	1	-8	-9	12	13	-15	0
South	1	-1	1	-11	0	8	-13	-1
West	7	7	-11	-20	17	17	-21	-2

Race:

White	5	6	2	-7	12	12	-8	3
Black	-26	-33	-43	-46	-35	-8	-51	-30

Politics:

Republican	31	30	16	19	22	34	5	21
Democrat	-15	-15	-18	-29	-7	2	-29	-13
Independent	-4	-4	-4	-17	2	4	-19	-6

Education:

< High School	-15	-20	-37	-49	-31	-15	-49	-32
High Sch. Grad.	-9	-7	-3	-15	-2	6	-18	-7
College +	12	13	5	0	21	26	-5	11

Home:

Own	7	8	4	-7	9	16	-10	4
Rent	-18	-20	-23	-27	-5	-1	-27	-16

Marital Status:

Single	-5	-12	-14	-19	3	15	-19	-2
Married	7	11	3	-6	13	17	-7	5
Sep/Wid/Div	-19	-25	-31	-33	-22	-10	-42	-25

Employ. Status:

Full-Time	12	9	4	-4	11	19	-4	8
Part-Time	0	9	4	-10	1	11	-15	-3
Not Employed	-15	-14	-19	-27	-3	-1	-28	-14

END