

Confidence Unfazed By Market Fluctuations

Confidence inched up this week, despite last week's stock market volatility, Friday's record market plunge, and a jump in consumer inflation.

Confidence remains strong, demonstrating once again that market fluctuations typically don't have any lasting impact on consumer confidence. Past ABC News/Money magazine polls have shown confidence unfazed by market gyrations; an exception occurred following the 1987 crash, when confidence was down for five months. (Interviews for this week's survey were completed Sunday, before the market rebounded on Monday and Tuesday.)

Seventy-four percent of Americans say the economy is in good shape – up two points from last week, and fifty-one percent say it's a good time to buy things – the same as last week. Both are six points below January's record high. Sixty-eight percent say their own finances are in good shape – only two points off the record, and around where it's been all year.

Positive ratings:	----- Since 12/85 -----			Average
	Today	Highest	Lowest	
National Economy	74%	80	7	39
Personal Finances	68	70	42	56
Buying Climate	51	57	20	38

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +29 on its scale of +100 to -100. So far this year the index has averaged +31, three points above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average is just -11.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+29	
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 +66 in higher-income households compared to -19 in the lowest; +48 among college graduates but -7 among high-school dropouts; +32 among whites but +5 among blacks; and +36 among men compared to +20 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-four percent say excellent or good, up 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	74%	15	59	26	18	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, up one point from 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%	7	61	32	20	12
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, the same as 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%	3	48	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 1,041 interviews in the week ending April 16 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.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

04/16/00	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	29	27	28	38	27	38	22	28
State of Economy	48	44	50	60	48	60	38	47
Personal Finances	36	34	34	40	30	40	28	34
Buying Climate	2	2	0	14	2	14	-4	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	36	35	32	45	33	45	30	36
Women	20	18	23	30	21	30	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	23	20	22	37	24	37	16	25
35 - 44	33	32	20	35	25	37	13	28
45 - 54	27	19	29	45	27	45	11	28
55 - 64	30	36	43	40	29	48	16	31
65 +	33	29	32	29	30	45	17	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-19	-21	-24	-19	-19	-12	-42	-25
\$15K To \$24.9K	-8	-10	-3	22	-11	26	-15	1
\$25K To \$39.9K	18	18	24	30	33	33	8	24
\$40K To \$49.9K	41	48	45	54	39	60	27	43
Over \$50K	66	66	61	68	55	68	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	34	35	21	47	31	48	20	31
Midwest	40	32	31	40	32	41	20	30
South	20	20	25	26	23	31	14	24
West	22	22	34	42	23	43	13	28
Race:								
White	32	31	31	43	33	43	26	32
Black	5	-3	4	3	5	25	-11	1
Politics:								
Republican	38	38	41	50	33	55	32	42
Democrat	36	31	26	38	28	38	15	27
Independent	18	18	22	26	26	29	13	22
Education:								
< High School	-7	-7	-14	1	-4	9	-27	-10
High Sch. Grad.	16	13	18	29	23	32	8	19
College +	48	48	48	53	40	53	38	46
Home:								
Own	36	34	35	44	36	44	28	35
Rent	9	8	4	19	4	22	-3	9
Marital Status:								
Single	23	25	24	33	25	36	8	24
Married	32	30	33	44	32	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	16	10	6	13	10	17	-9	7
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	39	36	32	44	31	44	29	36

Part-Time	21	18	25	30	27	38	7	22
Not Employed	14	14	20	28	20	28	8	18

END