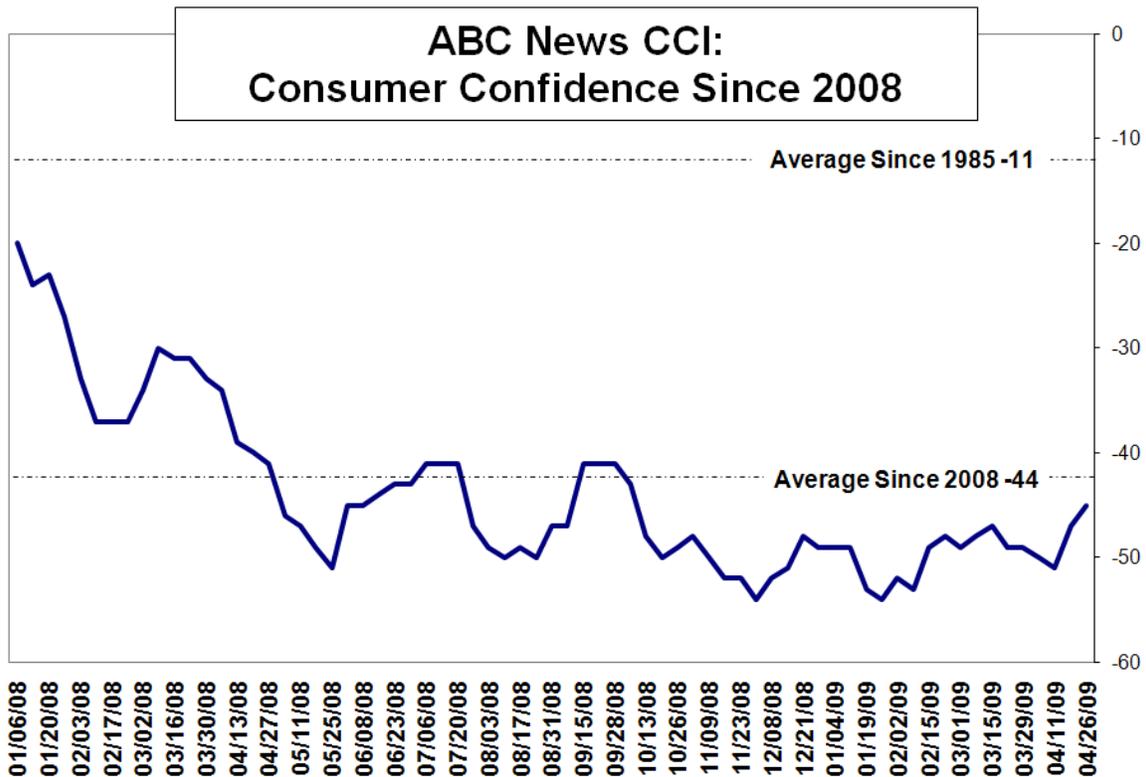


Confidence at 2009 High, Not that it's Party Time

Consumer confidence has inched to its best in more than six months, led by improved ratings of personal finances. But it's hardly party time: A near-unanimous 93 percent of Americans still say the national economy's in bad shape.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -45 on its scale of +100 to -100, a 6-point gain in two weeks to its best since Oct. 5. Nonetheless, the CCI is only 9 points from its worst in 23 years of weekly polls, -54 on Jan. 25. Its lifetime average is -11.

Half of Americans now rate their personal finances positively, up 5 points in three weeks to the most since mid-October. Far fewer, 26 percent, call it a good time to spend money, albeit the most since the start of the year. And as noted, only 7 percent rate the national economy positively. That's been in single digits for half a year.



This week marks Barack Obama's first 100 days in office; the CCI has climbed 8 points since his inauguration – but with sharp partisan differences. It's risen by 21 points among

Democrats and by 11 points among independents – but dropped by 8 points among Republicans.

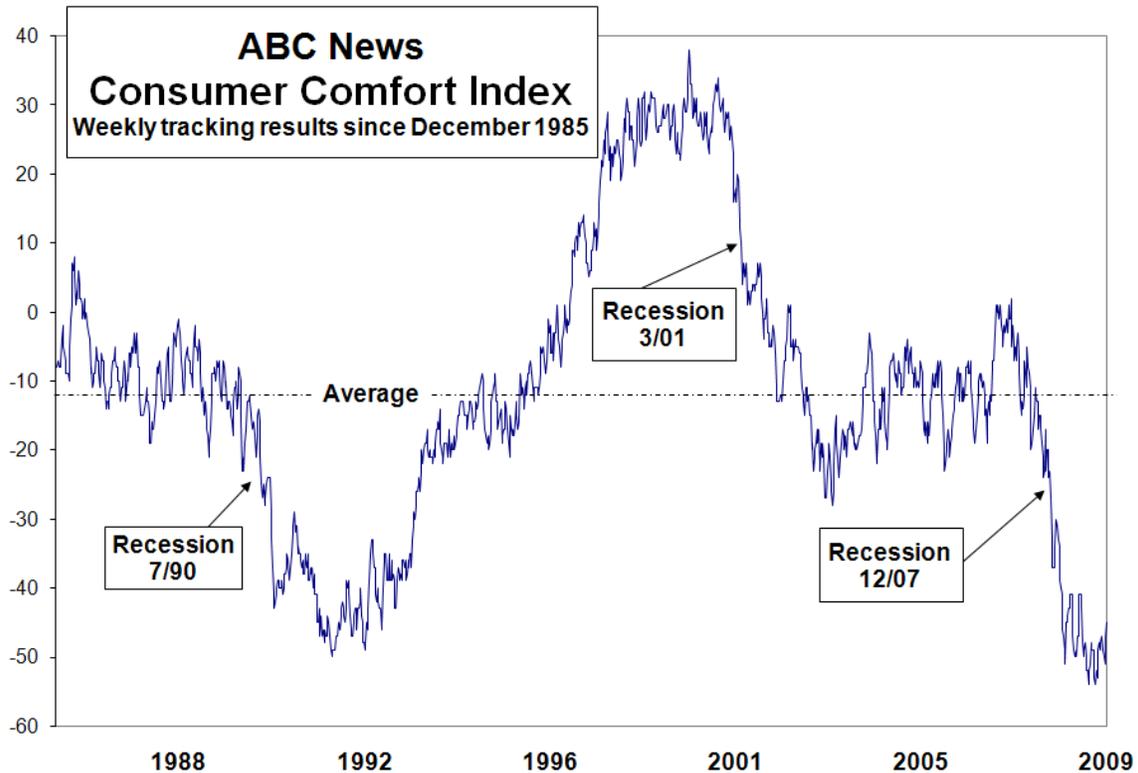
There is some optimism for the future, albeit also highly partisan. In a separate ABC News/Washington Post poll this week 55 percent are optimistic about the state of the national economy, the most since 2006, and the number who say the country’s in a serious long-term decline has fallen by 10 points since February, to 46 percent.

But future hopes can’t replace the reality of the worst job market in a quarter century, with unemployment up to 8.5 percent.

TREND – The index’s 6-point gain in two weeks is its largest since September; it breaks the CCI out of a 7-point range, -47 to -54, in which it’d wallowed for a record 28 weeks.

Still, the index has been below -40 for 53 consecutive weeks, a record, and hasn’t seen positive territory since March 2007. It’s 34 points below its long-term average, and its 2009 average to date, -50, is 6 points below its worst annual average, -44 in 1992.

Its best yearlong average was +29 in 2000; its best week, +38 in January 2000.



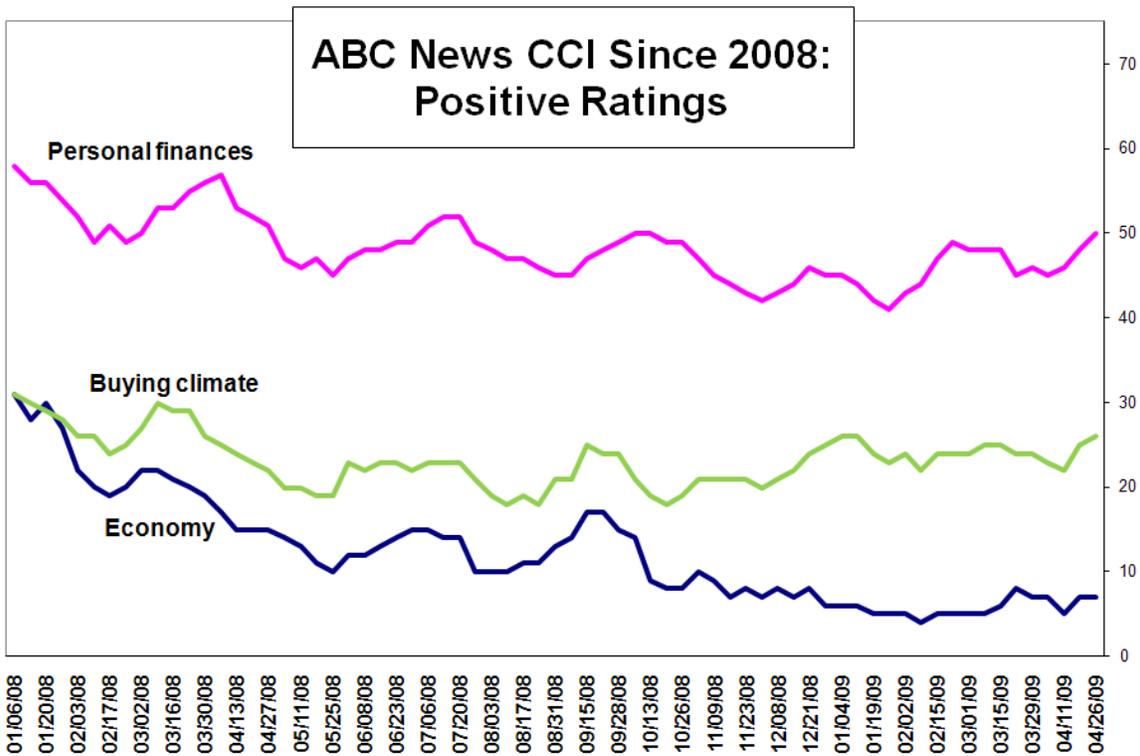
	ABC News	CCI
This week	-45	2009 high
Last week	-47	
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low

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	

INDEX – Among the CCI’s three gauges, ratings of personal finances typically are the strongest. Today they’re 4 points better than the 2009 average and just 7 points below the long-term average. But fewer than a majority have rated their own finances positively for 40 weeks straight, surpassed only by a 46-week stretch in 1991-92.

The 26 percent who say it’s a good time to buy things is up 4 points in two weeks to match this year’s high. But it’s still 11 points below the long-term average and just 8 points above the record low reached in October and August.

Positive ratings of the national economy, meanwhile, have been locked in at a dismal 7 percent – 32 points below average – in four of the last five weeks. They’ve been in single digits for a record 25 weeks.



	ABC News CCI		Averages	
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2009	'85-'09
National economy	7%	7	6	39
Buying climate	26	25	24	37
Personal finances	50	48	46	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-45	-47	-50	-11

GROUPS – The index is negative across the board for the ninth consecutive week, with an unusually narrow partisan gap. This week’s partisan gap is only 2 points (the smallest since September 2000) – -41 among Republicans and -43 among Democrats, their best in a year. (It’s -44 among independents.) The average Democratic-Republican gap is 33 points; it was 41 points last year.

The index customarily is higher among better-off groups. It’s -15 among those with the highest incomes but -68 among those with the lowest, -30 among those who’ve attended college (also the best in a year) vs. -69 among high school dropouts, -38 among men (the best since December) while -50 among women and -40 among homeowners (the best since November) compared with -56 among renters.

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, the same as 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	40	53
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	35	61	40	22

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 48 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	50	4	46	50	35	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-six percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 25 percent 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	26	3	23	74	44	30
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	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 April 26, 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.

04/26/09	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	-45	-47	-49	-54	-41	-41	-54	-48
State of Economy	-86	-86	-86	-90	-70	-66	-92	-81
Personal Finances	0	-4	-8	-18	2	4	-18	-6
Buying Climate	-48	-50	-52	-54	-56	-48	-64	-56

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-38	-42	-41	-49	-33	-32	-49	-43
Women	-50	-50	-53	-57	-49	-39	-59	-51
Age:								
18 - 34	-33	-36	-44	-58	-39	-33	-60	-46
35 - 44	-48	-54	-55	-52	-48	-27	-62	-46
45 - 54	-46	-42	-44	-53	-41	-31	-61	-48
55 - 64	-46	-53	-53	-54	-36	-36	-64	-50
65+	-56	-55	-45	-46	-41	-31	-56	-46
Income:								
Under \$15K	-68	-66	-75	-78	-74	-51	-87	-74
\$15K To \$24.9K	-65	-67	-70	-76	-66	-44	-83	-68
\$25K To \$39.9K	-68	-68	-64	-71	-47	-47	-71	-59
\$40K To \$49.9K	-36	-38	-45	-52	-49	-16	-62	-48
Over \$50K	-22	-28	-31	-33	-25	-17	-41	-29
\$50K To \$74.9K	-33	-42	-46	-37	-43	-28	-57	-42
\$75K To \$99.9K	-14	-24	-26	-49	-21	-14	-52	-31
Over \$100K	-15	-16	-18	-12	-8	5	-34	-13
Region:								
Northeast	-48	-45	-50	-48	-47	-42	-62	-52
Midwest	-54	-54	-46	-56	-46	-31	-58	-46
South	-39	-45	-50	-59	-33	-33	-59	-47
West	-38	-41	-42	-46	-44	-26	-56	-43
Race:								
White	-45	-46	-45	-49	-40	-35	-50	-44
Black	-46	-53	-67	-66	-54	-46	-81	-64
Politics:								
Republican	-41	-42	-32	-37	-20	-10	-42	-26
Democrat	-43	-46	-58	-65	-57	-43	-70	-60
Independent	-44	-49	-49	-50	-36	-36	-55	-48
Education:								

< High School	-69	-70	-63	-67	-57	-50	-77	-64
High Sch. Grad.	-58	-60	-53	-60	-51	-38	-62	-52
College +	-30	-33	-40	-46	-29	-29	-50	-40
Home:								
Own	-40	-44	-42	-49	-36	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-56	-54	-64	-67	-57	-49	-80	-62
Marital Status:								
Single	-44	-44	-46	-59	-45	-34	-69	-51
Married	-38	-42	-40	-45	-33	-26	-46	-39
Sep/Wid/Div	-59	-62	-70	-66	-60	-52	-70	-63
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-36	-40	-38	-45	-34	-29	-47	-39
Part-Time	-55	-56	-35	-62	-36	-30	-66	-49
Not Employed	-49	-49	-60	-59	-52	-47	-66	-56

END