

ABC NEWS CONSUMER INDEX – 5/10/09

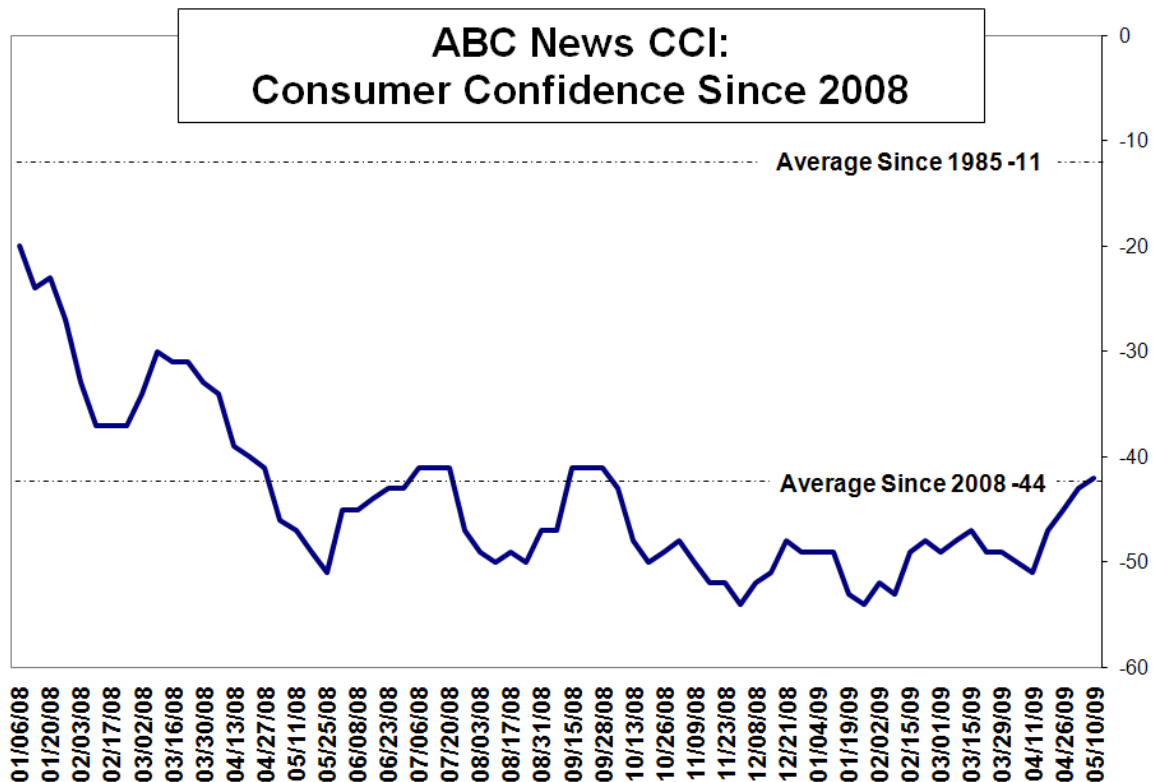
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Confidence Struggles Ahead

Dismal in historical terms, consumer confidence nonetheless has run up its best four-week stretch since September, setting a 2009 high for the third week in a row.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index now stands at -42 on its scale of +100 to -100, up 9 points in a month to its best since last fall. The progress has been incremental, with little week-to-week change, but the overall movement is a positive glimmer in a year that's seen the worst rating in 23 years of weekly polls, -54 in late January.

The past month's improvement stems mostly from better ratings of personal finances, now 52 percent positive, their best since July. Fewer than half as many, 25 percent, call it a good time to buy things, stagnant over the last four weeks. In a third gauge, one in 10 rates the national economy positively, the first time this measure has cracked double digits since early November, albeit a whopping 90 percent negative.



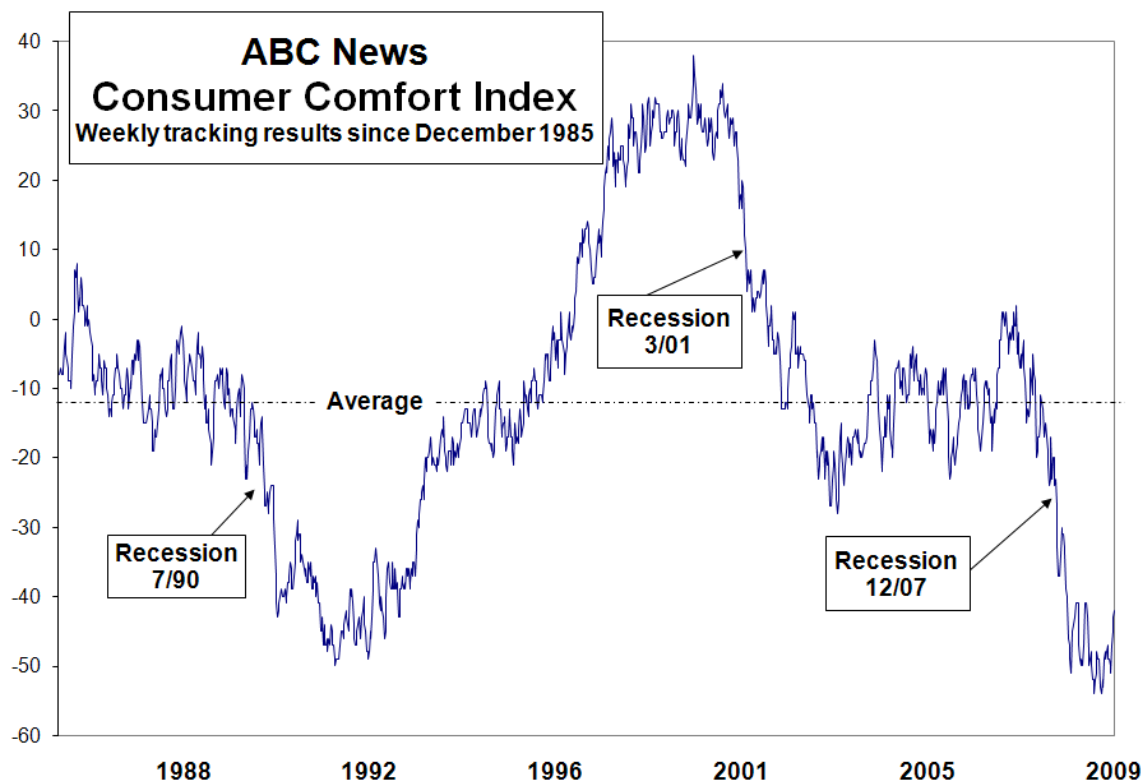
Another indicator also suggests potential improvement: The Bureau of Labor Statistics last week reported 539,000 jobs lost in April - hardly good, but dramatically better than

recently, and the slowest pace of job loss in six months. At the same time, unemployment is now 8.9 percent, the highest in 25 years.

TREND – The index has been improving after hitting -51 last month; it hasn't moved up this far this fast since September, and hasn't lost any ground in this period, another best since September. Over the past month, it's risen most sharply in the West and among men.

While at a seven-month high, confidence is hardly out of the woods. At -42, the index is 31 points below its long-term average, and matches its 2008 average – itself the second worst on record, after 1992's -44.

The CCI has been below -40 for 55 consecutive weeks, a record, and hasn't seen positive territory since March 2007. It remains vastly below the best yearlong average, +29 in 2000, and the best week, +38 in January 2000.

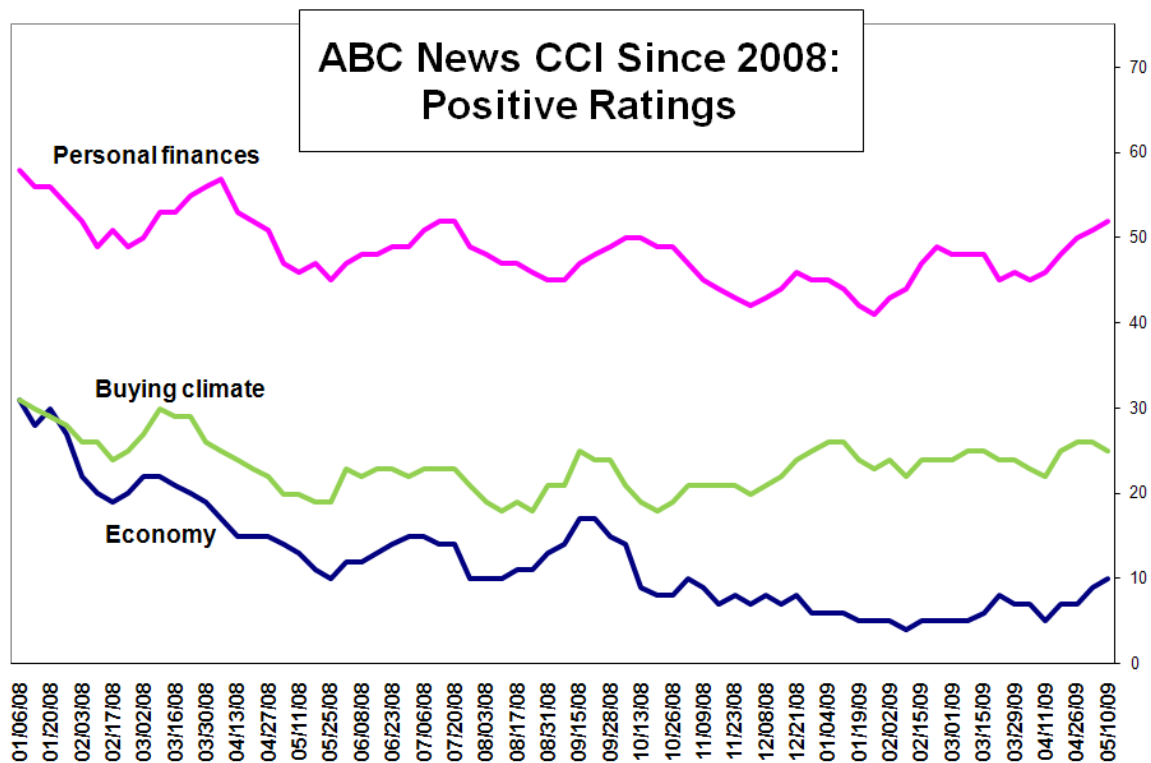


	ABC News	CCI
This week	-42	2009 high
Last week	-43	
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-49	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Average since 12/85	-11	

INDEX – The index, as noted, is based on Americans’ ratings of the national economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. Positive views of the economy, at 10 percent, are their highest in six months, breaking a record 26 weeks in the single digits. But it’s also the weakest of the three measures, 28 points below the long-term average.

Twenty-five percent say it’s a good time to buy things, about where it’s been for the past month, 12 points below the long-term average and just 7 points above the record low reached in October and August.

The index has been buoyed chiefly by better ratings of personal finances; this is the second week in which more than half rate their own finances positively, breaking a 40-week stretch below a majority. The current 52 percent positive measure is 6 points above the 2009 average and just 5 points below the long-term average.



ABC News CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	Averages	
			2009	'85-'09
National economy	10%	9	6	38
Buying climate	25	26	24	37
Personal finances	52	51	46	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-42	-43	-49	-11

GROUPS – As usual, the CCI is higher among better-off groups, but negative across groups for the 11th straight week, with an unusually large gender gap. It's -28 among men – their best since April 2008 – while -54 among women, the largest gender gap since May 2007, and 9 points higher than the average difference in available data since 1990.

Among other groups, the index is -8 among those with the highest incomes (the best since early March) but -75 among those with the lowest, -31 among those who've attended college vs. -61 among high school dropouts, -39 among homeowners (the best since October) compared with -48 among renters (the best since April 2008) and -39 among whites (the best since October) vs. -57 among blacks.

Partisan differences remain: The index is -32 among Republicans vs. -49 among Democrats and -39 among independents (the best for the latter group since July).

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Ten percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 9 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	10	1	9	90	43	47
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	40	22

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-two percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 51 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	52	6	46	48	32	16
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-five percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 26 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	25	3	22	75	45	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 May 10, 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.

05/10/09	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	-42	-43	-51	-53	-47	-41	-54	-48
State of Economy	-80	-82	-90	-92	-74	-66	-92	-81
Personal Finances	4	2	-8	-12	-8	4	-18	-6
Buying Climate	-50	-48	-56	-56	-60	-48	-64	-55

	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	-28	-32	-47	-46	-40	-28	-49	-42
Women	-54	-52	-53	-59	-53	-39	-59	-51
Age:								
18 - 34	-32	-34	-44	-58	-47	-32	-60	-46
35 - 44	-45	-39	-62	-39	-56	-27	-62	-46
45 - 54	-50	-49	-46	-52	-44	-31	-61	-49
55 - 64	-43	-48	-55	-63	-45	-40	-64	-50
65+	-46	-49	-50	-51	-41	-31	-56	-46
Income:								
Under \$15K	-75	-67	-72	-84	-73	-51	-87	-74
\$15K To \$24.9K	-41	-49	-67	-72	-65	-41	-83	-68
\$25K To \$39.9K	-56	-61	-67	-66	-50	-47	-71	-60
\$40K To \$49.9K	-52	-43	-55	-59	-53	-16	-62	-48
Over \$50K	-22	-22	-30	-31	-30	-17	-41	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-24	-30	-46	-48	-57	-24	-57	-41
\$75K To \$99.9K	-35	-22	-23	-44	-32	-14	-52	-31
Over \$100K	-8	-14	-21	-2	-4	5	-34	-13
Region:								
Northeast	-54	-51	-49	-53	-54	-42	-62	-53
Midwest	-48	-53	-47	-53	-46	-31	-58	-46
South	-45	-44	-51	-57	-40	-39	-59	-48
West	-19	-23	-54	-44	-53	-19	-56	-42
Race:								
White	-39	-42	-49	-49	-44	-35	-50	-44
Black	-57	-48	-61	-68	-70	-46	-81	-63
Politics:								
Republican	-32	-35	-40	-33	-21	-10	-42	-26
Democrat	-49	-44	-54	-63	-65	-43	-70	-60
Independent	-39	-44	-53	-53	-45	-39	-55	-48
Education:								

< High School	-61	-67	-73	-66	-57	-50	-77	-64
High Sch. Grad.	-52	-51	-61	-62	-58	-38	-62	-52
College +	-31	-32	-39	-44	-36	-30	-50	-40
Home:								
Own	-39	-40	-47	-49	-41	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-48	-49	-60	-65	-61	-48	-80	-62
Marital Status:								
Single	-38	-42	-56	-59	-52	-34	-69	-51
Married	-34	-33	-43	-43	-37	-26	-46	-39
Sep/Wid/Div	-64	-63	-65	-67	-64	-52	-70	-63
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-33	-36	-45	-41	-38	-29	-47	-39
Part-Time	-42	-42	-50	-56	-50	-30	-66	-49
Not Employed	-52	-50	-57	-64	-57	-47	-66	-56
END								