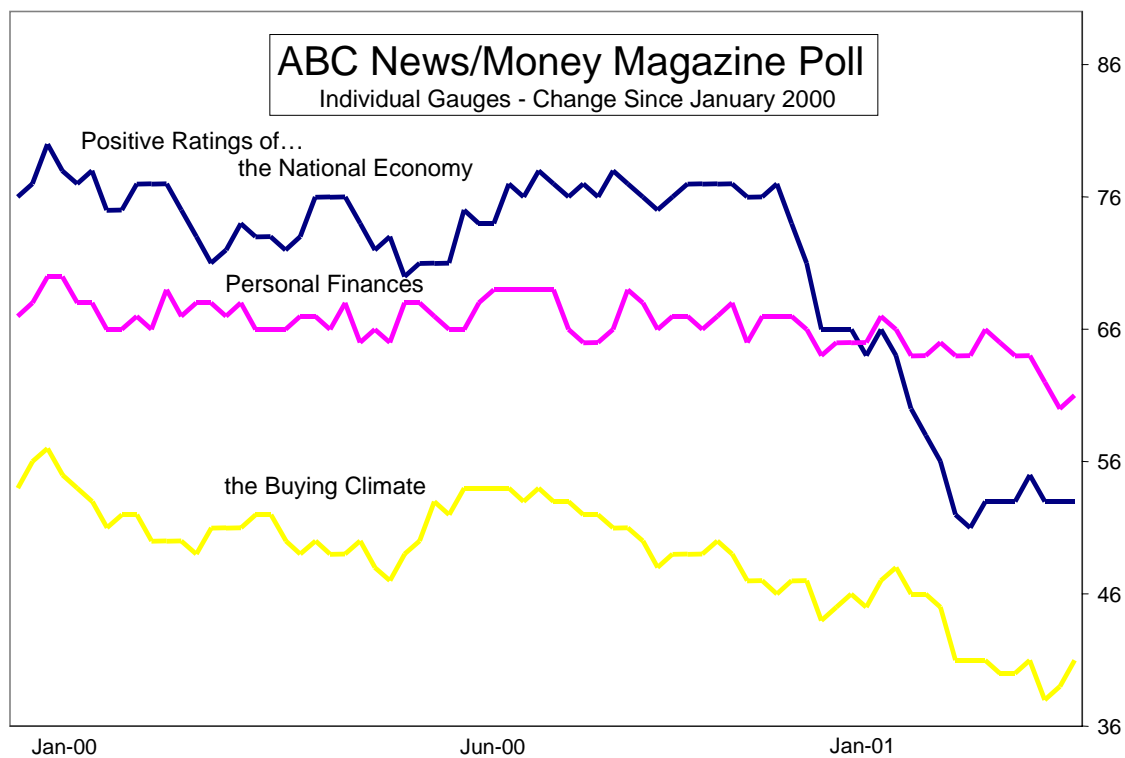


## Confidence Not Down, But Still Off Its Oats

Consumer confidence didn't fall this week, which is comparatively good news given its course this year. But it remains near its four-year low, far below its level last January.

Forty-one percent of Americans call it a good time to buy things, up two points from last week but down from 47 percent in January and 54 percent last fall. Fifty-three percent say the national economy is in good shape, steady since mid-March but way down from 71 percent in January.

In the third gauge in the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, 61 percent say their own finances are in good shape. This measure held steady earlier this year but weakened recently; it's down from 66 percent in January.

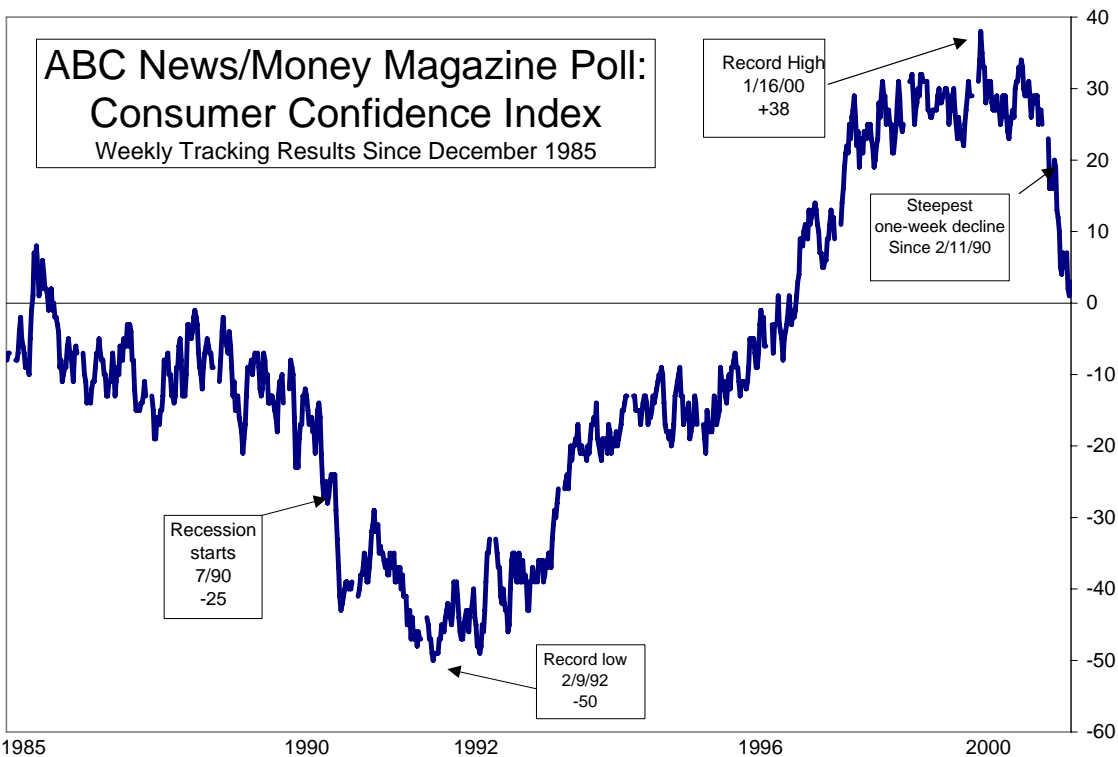


The Consumer Comfort Index, based on these views, stands at +3 on its scale of +100 to -100, up two points from last week but down from +23 in January. It peaked at +38 in January 2000.

|                      | Recent trend | Record high | 15-year average |    |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----|
| Positive ratings of: | 5/13/01      | 1/7/01      | 1/16/00         |    |
| National economy     | 53%          | 71          | 80              | 41 |
| Buying climate       | 41           | 47          | 57              | 38 |
| Personal finances    | 61           | 66          | 70              | 57 |

The index fell seven points in one week in January (tying the one-week record), six points in one week in February, five points in a week in March, and another five points in April. Nonetheless, all three gauges are still well above their levels at the beginning of the last recession.

|                     | ABC/Money | Index           |  |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Today               | + 3       |                 |  |
| Last week           | + 1       |                 |  |
| Three months ago    | +20       |                 |  |
| Jan. 7, 2001        | +23       |                 |  |
| Jan. 16, 2000       | +38       | Record high     |  |
| 2000 average        | +29       | Best full year  |  |
| 1992 average        | -44       | Worst full year |  |
| Feb. 9, 1992        | -50       | Record low      |  |
| Average since 12/85 | - 9       |                 |  |



**GROUPS** - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +28 in higher-income households compared to -32 in the lowest, +18 among college graduates while -27 among high-school dropouts, +8 among whites but -25 among blacks and +13 among men while -5 among women.

Interviews for the latest survey were completed May 13, before the Fed's latest rate cut.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Fifty-three percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, the same as 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        | 53       | 3      | 50   | 47       | 37       | 10   |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 41       | 4      | 38   | 59       | 39       | 20   |

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-one percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up 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        | 61       | 7      | 54   | 39       | 30       | 9    |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 57       | 5      | 52   | 43       | 30       | 12   |

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-one percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, up two points 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        | 41       | 3      | 38   | 59       | 42       | 17   |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 38       | 3      | 36   | 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 1,025 interviews in the month ending May 13, 2001 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/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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| 05/13/01                            | 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                       | 3         | 1         | 5         | 20        | 26        | 34         | 1         | 22        |
| State of Economy                    | 6         | 6         | 6         | 32        | 46        | 56         | 2         | 38        |
| Personal Finances                   | 22        | 20        | 28        | 34        | 34        | 38         | 20        | 32        |
| Buying Climate                      | -18       | -22       | -20       | -6        | -2        | 8          | -24       | -4        |
| -----                               |           |           |           |           |           |            |           |           |
| OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS |           |           |           |           |           |            |           |           |
| Sex:                                | -----     |           |           |           |           |            |           |           |
| Men                                 | 13        | 13        | 11        | 27        | 35        | 45         | 8         | 28        |
| Women                               | -5        | -9        | 0         | 13        | 18        | 27         | -9        | 16        |
| Age:                                | -----     |           |           |           |           |            |           |           |
| 18 - 34                             | 9         | 11        | 14        | 23        | 27        | 36         | 8         | 24        |
| 35 - 44                             | 4         | -1        | 6         | 29        | 22        | 34         | -1        | 21        |
| 45 - 54                             | -1        | -7        | 3         | 7         | 38        | 43         | -7        | 25        |
| 55 - 64                             | 14        | 4         | -12       | 6         | 27        | 51         | -12       | 18        |
| 65 +                                | -6        | -1        | 3         | 25        | 14        | 43         | -6        | 19        |
| Income:                             | -----     |           |           |           |           |            |           |           |
| Under \$15K                         | -32       | -28       | -28       | -18       | -25       | -8         | -43       | -24       |

|                  |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| \$15K To \$24.9K | -40 | -39 | -25 | -14 | 6   | 14 | -40 | -8  |
| \$25K To \$39.9K | -3  | -10 | -9  | 1   | 27  | 32 | -10 | 14  |
| \$40K To \$49.9K | 10  | 10  | 18  | 29  | 29  | 51 | 10  | 30  |
| Over \$50K       | 28  | 25  | 32  | 45  | 57  | 68 | 25  | 52  |
| Region:          |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| Northeast        | -2  | -8  | -9  | 24  | 36  | 42 | -9  | 23  |
| Midwest          | 10  | 12  | 10  | 20  | 32  | 46 | 5   | 25  |
| South            | 1   | -5  | 3   | 20  | 20  | 30 | -5  | 17  |
| West             | 7   | 10  | 17  | 15  | 20  | 42 | 6   | 24  |
| Race:            |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| White            | 8   | 6   | 11  | 21  | 33  | 38 | 6   | 26  |
| Black            | -25 | -28 | -31 | 14  | -10 | 20 | -39 | -4  |
| Politics:        |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| Republican       | 26  | 20  | 26  | 28  | 40  | 48 | 19  | 35  |
| Democrat         | -8  | -7  | -2  | 17  | 24  | 37 | -13 | 17  |
| Independent      | -1  | -1  | -2  | 14  | 25  | 39 | -2  | 19  |
| Education:       |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| < High School    | -27 | -25 | -29 | -7  | -9  | 13 | -36 | -14 |
| High Sch. Grad.  | -2  | -6  | -2  | 13  | 15  | 29 | -6  | 14  |
| College +        | 18  | 16  | 20  | 32  | 45  | 53 | 14  | 38  |
| Home:            |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| Own              | 11  | 8   | 8   | 25  | 32  | 42 | 7   | 28  |
| Rent             | -14 | -14 | -1  | 4   | 9   | 17 | -14 | 5   |
| Marital Status:  |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| Single           | 3   | 5   | 2   | 17  | 25  | 42 | -2  | 21  |
| Married          | 13  | 10  | 13  | 26  | 32  | 38 | 10  | 28  |
| Sep/Wid/Div      | -25 | -25 | -18 | -3  | 2   | 27 | -29 | -1  |
| Employ. Status:  |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |
| Full-Time        | 14  | 10  | 10  | 26  | 32  | 40 | 10  | 29  |
| Part-Time        | 2   | 1   | 1   | 28  | 29  | 40 | -5  | 22  |
| Not Employed     | -12 | -10 | -1  | 7   | 17  | 29 | -12 | 11  |

\*\*\*END\*\*\*