

## Consumer Confidence Stays Strong and Stable

Consumer confidence stayed strong and stable in the latest ABC News/Money magazine poll, with twice the usual number of Americans saying the nation's economy is strong. Ratings of personal finances and the buying climate also remain well above average.

Rising incomes, low unemployment and low inflation have pushed confidence to unheard of levels this year, with concerns over the Asian economies and stock market gyrations showing little effect. This latest poll, completed Sunday, found confidence steady after advancing last week to its best since March, when it reached an all-time high.

Seventy percent say the economy is in good shape, compared to an average of 34 percent since this weekly poll began in late 1985. Sixty-five percent say their finances are good and 52 percent call it a good time to spend money on things they want and need.

		Positive Ratings	
	Today	Record high	12-yr. avg.
National Economy	70%	76	34
Personal Finances	65	68	55
Buying Climate	52	54	36

INDEX - The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, was unchanged this week at +25 on its scale of +100 to -100. It reached a record high of +29 on March 22, then hovered between +19 and +24 in April and May.

The index is far above its lifetime average of -17, or even its previous best year, an average of +5 last year. Call the Polling Unit, x2621, for a chart tracking the progress of consumer confidence over time.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+25	
March 22	+29	Record high
1998 average (to date)	+22	
1997 average	+5	Best year
1992 average	-44	Worst year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Lifetime average	-17	

GROUPS - High as it is, confidence still lags in economically vulnerable groups. The index is +35 among men compared to +15 among women, +29 among whites but -12

among blacks, +57 in higher-income households but -38 in the lowest and +46 among people who've attended college but -14 among high school dropouts.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY**- Seventy percent of Americans rate the economy positively, down two points this week. The best was 76 percent Feb. 22; the worst, 93 percent negative in late 1991 and early 1992.

**PERSONAL FINANCES** - Sixty-five percent rate their finances positively, unchanged. The best was 68 percent March 22; the worst, 58 percent negative March 14, 1993.

**BUYING CLIMATE** - Fifty-two percent call this a good time to buy things, up two points. The best was 54 percent March 22; the worst, 80 percent negative in fall 1990.

	Positive ratings for...		
	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	70%	65	52
Full average	34	55	36
Best	76	68	54
Worst	7	42	20

**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 1,029 interviews in the month ending June 15 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR Survey 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 Gary Langer.

For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621. ABC News polls are available on America Online (keyword "ABC Polls") and at ABCnews.com on the Internet.

06/14/98	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	25	25	24	27	9	29	5	15
State of Economy	40	44	42	46	12	52	8	27
Personal Finances	30	30	28	32	26	36	14	25

Buying Climate	4	0	2	4	-12	8	-14	-5
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	35	35	39	37	21	39	13	25
Women	15	13	9	18	-3	20	-6	7
Age:								
18 - 34	17	12	22	27	-1	29	-2	11
35 - 44	34	26	17	29	7	37	-4	15
45 - 54	23	26	25	23	18	31	2	16
55 - 64	36	47	38	24	21	47	-5	19
65 +	18	23	33	28	13	35	-2	21
Income:								
Under \$15K	-38	-35	-35	-22	-45	-18	-47	-32
\$15K To \$24.9K	3	16	13	8	-15	16	-34	-7
\$25K To \$39.9K	21	16	25	20	11	25	-6	12
\$40K To \$49.9K	54	46	40	54	1	54	1	29
Over \$50K	57	52	55	59	48	63	33	50
Region:								
Northeast	27	27	19	13	3	27	-4	12
Midwest	38	33	23	29	18	38	6	20
South	16	16	23	27	8	29	-6	15
West	20	24	28	38	4	40	1	14
Race:								
White	29	28	30	33	13	33	10	21
Black	-12	-7	-7	-11	-25	4	-34	-15
Politics:								
Republican	42	38	40	32	25	42	16	29
Democrat	21	20	23	23	12	26	-2	12
Independent	18	22	21	28	-3	30	-4	11
Education:								
< High School	-14	-17	-14	-4	-16	1	-38	-17
High Sch. Grad.	10	12	16	19	-6	22	-7	7
College +	46	45	42	44	26	48	22	32
Home:								
Own	32	30	28	35	20	36	12	23
Rent	6	9	11	9	-19	11	-19	-4
Marital Status:								
Single	23	21	25	23	-5	30	-7	9
Married	30	30	29	34	18	36	13	22
Sep/Wid/Div	2	3	7	8	-17	18	-22	-5
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	34	32	35	32	17	35	10	23
Part-Time	13	15	13	15	-2	27	-5	8
Not Employed	13	12	10	25	-3	25	-8	7