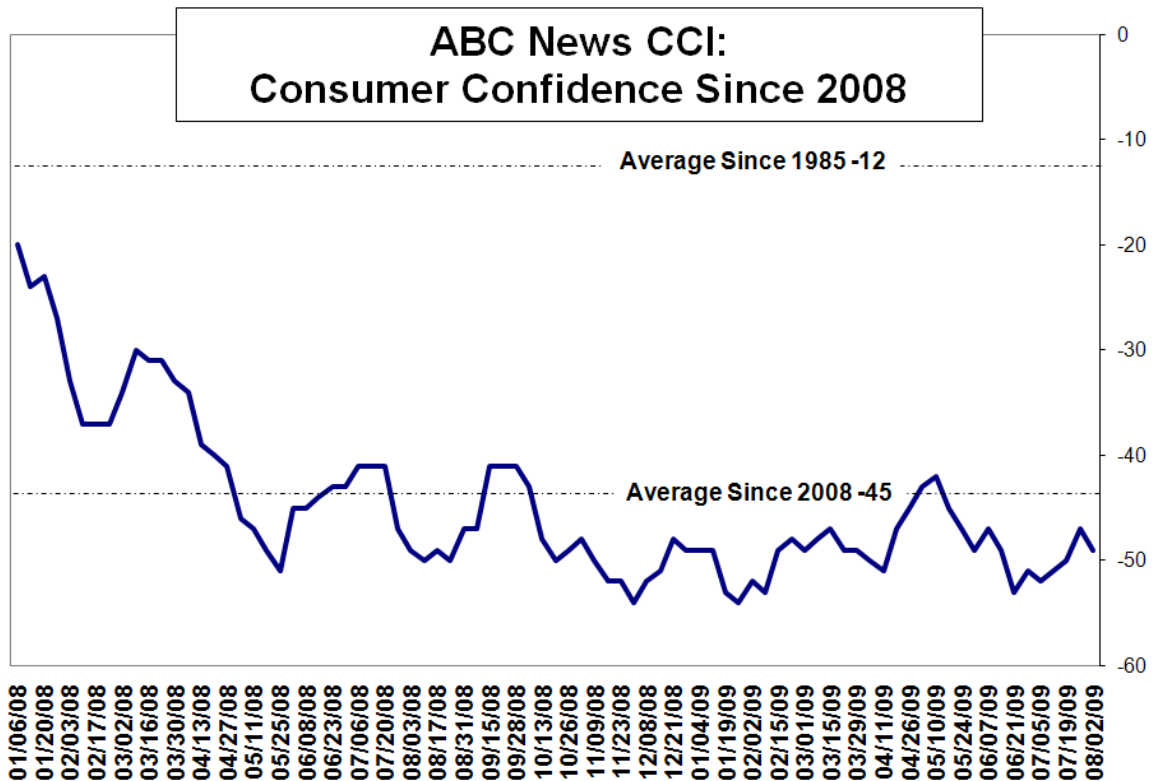


# **Recession Receding? Not for Consumers**

Even as the Obama administration cites evidence that the recession is slowing down, consumer confidence is in miserable shape.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, showing no signs of improvement after three weeks of progress.

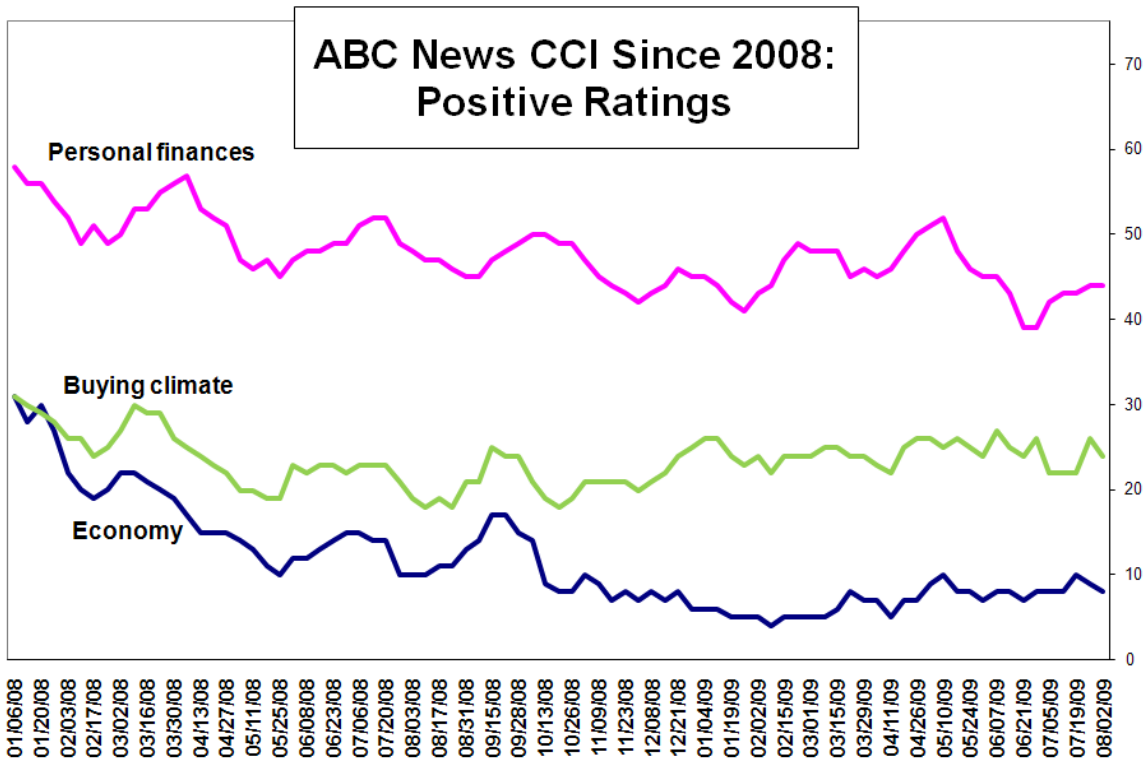
Ninety-two percent say the economy is in bad shape, at or above the fearsome 90 percent mark since early October; 76 percent think it's not a good time to buy things; and 56 percent rate their personal finances negatively.



Americans appear unimpressed by recent economic news: pending home sales rose for the fifth straight month, the stock market surged past notable benchmarks on Monday and consumers boosted their spending in June for the second straight month. Despite these promising signs the gross domestic product dropped for the fourth quarter in a row (albeit by less than expected), the longest such stretch since 1947.

**INDEX** – Of the three components of the CCI, ratings of personal finances are typically the best. Forty-four percent of Americans saying their own finances are in excellent or good shape, well below the long-term average, 57 percent. But it has improved since late June, when it hit its record low, 39 percent.

At 24 percent, positive ratings of the buying climate are 20 points lower than ratings of personal finances and 13 points below the long-term average. Positive ratings of the national economy are on a terrible run and have been in single digits for 40 of the last 43 weeks, a record. The 8 percent that currently rate the economy positively are 30 points below the long-term average.

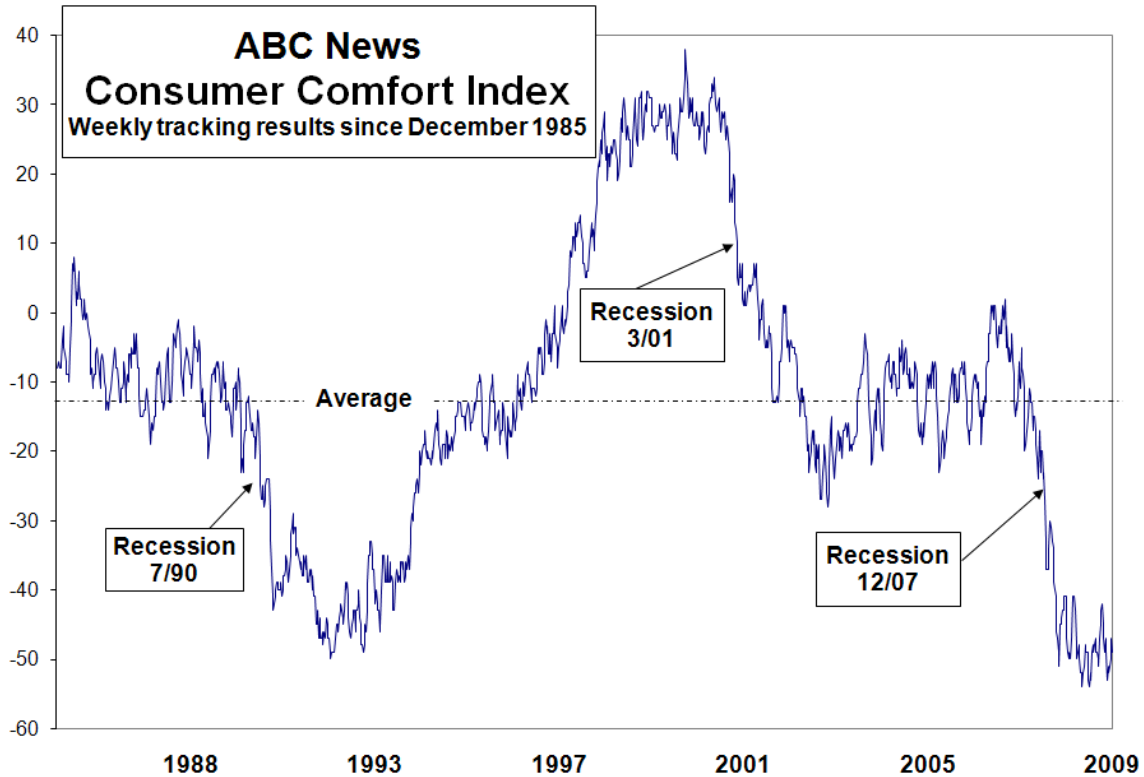


Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	2009	'85-'09
National economy	8%	9	7	38
Buying climate	24	26	24	37
Personal finances	44	44	45	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-47	-49	-12

**TREND** – Consumer confidence halted its three-week climb, but is above the dreaded -50 mark for the second straight week. The summer months have been tough so far, with confidence at -50 or worse for five of the past seven weeks. Confidence is only 5 points

from its lowest ever, -54 on Jan. 25. It's averaged -49 this year, compared with its long-term average of -12. Its record high was +38 in January 2000.

The index is on pace for its weakest year, running 5 points below its worst annual average on record, -44 in 1992. It's been below -40 for a record 67 weeks straight and hasn't been positive since March 2007.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-49	
Last week	-47	
2009 high	-42	May 10
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	-12	

**GROUPS** – The index is higher as usual among better-off Americans, but negative across the board for the 23<sup>rd</sup> week straight, and all but two weeks this year.

It's -17 among those with the highest incomes (the best since June) but -66 among those with the lowest, -39 among those who've attended college vs. -69 among high school

dropouts, -41 among men while -56 among women, and -45 among homeowners compared with -56 among renters.

Most unusual is this week's racial gap, with an index of -41 among blacks (its best since February 2008) and -50 among whites. This marks the sixth time in data since 1990 (including twice last month) that the CCI has been numerically higher among blacks than whites. Indeed, the racial gap has been atypically narrow this year, averaging 9 points, compared with a long-term average of 28 points.

Partisan differences remain, but also are narrower than usual: The CCI is -39 among Republicans, -54 among Democrats and -49 among independents (the best since June). That 15-point Republican-Democratic gap compares with 41 points last year and 32 points long-term.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Eight 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, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	8	1	7	92	42	50
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	40	22

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Forty-four percent say their own finances are excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 39 percent June 28 and 21.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	44	5	39	56	37	19
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Twenty-four 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, last reached Oct. 19, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	24	3	21	76	44	32
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 Aug. 2, 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 Giovanni Russonello.

ABC News polls can be found online at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

08/02/09	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-49	-47	-52	-43	-49	-41	-54	-49
State of Economy	-84	-82	-84	-82	-80	-66	-92	-83
Personal Finances	-12	-12	-16	2	-4	4	-22	-9
Buying Climate	-52	-48	-56	-48	-62	-46	-64	-54
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-41	-40	-42	-32	-47	-28	-49	-42
Women	-56	-54	-60	-52	-49	-46	-60	-54
Age:								
18 - 34	-48	-49	-51	-34	-52	-32	-61	-47
35 - 44	-52	-49	-52	-39	-45	-35	-62	-49
45 - 54	-48	-43	-50	-49	-48	-31	-61	-48
55 - 64	-48	-53	-58	-48	-48	-40	-65	-51
65+	-48	-43	-51	-49	-45	-34	-56	-47
Income:								
Under \$15K	-66	-57	-67	-67	-83	-51	-84	-72
\$15K To \$24.9K	-75	-71	-75	-49	-79	-41	-83	-69
\$25K To \$39.9K	-62	-65	-71	-61	-61	-47	-73	-61
\$40K To \$49.9K	-55	-55	-35	-43	-29	-27	-68	-50
Over \$50K	-26	-25	-33	-22	-26	-21	-41	-29
\$50K To \$74.9K	-36	-30	-38	-30	-34	-24	-54	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-24	-23	-34	-22	-34	-14	-52	-33
Over \$100K	-17	-22	-27	-14	-12	5	-34	-15
Region:								
Northeast	-57	-51	-47	-51	-48	-40	-62	-52
Midwest	-43	-46	-56	-53	-45	-31	-58	-48
South	-47	-47	-49	-44	-49	-39	-59	-49
West	-50	-47	-55	-23	-48	-19	-58	-44
Race:								
White	-50	-47	-51	-42	-44	-35	-52	-46
Black	-41	-48	-51	-48	-77	-41	-81	-60
Politics:								
Republican	-39	-36	-38	-35	-17	-10	-42	-31
Democrat	-54	-52	-59	-44	-64	-43	-70	-58
Independent	-49	-51	-53	-44	-51	-39	-56	-49
Education:								
< High School	-69	-63	-64	-67	-62	-51	-76	-65

High Sch. Grad.	-56	-56	-64	-51	-60	-38	-65	-55
College +	-39	-39	-42	-32	-37	-30	-50	-40
Home:								
Own	-45	-44	-44	-40	-43	-36	-49	-43
Rent	-56	-55	-71	-49	-65	-48	-80	-62
Marital Status:								
Single	-53	-54	-64	-42	-62	-34	-69	-53
Married	-45	-40	-43	-33	-35	-32	-47	-41
Sep/Wid/Div	-53	-54	-58	-63	-62	-52	-70	-62
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-41	-39	-40	-36	-42	-29	-47	-39
Part-Time	-58	-57	-58	-42	-63	-31	-67	-51
Not Employed	-53	-52	-64	-50	-52	-49	-66	-58

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