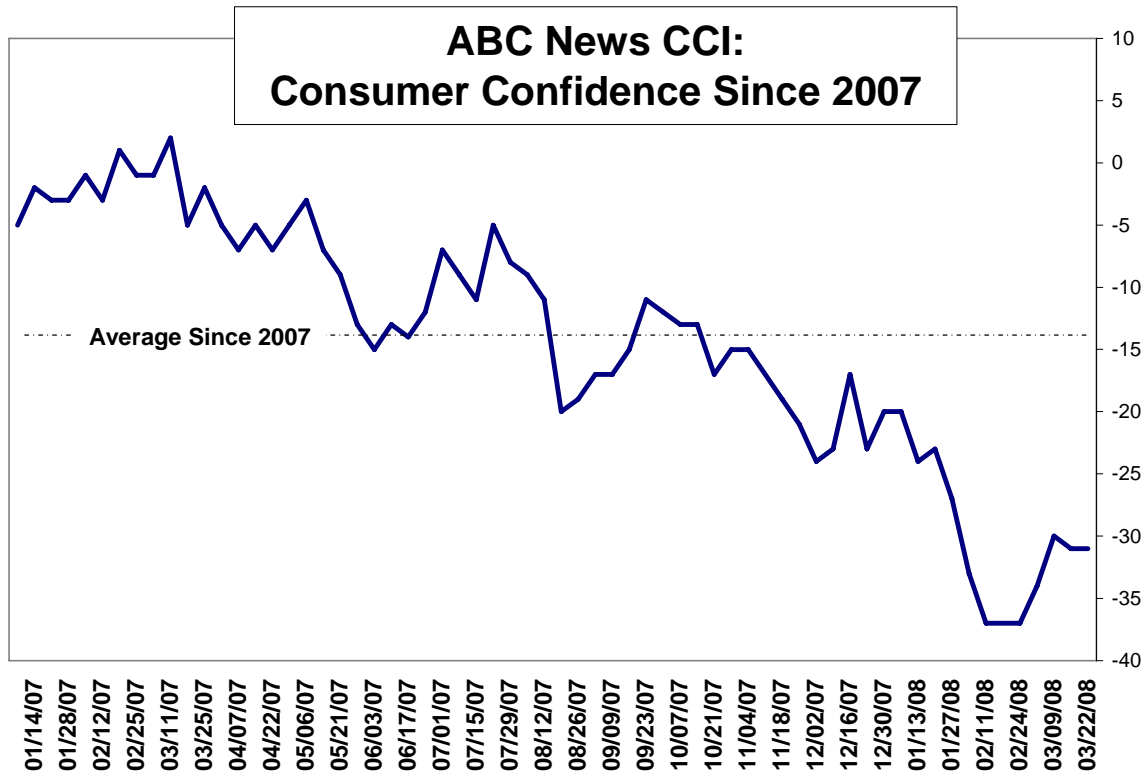


Confidence Stuck in a Rut

Consumer confidence is stuck in a three-week holding pattern, hovering above its recent lows but still significantly below its long-term average.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index, at -31 on its scale of +100 to -100, has remained at -30 or lower for the last two months, the longest such run in 14 years. While the CCI rebounded early this month since bottoming out in February at -37 – its lowest point since 1993 – that upturn has leveled off.

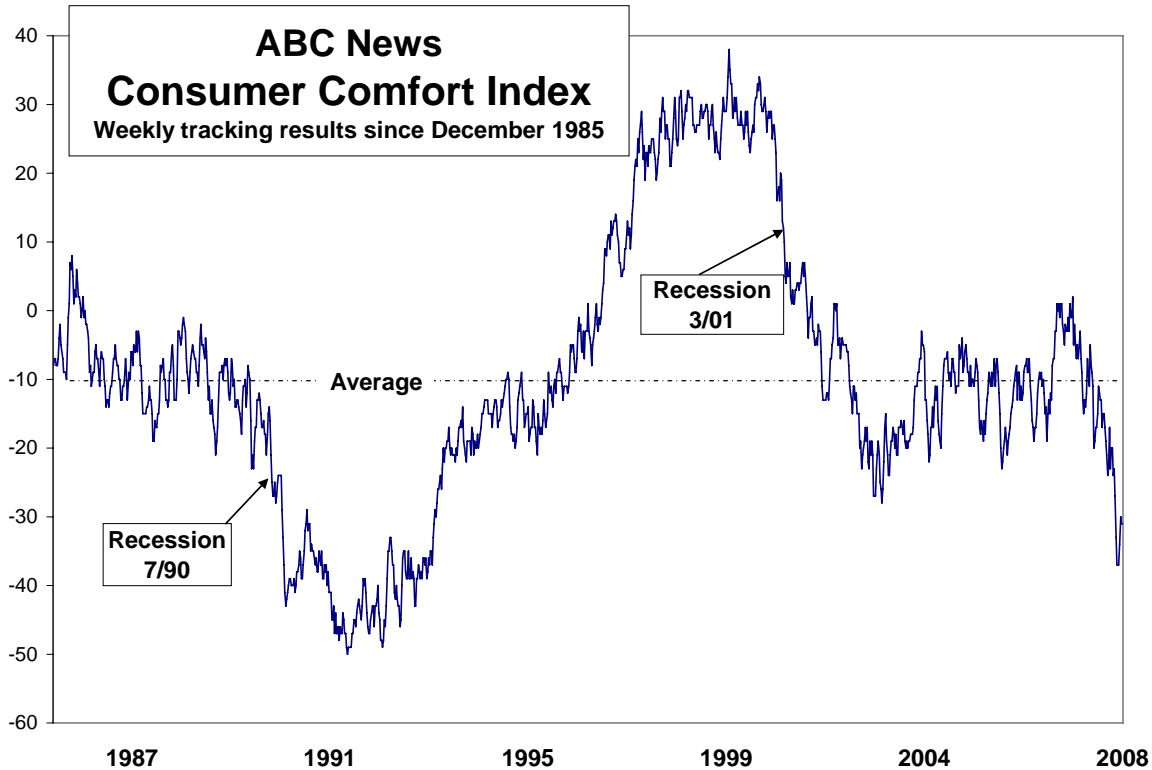
Consumer concerns continue amid signs of a slowing economy: the Federal Reserve last week responded to credit concerns by lowering the Fed Funds rate by three-quarters of a point; gas, although down 3 cents, is still at a costly \$3.26 per gallon; and stocks zig-zagged between big gains and huge sell-offs all week.



INDEX – The ABC News CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of their current finances, the national economy and the buying climate. This week 55 percent rate their personal finances positively – traditionally the strongest of the three measures – slowly rebounding

from hitting its 14-year low point of 49 percent last month. Ratings of personal finances are now just 2 points below the long-term average in weekly polls since late 1985.

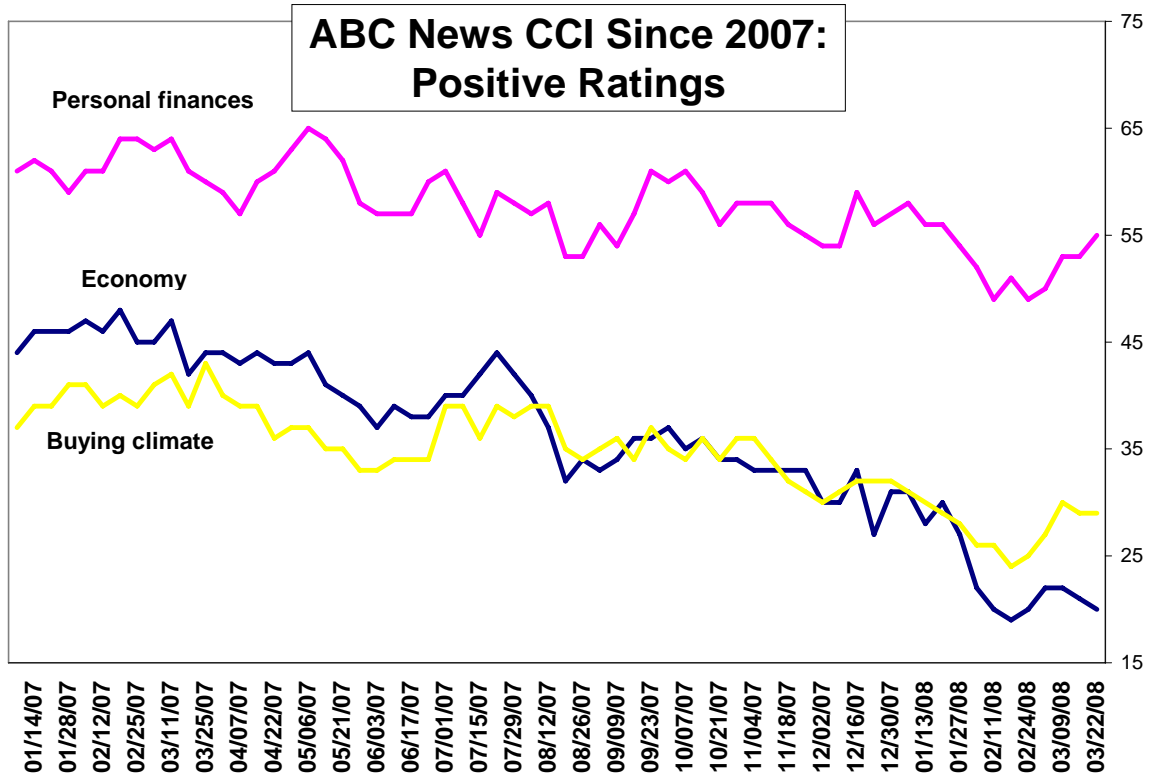
Only 20 percent rate the national economy positively, down 11 points since the beginning of the year and half of its long-term average of 40 percent. Twenty-nine percent say it's a good time to buy things, the same as last week, and 9 points below its long-term average.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	2008	'85-'08
National economy	20%	21	24	40
Buying climate	29	29	28	38
Personal finances	55	53	53	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-31	-31	-30	-10

TREND – At -31, the CCI is exactly where it was last week, and remains a point below its 2008 average, its lowest since 1993. Although it did improve 7 points in the first half of this month, it still has much ground to gain from a 17-point drop over a five-week span in January and February.

The index today is much closer to its record low, -50 in February 1992, than to its all-time high, +38 in January 2000.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-31	
Last week	-31	
2008 low	-37	Feb. 11, 17, 24
2008 high	-20	Jan. 6
2008 average	-30	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-10	

GROUPS – The CCI as usual is higher in better-off groups. It’s 13 among higher-income people while -71 among those with the lowest incomes, -24 among those who’ve been to college while -48 among high-school dropouts, -28 among whites but -50 among blacks and -25 among men while -36 among women.

Partisan differences remain: The index is -1 among Republicans, but -37 among independents and -46 among Democrats.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Twenty percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 21 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was 7 percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	20	2	18	80	41	39
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	36	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-five percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 53 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	55	8	47	45	30	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-nine percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 29 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000; the worst, 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	29	3	26	71	43	28
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	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 March 22, 2008. 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 Madeleine Perez.

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

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

03/22/08	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	-31	-31	-37	-23	-2	-2	-27	-14
State of Economy	-60	-58	-60	-46	-12	-12	-46	-27
Personal Finances	10	6	-2	12	20	30	6	16
Buying Climate	-42	-42	-50	-36	-14	-14	-44	-30

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-25	-23	-25	-18	4	12	-19	-6
Women	-36	-38	-48	-27	-7	-6	-35	-21
Age:								
18 - 34	-12	-12	-30	-14	-2	6	-32	-9
35 - 44	-34	-37	-39	-28	-5	3	-31	-14
45 - 54	-38	-35	-27	-24	-6	2	-29	-15
55 - 64	-44	-45	-48	-23	11	11	-36	-16
65+	-37	-40	-49	-31	-5	-2	-37	-19
Income:								
Under \$15K	-71	-68	-70	-54	-21	-21	-70	-52
\$15K To \$24.9K	-54	-53	-47	-45	-22	-16	-58	-40
\$25K To \$39.9K	-48	-48	-58	-43	-27	-15	-49	-29
\$40K To \$49.9K	-43	-46	-24	1	-29	7	-47	-18
Over \$50K	-8	-10	-18	-9	25	27	-9	11
\$50K To \$74.9K	-34	-35	-33	-13	7	21	-28	-4
\$75K To \$99.9K	-5	-10	-7	-18	22	25	-19	7
Over \$100K	13	15	-8	1	43	49	1	29
Region:								
Northeast	-32	-29	-41	-21	-4	-4	-38	-21
Midwest	-31	-34	-25	-24	-17	2	-30	-18
South	-29	-30	-44	-23	1	7	-31	-13
West	-32	-30	-32	-21	9	10	-21	-4
Race:								
White	-28	-28	-36	-21	0	4	-25	-10
Black	-50	-49	-64	-38	-11	-11	-54	-38
Politics:								
Republican	-1	-2	-6	8	19	44	4	21
Democrat	-46	-46	-52	-44	-15	-15	-47	-31
Independent	-37	-42	-45	-26	0	0	-40	-21
Education:								
< High School	-48	-57	-58	-52	-35	-13	-57	-38
High Sch. Grad.	-32	-26	-42	-27	-16	-13	-38	-23
College +	-24	-24	-24	-10	17	17	-14	1
Home:								
Own	-26	-28	-34	-18	6	6	-23	-7
Rent	-46	-39	-44	-38	-18	-12	-44	-30
Marital Status:								
Single	-28	-26	-40	-21	-8	-6	-39	-16
Married	-22	-26	-28	-13	7	7	-18	-4
Sep/Wid/Div	-57	-53	-56	-51	-20	-20	-56	-36
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-19	-24	-26	-17	7	10	-24	-5
Part-Time	-34	-25	-39	-25	-7	-4	-39	-15
Not Employed	-44	-43	-51	-30	-12	-7	-43	-23

END