

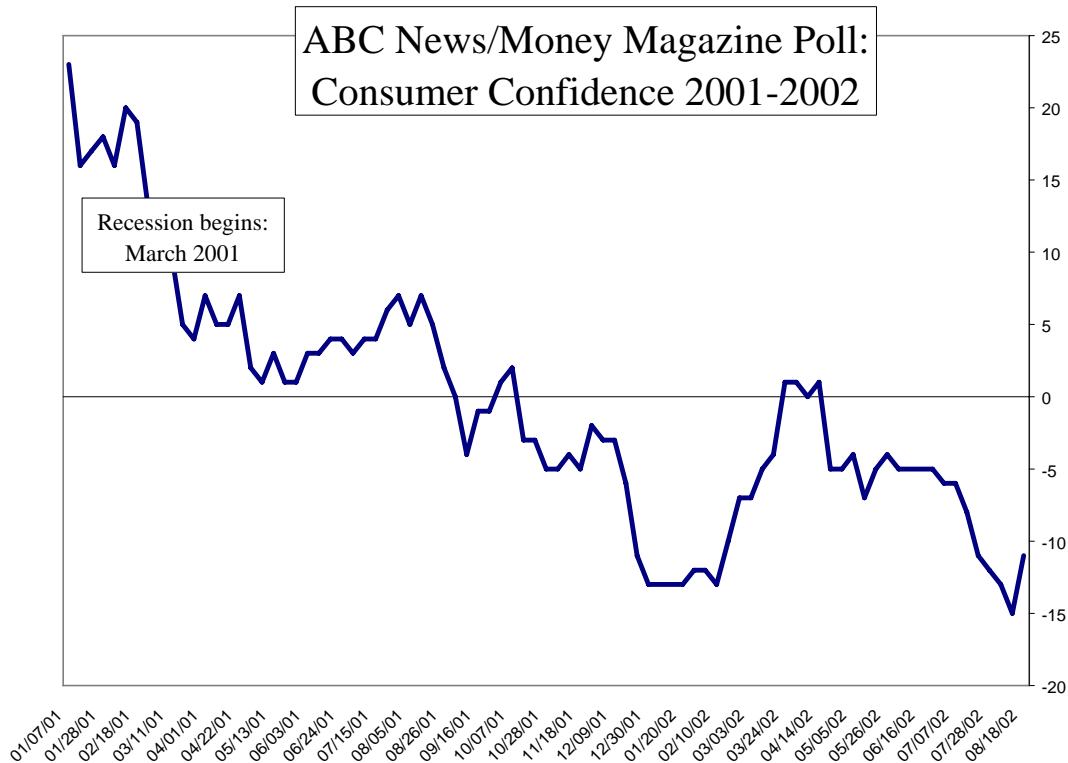
## Confidence Advances, Halting Five-Week Decline

After slipping for five weeks, consumer confidence gained back some ground this week, recording its largest one-week advance since March. Still, confidence has a long way to go before it gets back to this year's high, last reached in April.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort index, based on Americans' ratings of the economy, their personal finances and the buying climate, stands at -11 on its scale of +100 to -100, up four points from last week. The index had fallen since July 14, bottoming out at -15 last week, its lowest since April 1996.

Sixty percent of Americans say their personal finances are in good shape (up three points from last week) and 40 percent say now's a good time to buy things (up two points). Both gauges are back to where they were before the five-week fall, and each is within five points of its high this year.

Ratings of the national economy, however, continue to lag. Just 33 percent rate the economy positively, down seven points since early July and 12 points off its high this year.

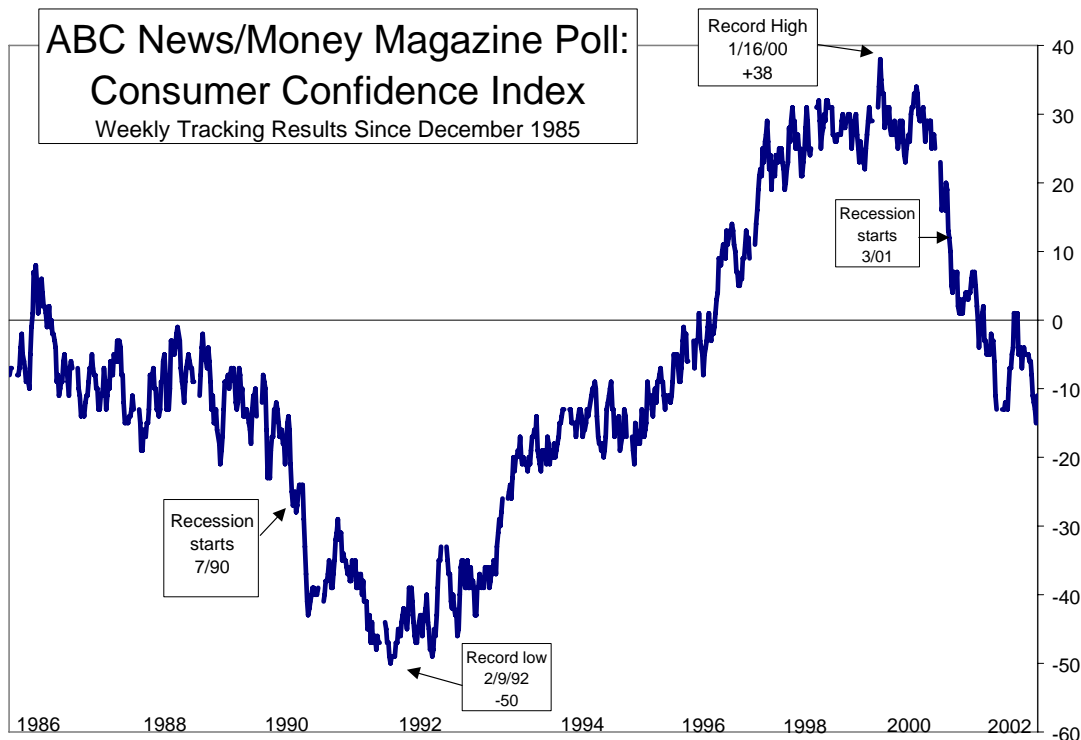


ABC News/Money magazine poll					
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2002 High	2002 Low	16-yr. avg.
National economy	33	32	45	31	41
Buying climate	40	38	45	38	39
Personal finances	60	57	63	56	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-11	-15	+1	-15	-8

**TREND** – The ABC/Money index started the year at -13 and improved to +1 in March and mid-April. It then fell to -5 in late April and held steady between -4 and -7 until July. In the face of corporate scandals, the declining stock market, and disappointing economic reports, the index dropped from -8 on July 14 to -15 on Aug. 11, before improving to -11 this week.

The index's all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992. Its lifetime average in weekly polls since December 1985 is -8.

ABC/Money Index		
Today	-11	
Last week	-15	
Six weeks ago	- 6	
2002 high	+ 1	
2002 low	-15	
2002 average	- 7	
2001 average	+ 4	
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	- 8	



**GROUPS** – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +3 among people in higher-income households compared to -26 in the lowest, -4 among college graduates while -21 among high-school dropouts, -9 among whites but -24 among blacks and -2 among men while -21 among women.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Thirty-three percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, up one point from 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	33	2	31	67	48	19
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	38	59	39	19

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Sixty percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up three points 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	60	5	55	40	28	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Forty 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	40	2	38	60	41	19
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21

**METHODOLOGY** - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with a random sample of about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,018 interviews in the month ending August 18, 2002 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/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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08/18/02	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	-11	-15	-11	-5	5	5	-15	-6
State of Economy	-34	-36	-28	-18	-4	-2	-38	-23
Personal Finances	20	14	18	22	32	32	12	21
Buying Climate	-20	-24	-22	-18	-12	-4	-24	-15
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-2	-5	-5	1	11	11	-6	1
Women	-21	-23	-16	-9	0	0	-23	-12
Age:								
18 - 34	-9	-12	-7	5	13	15	-12	1
35 - 44	-18	-22	-7	-2	7	9	-22	-6
45 - 54	0	-7	-13	-9	4	6	-22	-7
55 - 64	-14	-8	-8	-1	-18	20	-30	-6
65 +	-17	-19	-19	-22	7	7	-23	-14
Income:								
Under \$15K	-26	-42	-44	-43	-43	-23	-54	-42
\$15K To \$24.9K	-24	-26	-25	-31	-26	-14	-44	-26
\$25K To \$39.9K	-21	-20	-12	-13	11	11	-24	-10
\$40K To \$49.9K	-15	-11	7	4	-2	15	-15	2
Over \$50K	3	0	2	22	34	34	0	18
Region:								
Northeast	-19	-21	-16	-16	1	2	-21	-8
Midwest	-6	-8	-18	3	9	9	-18	-5
South	-19	-24	-7	-4	4	7	-24	-4
West	-1	0	-4	-3	8	9	-21	-5
Race:								
White	-9	-12	-6	1	9	9	-12	-1
Black	-24	-28	-44	-38	-22	-8	-51	-34
Politics:								
Republican	5	5	11	19	34	34	5	18
Democrat	-24	-32	-25	-18	-4	-4	-32	-19
Independent	-11	-13	-13	-9	-5	1	-19	-8
Education:								
< High School	-21	-31	-24	-33	-32	-12	-49	-31
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-20	-20	-5	3	3	-22	-10
College +	-4	-5	0	5	18	18	-5	5
Home:								
Own	-12	-14	-7	2	11	11	-14	0
Rent	-9	-13	-19	-20	-10	-8	-28	-18
Marital Status:								
Single	-3	-4	-12	0	6	10	-19	-4
Married	-9	-13	-6	-1	12	12	-13	0
Sep/Wid/Div	-24	-27	-24	-21	-19	-14	-42	-26
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-5	-7	-5	6	19	19	-8	4
Part-Time	-17	-20	-14	7	-2	14	-20	-6
Not Employed	-20	-23	-19	-22	-10	-8	-28	-18

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