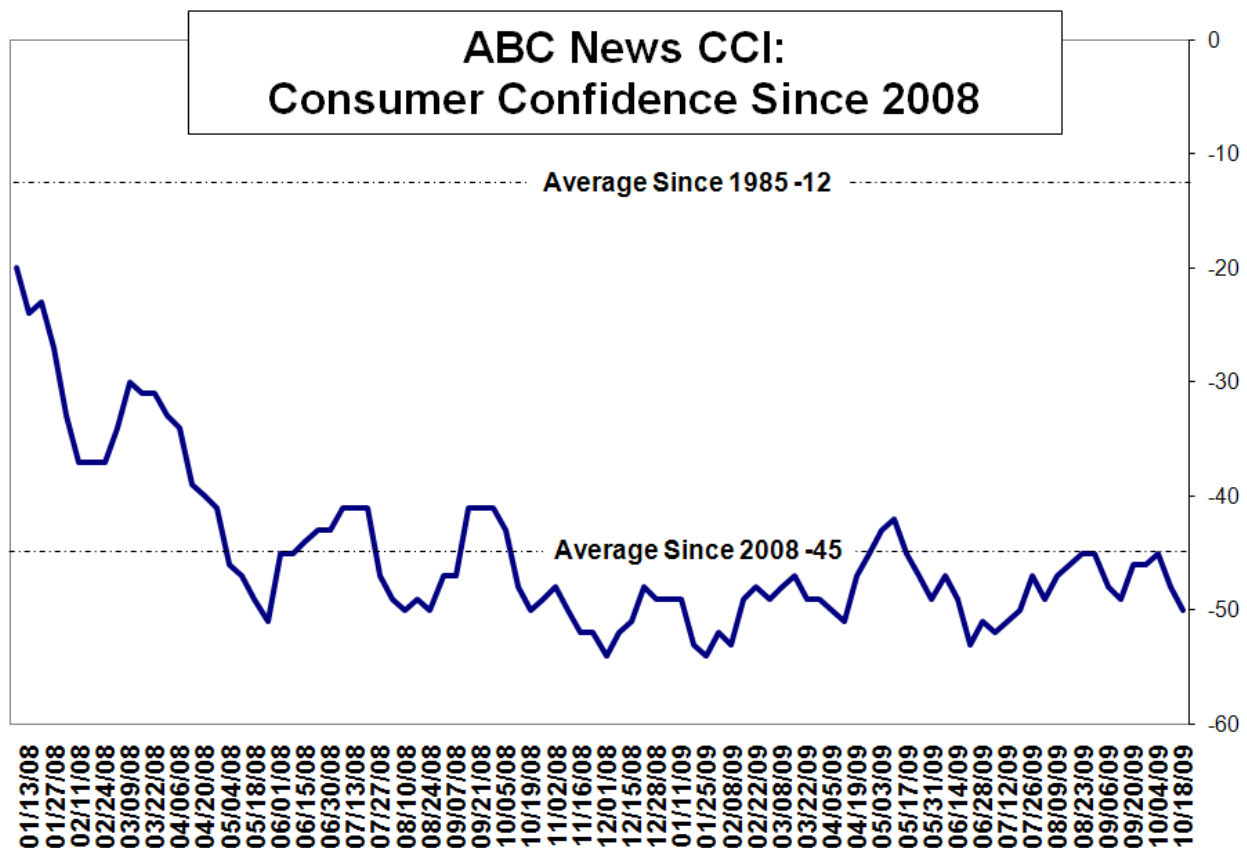


## **CCI: Back in the Dead Zone**

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index crossed a dubious barrier this week, returning to -50 after a three-month stretch above it.

That level, on the CCI's scale of +100 to -100, is about as bad as it gets. The index's been this low or lower just 23 times in 23 years of weekly polls – 22 of them in 2008 or 2009. The index, down 5 points in two weeks, is now its worst since mid-July, and just 4 points above its worst-ever rating, -54 last in January.



The recent slide reflects sagging ratings of the buying climate and personal finances alike. Just 23 percent of Americans now rate buying climate positively, the fewest since July 19, when the CCI last hit -50. Forty-one percent rate their personal finances positively, the fewest since this measure hit its record low in June.

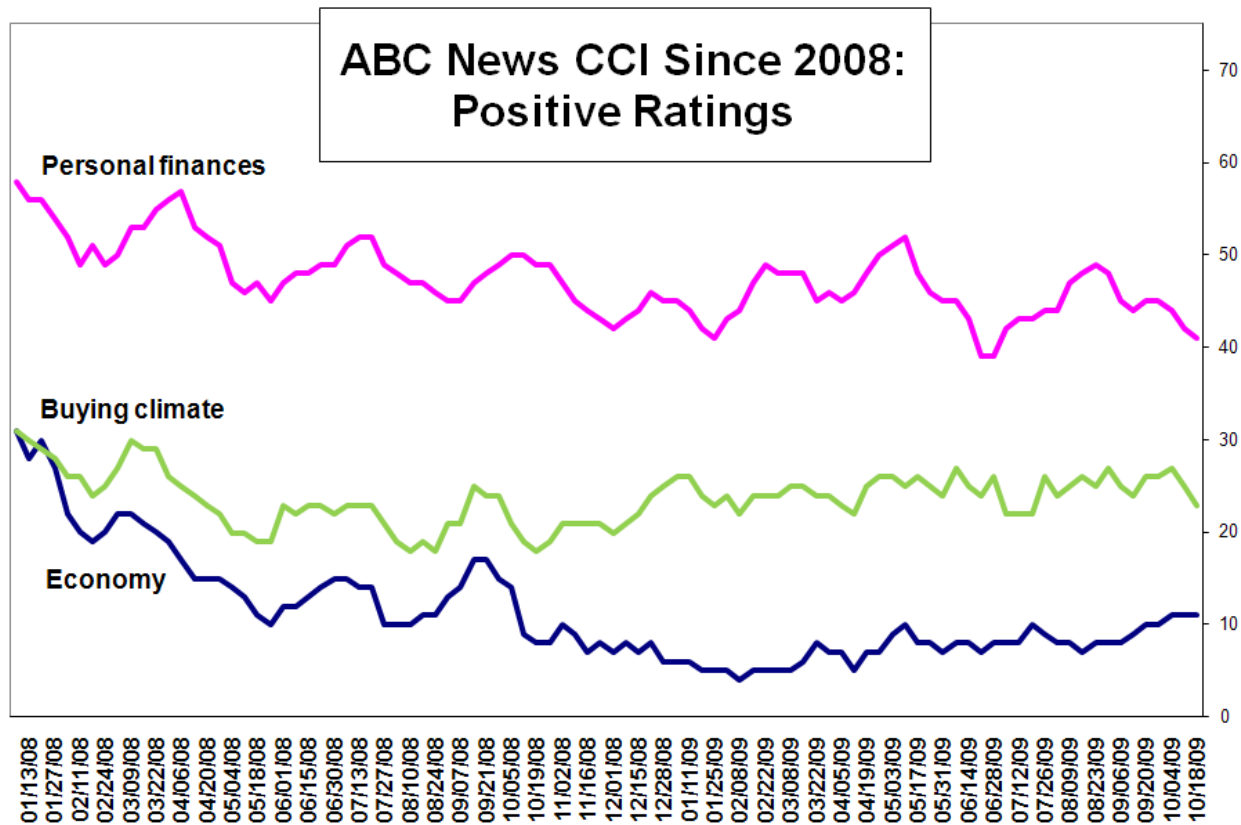
The third component of the CCI, rating the national economy, has been more stable recently, but miserable – only 11 percent positive.

There's no mystery why confidence continues to struggle. On top of unemployment, home foreclosures reportedly increased by 5 percent from July to September, affecting nearly one million homes, a record; retail sales in September dropped 1.5 percent from August; and there's rough news for parents of college-bound kids, with tuitions reportedly up 6.5 percent for public in-state tuition over last year.

INDEX – As noted, ratings of personal finances, typically the best of the CCI's three measures, have slipped to 41 percent positive, down 8 points from their recent high, 49 percent Aug. 23. That's the steepest such decline since the summer, when this measure hit its record low, 39 percent positive. Now 16 points below the long-term average, it's has been below a majority for 23 weeks straight and all but two weeks this year.

Ratings of the buying climate, at 23 percent positive, are just 5 points from the record low and 14 points below the long-term average. They've been below 30 percent for a record 84 weeks.

Ratings of the national economy, for their part, are a remarkable 27 points below average.

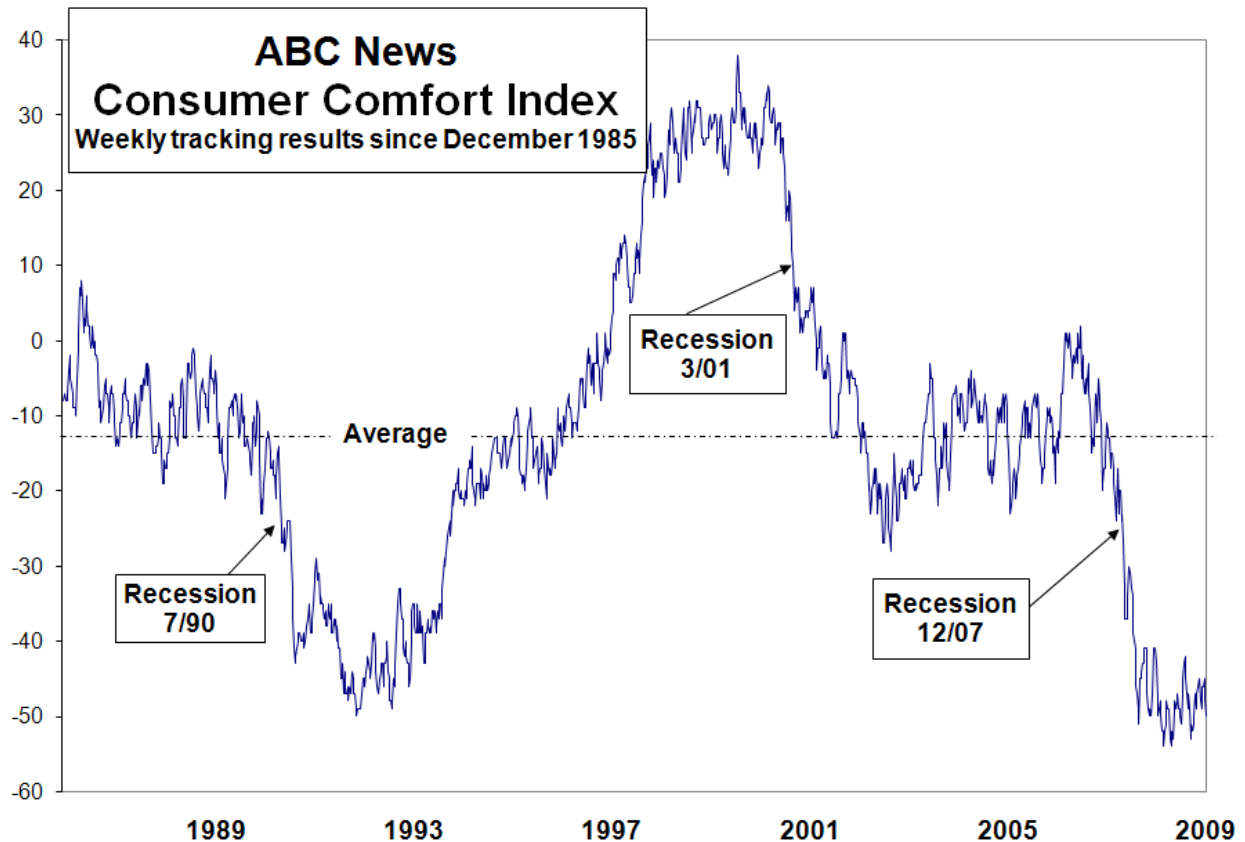


ABC News CCI		Averages	
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2009 '85-'09
National economy	11%	11	8 38

Buying climate	23	25	25	37
Personal finances	41	42	45	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-50	-48	-48	-12

TREND – At -50 this week, the CCI ends its 12-week run above that grim mark – its longest such stretch since May 2008. It’s the 12<sup>th</sup> time this year the index has been -50 or worse, compared with 10 times in all of 2008 and only once before that in weekly polling since December 1985.

The index has been below -40 for a record 78 weeks, hasn’t been positive since March 2007 and stands only 4 points from the record low, -54 on Jan. 25. Overall, it’s 38 points below its long-term average, -12, and miles from its best annual average, +29 in 2000, and all-time best, +38 in January 2000.



	ABC News CCI	
This week	-50	
Last week	-48	
2009 high	-42	May 10
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-48	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high

**GROUPS** – The index is higher as usual among better-off Americans, but has been negative across the board for 34 weeks straight, the longest such run in data since 1990.

The CCI is -39 among people who've attended college (the worst since August) vs. -82 among high school dropouts (a new low), -44 among men while -55 among women (also the worst since August), -40 among homeowners compared with -71 among renters, and -51 among whites (a point from the low) vs. -56 among blacks. This week's 5-point racial gap again is narrower than usual – it's averaged 28 points long-term.

Partisan differences remain, but are smaller than usual, with the index at -33 among Republicans vs. -52 among Democrats and -59 among independents (2 points from the low). That 19-point partisan gap is far smaller than the long-term gap, 32 points.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Eleven percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good, the same as 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	11	1	10	89	41	48
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	40	22

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Forty-one percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 42 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 39 percent June 28 and 21, 2009.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	41	4	37	59	39	20
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	51	43	30	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Twenty-three percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 25 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	23	2	21	77	48	29
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	34	63	42	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 Oct. 18, 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.

ERRATA – A software problem at ICR created errors in crosstabulated results by income group and marital status in data Aug. 30 to Oct. 18. The CCI overall and in other crosstabulations was not affected. This report has been updated with corrected results by income group and marital status.

Analysis by Patrick Moynihan.

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

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

10/18/09	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	-50	-48	-46	-50	-50	-42	-54	-49
State of Economy	-78	-78	-80	-80	-84	-78	-92	-85
Personal Finances	-18	-16	-10	-14	-2	4	-22	-10
Buying Climate	-54	-50	-48	-56	-64	-46	-64	-52
-----								
OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-44	-42	-45	-39	-42	-28	-49	-42
Women	-55	-53	-45	-59	-57	-45	-60	-54
Age:								
18 - 34	-46	-43	-31	-49	-48	-31	-61	-45
35 - 44	-55	-53	-45	-53	-50	-35	-62	-48
45 - 54	-45	-50	-65	-46	-54	-36	-65	-50
55 - 64	-50	-46	-49	-52	-44	-39	-65	-52
65+	-55	-50	-46	-48	-52	-40	-56	-48
Income:								
Under \$15K	-78	-79	-73	-57	-81	-51	-84	-72
\$15K To \$24.9K	-73	-75	-79	-81	-80	-40	-83	-68
\$25K To \$39.9K	-61	-64	-53	-66	-61	-48	-73	-60
\$40K To \$49.9K	-47	-46	-27	-48	-55	-27	-68	-51
Over \$50K	-26	-23	-21	-27	-26	-19	-41	-29
\$50K To \$74.9K	-44	-37	-29	-29	-40	-24	-54	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-19	-13	-20	-25	-34	-12	-52	-31
Over \$100K	-6	-7	-7	-25	-4	5	-34	-16
Region:								
Northeast	-56	-52	-48	-48	-57	-39	-62	-51
Midwest	-44	-47	-49	-49	-48	-41	-58	-50
South	-56	-55	-49	-45	-46	-39	-59	-49
West	-41	-35	-31	-58	-53	-19	-58	-44
Race:								

White	-51	-47	-45	-49	-46	-39	-52	-47
Black	-56	-59	-60	-42	-67	-41	-81	-58
Politics:								
Republican	-33	-34	-42	-34	-29	-16	-42	-35
Democrat	-52	-52	-54	-54	-63	-43	-70	-57
Independent	-59	-55	-43	-55	-51	-39	-59	-49
Education:								
< High School	-82	-81	-81	-63	-73	-51	-82	-67
High Sch. Grad.	-55	-53	-46	-63	-51	-46	-65	-55
College +	-39	-36	-35	-39	-43	-30	-50	-40
Home:								
Own	-40	-38	-37	-45	-44	-35	-49	-43
Rent	-71	-71	-67	-60	-69	-48	-80	-63
Marital Status:								
Single	-52	-49	-42	-62	-56	-34	-69	-52
Married	-42	-40	-42	-38	-42	-33	-47	-41
Sep/Wid/Div	-64	-64	-56	-60	-63	-53	-70	-62
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-39	-38	-34	-38	-38	-31	-45	-38
Part-Time	-47	-44	-53	-63	-63	-31	-67	-51
Not Employed	-61	-59	-52	-59	-61	-49	-66	-58

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