

Confidence Steady as Election Approaches

Consumer confidence is holding steady as Election Day approaches, at a far higher level than in any of the last three presidential elections.

More than three-quarters of Americans rate the economy positively, most say their own finances are good and half say it's a good time to buy things. Each of those is well above its average in weekly polls since late 1985, though down from its record high early this year.

These ratings also are significantly better than at this time in 1996, 1992 or 1988.

In 1988, perceptions the economy had improved helped then-Vice President George Bush win swing independent voters. In '92 a bad economy contributed strongly to Bush's loss. And Bill Clinton won re-election in '96 with help from an improving economy.

Positive ratings:	Today	10/96	10/92	10/88	----- Since 12/85 -----		
					Highest	Lowest	Average
National Economy	76%	43	8	43	80	7	41
Personal Finances	68	60	45	58	70	42	57
Buying Climate	50	39	25	36	57	20	38

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +29 on its scale of +100 to -100, down two points from last week. The index has averaged the same +29 this year, a point above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average is -10, depressed by recession in the early 1990s.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+29	
10/20/96	-5	
10/25/92	-48	
10/23/88	-9	
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
2000 average	+29	
1999 average	+28	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-10	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the index over time.

GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +54 in higher-income households compared to -13 in the lowest, +50 among college graduates but -12 among high-school dropouts, +32 among whites but +7 among blacks and +35 among men but +23 among women. The index is +46 among Republicans (who tend to be better off financially), +30 among Democrats and +21 among independents.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Seventy-six percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, down one point from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	76	10	66	24	18	6
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	39	20

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-eight percent of Americans rate their own finances as excellent or good, down one point from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	68	5	63	32	23	9
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	31	13

BUYING CLIMATE - Fifty percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, down one point from last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	50	3	47	50	36	14
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	21

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 week ending Oct. 22 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Fieldwork 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 Aaron Frechette.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

10/22/00

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:

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Overall Index	29	31	29	26	23	38	22	29
State of Economy	52	54	54	42	42	60	38	49
Personal Finances	36	38	30	32	32	40	28	34
Buying Climate	0	2	4	4	-4	14	-6	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Group	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Sex:								
Men	35	38	32	32	31	45	30	36
Women	23	25	27	20	15	30	11	21
Age:								
18 - 34	25	27	32	26	19	37	16	26
35 - 44	31	31	26	26	13	37	13	27
45 - 54	31	40	31	32	31	45	11	32
55 - 64	30	33	25	28	31	51	13	30
65 +	30	31	28	17	28	45	12	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-13	-19	-23	-18	-34	-12	-36	-23
\$15K To \$24.9K	6	14	-11	1	5	26	-20	2
\$25K To \$39.9K	20	21	18	19	9	33	9	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	46	51	48	24	31	60	19	39
Over \$50K	54	56	65	58	59	68	54	61
Region:								
Northeast	36	40	32	35	31	48	17	32
Midwest	31	35	40	31	28	46	17	32
South	20	22	19	18	20	31	17	23
West	32	34	33	27	13	43	13	30
Race:								
White	32	35	33	30	27	43	25	33
Black	7	5	7	-7	-1	25	-15	1
Politics:								
Republican	46	45	39	33	41	55	31	42
Democrat	30	37	31	24	20	38	7	28
Independent	21	21	22	28	15	39	13	23
Education:								
< High School	-12	-6	-23	1	-20	13	-23	-8
High Sch. Grad.	15	17	24	12	14	32	8	19
College +	50	52	50	43	42	53	38	47
Home:								
Own	34	38	35	33	34	44	31	36
Rent	14	15	16	4	-3	19	-3	9
Marital Status:								
Single	32	34	27	25	8	42	8	26
Married	32	37	33	33	33	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	9	6	17	-3	-3	27	-3	8
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	33	35	40	33	34	44	28	35
Part-Time	16	19	26	32	22	40	11	26
Not Employed	25	29	17	14	9	29	8	19

END