

**ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX -10/31/99**

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## **Confidence Ends October at Year Low**

Consumer confidence is unchanged this week, remaining at its low point of the year.

While still relatively high, the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index averaged +24 in October, making it the lowest-rated month of the year. From January through September, the index – based on public ratings of the buying climate, national economy and personal finances – averaged +29.

This week 70 percent of Americans rate the economy positively, 32 points above average but down from a record 77 percent. Sixty-five percent say their own finances are in good shape, down from a high of 70 percent. And 50 percent call it a good time to buy things, down from 54 percent this summer and a record 56 percent a year ago.

	Today	----- Since 12/85 -----		Average
Positive ratings:		Highest	Lowest	
National Economy	70%	77	7	38
Personal Finances	65	70	42	56
Buying Climate	50	56	20	37

INDEX – This week the ABC/Money index stands at +23 on its scale of -100 to +100, the same as last week. The average so far for this year is +28, well on its way to breaking the full-year record of +24 set last year. The lifetime average since late 1985 is -12.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	+23	
Last week	+23	
Oct '99 average	+24	
Jan-Sep '99 average	+29	
Record high	+32	(1/17, 3/7, 3/14)
1999 average	+28	
1998 average	+24	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-12	

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

GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +54 in higher-income households compared to -30 in the lowest; +41 among college

graduates but -17 among high-school dropouts; +27 among whites but +2 among blacks; and +30 among men compared to +15 among women.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY**- The poll asks: Would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Seventy percent say excellent or good, down one point last week. The record, 77 percent, was set Jan. 10 and tied in March, April and July. The worst rating was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	70%	8	62	30	20	10
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	41	21

**PERSONAL FINANCES** - The poll asks: Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor? Sixty-five percent say excellent or good, down one point from last week. The record, 70 percent, was set Aug. 30, 1998, and tied this January, June and September. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	65%	7	58	35	24	11
Avg. since 12/85	56	4	52	44	31	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** - The poll asks: Considering the cost of things today and your own personal finances, would you say now is an excellent time, a good time, a not so good time or a poor time to buy the things you want and need? Fifty percent say excellent or good, up two points from last week. The record was 56 percent Nov. 29, 1998; the worst rating, 20 percent, was set in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	50%	4	46	50	35	15
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	41	22

**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 1,027 interviews in the month ending Oct. 31 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 Daniel Merkle.

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

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

10/31/99	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	23	23	23	30	21	32	21	28
State of Economy	40	42	40	50	36	54	36	46
Personal Finances	30	32	30	34	30	40	28	34
Buying Climate	0	-4	-2	6	-4	12	-4	4
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	30	31	34	38	31	44	30	35
Women	15	15	11	22	12	31	11	20
Age:								
18 - 34	18	19	23	33	18	35	17	27
35 - 44	19	13	19	29	27	40	13	28
45 - 54	30	31	20	23	26	41	13	28
55 - 64	22	31	25	31	12	47	12	27
65 +	26	28	25	33	18	37	17	27
Income:								
Under \$15K	-30	-34	-26	-24	-34	-11	-42	-23
\$15K To \$24.9K	11	5	-7	6	3	11	-15	-1
\$25K To \$39.9K	17	9	9	25	22	38	8	24
\$40K To \$49.9K	27	31	46	50	32	56	27	42
Over \$50K	54	59	53	57	53	67	53	60
Region:								
Northeast	21	31	40	33	20	42	16	29
Midwest	27	28	22	27	25	41	20	32
South	24	20	14	30	15	31	14	22
West	15	13	21	31	27	43	13	28
Race:								
White	27	27	27	37	25	37	25	31
Black	2	-1	-10	-4	1	22	-10	5
Politics:								
Republican	39	41	38	41	32	49	32	39
Democrat	21	20	18	28	26	35	15	26
Independent	19	15	16	26	15	34	15	24
Education:								
< High School	-17	-20	-24	-6	-6	6	-27	-9
High Sch. Grad.	12	14	19	27	10	31	10	20
College +	41	42	40	43	37	52	37	45
Home:								
Own	34	34	28	36	30	40	26	34
Rent	-1	-3	5	15	0	26	-3	11
Marital Status:								
Single	13	8	20	27	14	36	8	24
Married	30	33	28	35	29	41	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	0	-3	4	16	-1	18	-9	5
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	32	34	30	36	27	44	27	36
Part-Time	20	22	19	24	22	38	5	22
Not Employed	11	9	12	21	9	26	6	16