

Confidence Stays Strong Despite Election Uncertainty

Consumer confidence held strong and steady this week, unfazed by the uncertain outcome of the 2000 presidential election.

Ratings of the national economy and personal finances held near their record highs, with views of the buying climate a tad lower but unchanged. That's consistent with an ABC News/Washington Post poll that found only 19 percent "very worried" about the election.

Seventy-seven percent of Americans say the economy's good and 67 percent rate their own finances positively, each three points off its record. Just under half say it's a good time to buy things, eight points below the record.

	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
Positive ratings:				
National Economy	77%	80	7	41
Personal Finances	67	70	42	57
Buying Climate	49	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, up one point from last week. It peaked at +38 last January.

The index has averaged +29 this year, a point above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average, depressed by recession in the early 1990s, is -10.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+29	
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 +63 in higher-income households compared to -10 in the lowest, +52 among college

graduates but -23 among high-school dropouts, +33 among whites but -5 among blacks and +33 among men but +23 among women.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Seventy-seven 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. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	77	12	65	23	16	7
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	39	20

PERSONAL FINANCES - Sixty-seven percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, unchanged 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	67	7	60	33	25	8
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	31	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-nine percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, the same as 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	49	4	46	51	37	14
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	36	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 1,030 interviews in the week ending Nov. 12 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 Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at: <http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Group	Week	Week	Ago	Ago	Ago	High	Low	Avg
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	29	28	31	31	25	38	23	29
State of Economy	54	52	54	48	40	60	40	50
Personal Finances	34	34	38	38	32	40	30	34
Buying Climate	-2	-2	2	8	4	14	-6	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	33	33	38	39	34	45	30	36
Women	23	22	25	23	16	30	13	22
Age:								
18 - 34	26	26	27	29	17	37	16	27
35 - 44	23	26	31	31	23	37	15	27
45 - 54	34	36	40	32	33	45	11	32
55 - 64	36	32	33	21	28	51	13	31
65 +	24	20	31	40	25	45	12	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-10	-8	-19	-19	-27	-8	-36	-22
\$15K To \$24.9K	-5	-1	14	2	12	26	-20	1
\$25K To \$39.9K	17	22	21	28	20	33	12	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	37	41	51	29	35	60	19	39
Over \$50K	63	57	56	62	54	68	54	61
Region:								
Northeast	27	24	40	37	23	48	17	32
Midwest	33	34	35	35	25	46	17	32
South	23	24	22	22	29	31	17	23
West	32	29	34	35	18	43	15	31
Race:								
White	33	32	35	35	28	43	25	33
Black	-5	1	5	2	1	25	-15	1
Politics:								
Republican	48	44	45	40	41	55	31	42
Democrat	19	21	37	21	30	38	7	28
Independent	25	25	21	35	13	39	13	23
Education:								
< High School	-23	-21	-6	5	-10	13	-23	-8
High Sch. Grad.	16	17	17	21	15	32	8	19
College +	52	50	52	46	42	53	38	47
Home:								
Own	38	34	38	39	34	44	31	36
Rent	7	12	15	8	5	19	2	9
Marital Status:								
Single	29	31	34	32	23	42	9	27
Married	32	32	37	38	28	44	28	34
Sep/Wid/Div	16	6	6	0	7	27	-3	8
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	35	35	35	33	33	44	28	36
Part-Time	34	28	19	33	29	40	11	26
Not Employed	15	16	29	27	11	29	10	19

END