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ABC NEWS/MONEY CONSUMER INDEX - 11/17/96
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ECONOMY RATING JUMPS
TO ITS BEST SINCE 1989

Public ratings of the national economy jumped to their best level since early 1989 this week, bolstered by Democrats celebrating Bill Clinton's re-election and Republicans getting over it.

Forty-six percent of Americans now give a positive rating to the economy, the most since March 5, 1989. That's up from 33 percent a year ago, and just 10 to 17 percent at about this time in 1990, '91, '92 and '93.

National Economy: Excellent or Good	
11/96	46%
11/95	32
11/94	33
11/93	17
11/92	10
11/91	11
11/90	15
11/89	38

Ratings of the economy, buying climate and personal finances comprise the ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, which now stands at -7 on its scale of +100 to -100, up two points this week.

The index reached seven-year high of -5 in mid October, then slipped in advance of the election as Republicans and some independents anticipated Bob Dole's defeat at the polls.

A brighter outlook among Democrats tempered that decline. Today the index is a strong +6 among Democrats, its best in well over a year. It's -9 among Republicans, up from a 12-month low of -12 last week.

Republicans, who tend to have higher incomes, usually express greater consumer confidence. They may continue to perk up as their election wounds heal - as long as the economy cooperates.

INDICES - While 54 percent of Americans still rate the national economy negatively, that's down three points from last week and better even than its pre-recession average, 59 percent from 1986-90.

Sixty-three percent call it a bad time to buy things, down a point this week. And, in the one positive gauge, 57 percent say their own finances are in good shape, unchanged this week but four points below its recent high Oct. 13.

While ratings of the economy and buying climate include some built-in skepticism, they're much better than they've been. At the start of this year 66 percent of Americans said the economy was in bad shape; in January 1993 it was a record 93 percent; and the 1990-93 average was 85 percent negative.

	Today	1990-93	1986-90
Negative on national economy	54	85	59
Negative on buying climate	63	74	61
Positive on personal finances	57	49	57

GROUPS - Confidence lags in economically vulnerable groups, including women, the poor and the less-educated. The index is +3 among men but -15 among women; +14 in higher-income households but -40 in the lowest; and +8 among people who have attended college but -44 among high school dropouts. There's less of a difference than usual between blacks and whites because the index has improved among blacks, almost all Clinton supporters.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY- Fifty-four percent rate the economy negatively, down three from last week. It's averaged 62 percent this year, compared to 85 percent from 1990-93 and 59 percent from 1986-1990. The worst, 93 percent, was in late 1991 and early 1992; the best, 50-50, was April 27, 1986. The average for the life of the index is 69 percent negative.

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-seven percent rate their finances positively, unchanged this week. It's averaged 57 percent this year, compared to 49 percent in the 1990-93 slump and 57 percent before the recession. The worst was 58 percent negative March 14, 1993; the best, 62 percent positive Dec. 20, 1987. The full average is 54 percent positive.

BUYING CLIMATE - Sixty-three percent call this a bad time to buy things, down one point from last week. It's averaged 63 percent this year, compared to 74 percent during the 1990-93 slump and 61 percent before the recession. The worst is 80 percent negative Nov. 2 and Oct. 28, 1990; the best, 52 percent positive May 11, 1986. The full average is 66 percent negative.

	National Economy	Personal Finances	Buying Climate
This week	54% neg	57% pos	63% neg
1996 Average	62% neg	57% pos	63% neg
Recession Average (mid-1990 to 1993)	85% neg	51% neg	74% neg
Pre-Recession Avg. (1986 to mid-1990)	59% neg	57% pos	61% neg
Full Average (1986-1995)	69% neg	54% pos	66% neg
Worst	93% neg	58% neg	80% neg
Best	50% pos	62% pos	52% pos

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. Interviewing by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa. This week's results are based on 1,037 interviews in the month ending Nov.

17 and have an error margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

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 Gary Langer. For details contact the ABC News Polling Unit, (212) 456-2621.

ABC polls are available in the ABC News area of America Online.

11/17/96	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	-7	-9	-5	-11	-18	-5	-21	-12
State of Economy	-8	-14	-14	-22	-34	-8	-38	-25
Personal Finances	14	14	20	16	10	22	8	14
Buying Climate	-26	-28	-22	-28	-30	-18	-36	-26

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	3	-2	-1	-2	-10	7	-10	-1
Women	-15	-16	-8	-20	-25	-8	-33	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-5	-9	-7	-12	-14	-3	-23	-10
35 - 44	-10	-21	-18	-11	-18	-3	-23	-15
45 - 54	-8	-11	12	-9	-15	12	-36	-13
55 - 64	7	12	5	-15	-17	12	-40	-13
65 +	-10	-6	-6	-12	-28	9	-34	-11
Income:								
Under \$15K	-40	-39	-42	-46	-47	-39	-61	-49
\$15K To \$24.9K	-30	-34	-22	-28	-46	-12	-48	-32
\$25K To \$39.9K	0	-8	-18	-12	-17	0	-26	-13
\$40K To \$49.9K	22	14	4	16	-6	22	-31	3
Over \$50K	14	12	31	17	15	35	12	22
Region:								
Northeast	-11	-11	-14	-26	-26	-9	-34	-19
Midwest	3	7	9	2	-17	10	-17	-2
South	-9	-14	-2	-9	-15	-2	-24	-14
West	-10	-17	-16	-17	-15	6	-23	-14
Race:								
White	-5	-9	-3	-8	-13	1	-15	-8
Black	-14	-13	-24	-31	-53	-10	-56	-38
Politics:								
Republican	-9	-12	-2	-2	0	11	-12	1
Democrat	6	0	-6	-10	-18	6	-28	-15
Independent	-12	-12	-11	-16	-25	-8	-26	-17
Education:								
< High School	-44	-42	-28	-34	-50	-28	-50	-40
High Sch. Grad.	-7	-8	-7	-19	-25	-7	-30	-19
College +	8	2	5	2	0	11	-6	3

Home:								
Own	0	-3	2	-3	-13	2	-15	-5
Rent	-19	-24	-18	-32	-33	-13	-37	-29
Marital Status:								
Single	-7	-8	-16	-17	-5	0	-26	-13
Married	-3	-7	2	-4	-15	2	-18	-7
Sep/Wid/Div	-16	-18	-18	-29	-45	-15	-45	-31
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	0	-5	1	-5	-13	7	-14	-4
Part-Time	-25	-24	-15	-18	-25	-8	-35	-19
Not Employed	-11	-10	-9	-19	-24	-9	-33	-22