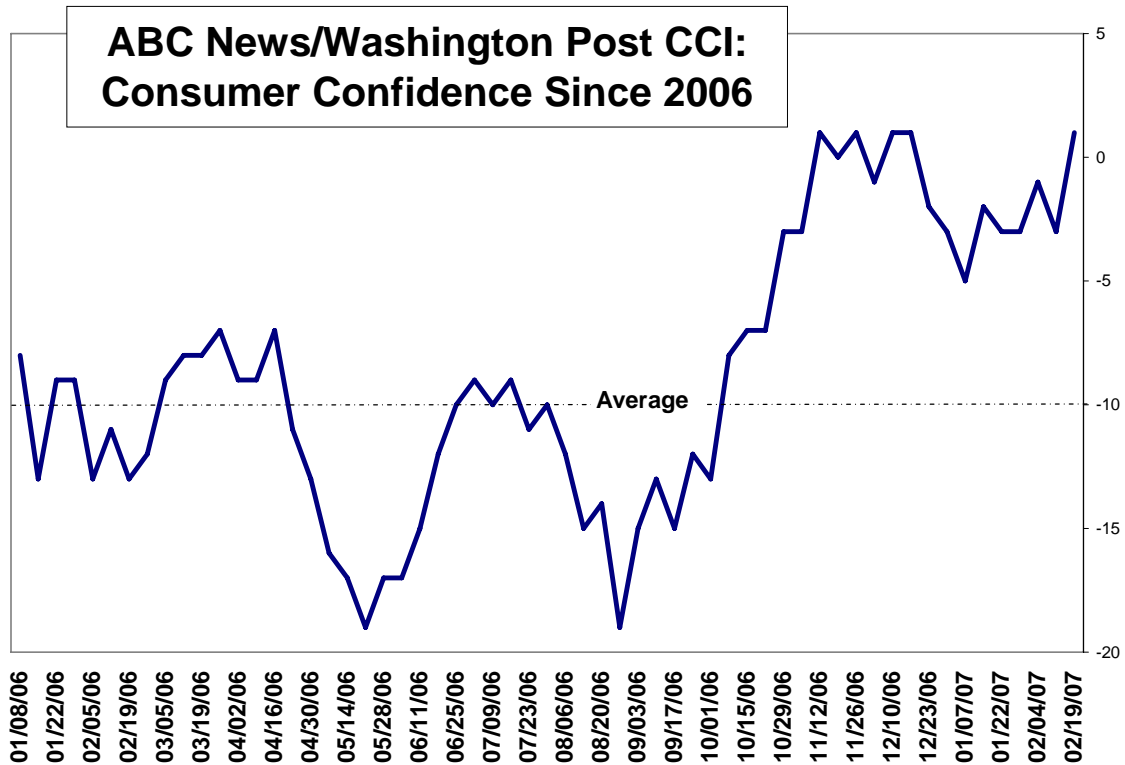


Confidence Returns to 2006 High Point

For the first time this year consumer confidence has broken through to positive territory, equaling the high of 2006.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at +1 on its scale of +100 to -100. Since mid-November of last year it's bounced between the positive and negative range. It dipped to -5 at the beginning of the year, but has rebounded to match its recent highs.

Not all the news is good. At the same time the CCI turned positive, a growing number of people say the national economy is getting worse – 41 percent say so, compared to about a third last month.



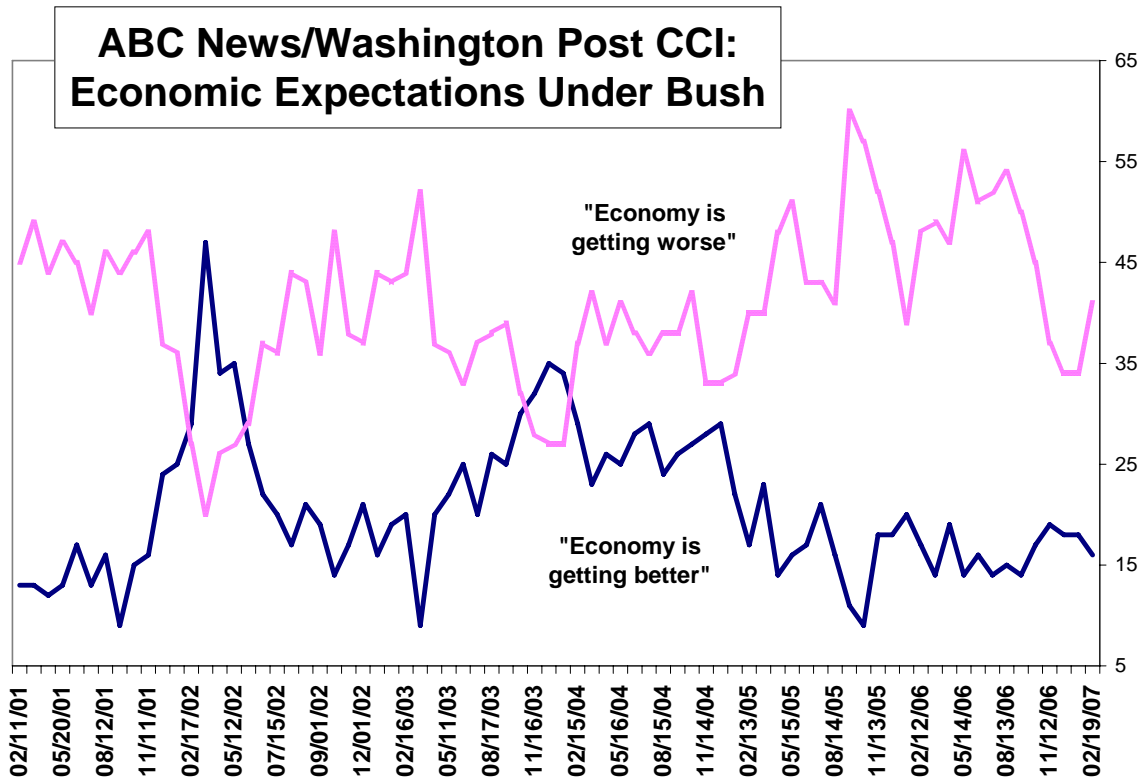
The CCI is trending above its long-term average, -9 in weekly polls since December 1985, and well up from its 2006 low of -19 in August. The return to the positive side is the fifth trip there in the past four months.

INDEX – The index is based on Americans’ ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 48 percent rate the economy positively – matching its five-year high of 48 percent, also reached on Dec. 17, and eight points above the long-term average.

Sixty-four percent rate their personal finances positively, compared with a long-term average of 57 percent. (It hit 65 percent in mid-November, the most since August 2001.) And 40 percent call it a good time to buy things, about the average.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Dec. 17	2006 avg.	22-yr. avg.
National economy	48%	48	40	40
Buying climate	40	41	37	38
Personal finances	64	63	59	57
Consumer Comfort Index	+1	+1	-10	-9

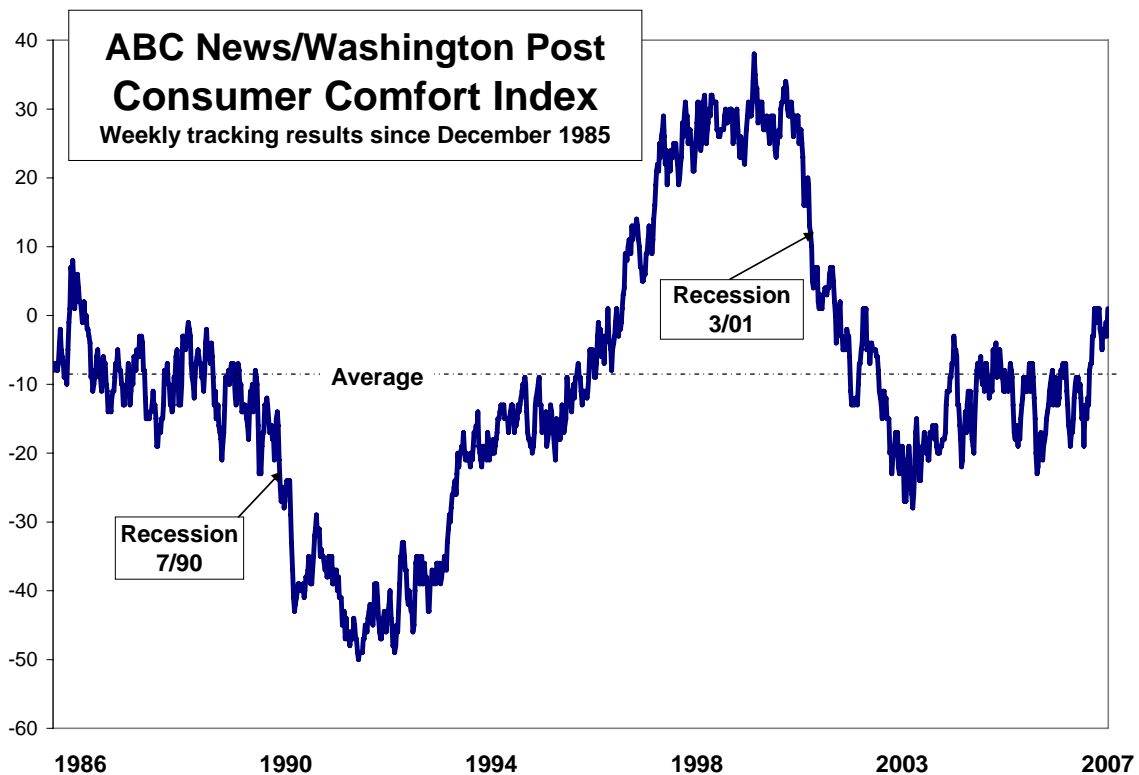
DIRECTION –Each month the ABC/Post poll measures expectations – whether people think the economy is getting better, getting worse or holding steady. Forty-one percent now say it’s getting worse, significantly higher than where it was – 34 percent – in January and December 2006. For the past six months, the difference between those saying the economy was getting better and getting worse was narrowing or holding steady; today that trend is in the opposite direction.



The current number rating the economy as getting worse – 41 percent – is no different than usual; 39 percent have been pessimistic on average in polls dating back 25 years. Fewer, just 16 percent (about what it's been the last few months), think the economy's improving. Forty-one percent says it's holding steady.

	Economy's direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
2/19/07	16%	41	41
1/14/07	18	34	45
12/17/06	18	34	46
11/12/06	19	37	42
10/15/06	17	45	36
9/17/06	14	50	35
8/13/06	15	54	30

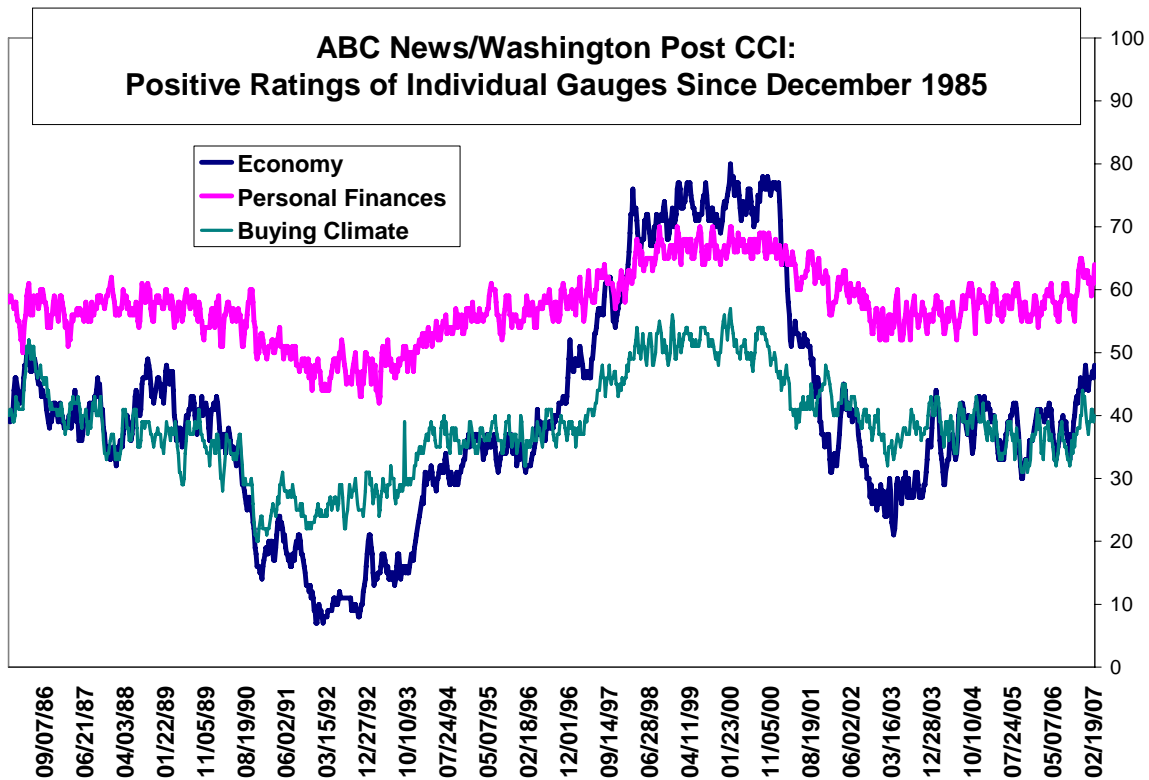
TREND – A rally in the last quarter of 2006 lifted the index into the positive range, from -19 on Aug. 27, amid soaring gasoline prices, to +1 in November and December. That trend flattened, and then turned south before returning to the positive side this week.



GROUPS – The index is higher in better-off groups – far better among higher-income Americans, college graduates and whites. It's +7 among men and -3 among women, the highest it's been since Nov. 2001.

Partisan differences remain, but have eased. The CCI is +30 among Republicans, -4 among independents and -13 among Democrats. That 43-point gap between Republicans and Democrats is its smallest since mid-August, albeit still bigger than its long-term average, 31 points. It peaked at 90 points in July 2004.

	ABC/Post	CCI
This week	+1	
2006 high	+1	Dec. 17, Dec. 10, Nov. 26, Nov. 12
2006 low	-19	Aug. 27, May 21
2006 average	-10	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-eight percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 46 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	48	6	42	52	34	18
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-four percent say their own finances are excellent or good, it was 61 percent last week. The best was 70 percent on Aug. 30, 1998, matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	64	9	55	36	25	11
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 39 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	40	5	35	60	40	20
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	36	62	41	21

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for the ABC News/Washington Post 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 Feb. 19, 2007. The results have a three-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.

Analysis by Peyton M. Craighill.

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

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

02/19/07	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	1	-3	-3	0	-13	1	-19	-9
State of Economy	-4	-8	-8	-10	-20	-4	-34	-19
Personal Finances	28	22	22	30	14	30	10	19
Buying Climate	-20	-22	-22	-20	-34	-12	-36	-26
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	7	5	2	8	-3	17	-12	2
Women	-3	-9	-6	-7	-23	-3	-32	-18

Age:									
18 - 34	3	-2	-1	2	-5	6	-24	-4	
35 - 44	-2	-7	11	8	-18	11	-23	-7	
45 - 54	-10	-6	-12	-4	-26	2	-30	-14	
55 - 64	10	4	-4	-9	-1	10	-25	-8	
65+	8	2	-10	-2	-18	8	-31	-11	
Income:									
Under \$15K	-45	-35	-43	-58	-43	-26	-72	-51	
\$15K To \$24.9K	-28	-29	-36	-21	-45	-15	-62	-40	
\$25K To \$39.9K	-14	-24	-26	-3	-18	0	-37	-17	
\$40K To \$49.9K	11	8	-5	-5	-40	15	-41	-11	
Over \$50K	26	25	32	26	20	35	6	20	
\$50K To \$74.9K	14	11	25	4	2	29	-20	4	
\$75K To \$99.9K	22	26	36	20	25	44	7	22	
Over \$100K	47	44	41	55	40	56	25	37	
Region:									
Northeast	-3	-10	-7	7	-24	7	-30	-15	
Midwest	-9	-6	-4	-15	-11	0	-33	-14	
South	16	9	-2	0	-13	16	-19	-7	
West	-7	-9	2	10	-7	23	-13	1	
Race:									
White	7	2	-1	8	-6	10	-12	-3	
Black	-27	-21	-25	-35	-50	-21	-57	-40	
Politics:									
Republican	30	27	36	40	30	45	12	31	
Democrat	-13	-19	-28	-19	-35	-13	-46	-29	
Independent	-4	-2	-5	-6	-14	1	-25	-16	
Education:									
< High School	-28	-42	-32	-33	-49	-18	-60	-38	
High Sch. Grad.	0	-1	-16	-8	-23	0	-30	-17	
College +	11	8	16	16	4	18	-9	6	
Home:									
Own	8	6	5	9	-7	10	-12	-1	
Rent	-20	-26	-22	-22	-32	-16	-44	-28	
Marital Status:									
Single	-11	-13	-9	0	-18	1	-32	-14	
Married	17	10	11	8	-3	17	-9	3	
Sep/Wid/Div	-22	-20	-33	-22	-37	-19	-45	-31	
Employ. Status:									
Full-Time	12	10	8	10	-3	15	-12	2	
Part-Time	4	2	2	1	-14	13	-29	-10	
Not Employed	-14	-20	-18	-14	-28	-11	-43	-23	

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No opinion
2/19/07	16	41	41	1
1/14/07	18	34	45	2
12/17/06	18	34	46	2
11/12/06	19	37	42	3
10/15/06	17	45	36	3
9/17/06	14	50	35	1
8/13/06	15	54	30	1

7/16/06	14	52	34	1
6/18/06	16	51	32	1
5/14/06	14	56	29	1
4/16/06	19	47	33	2

Call for full trend.

END