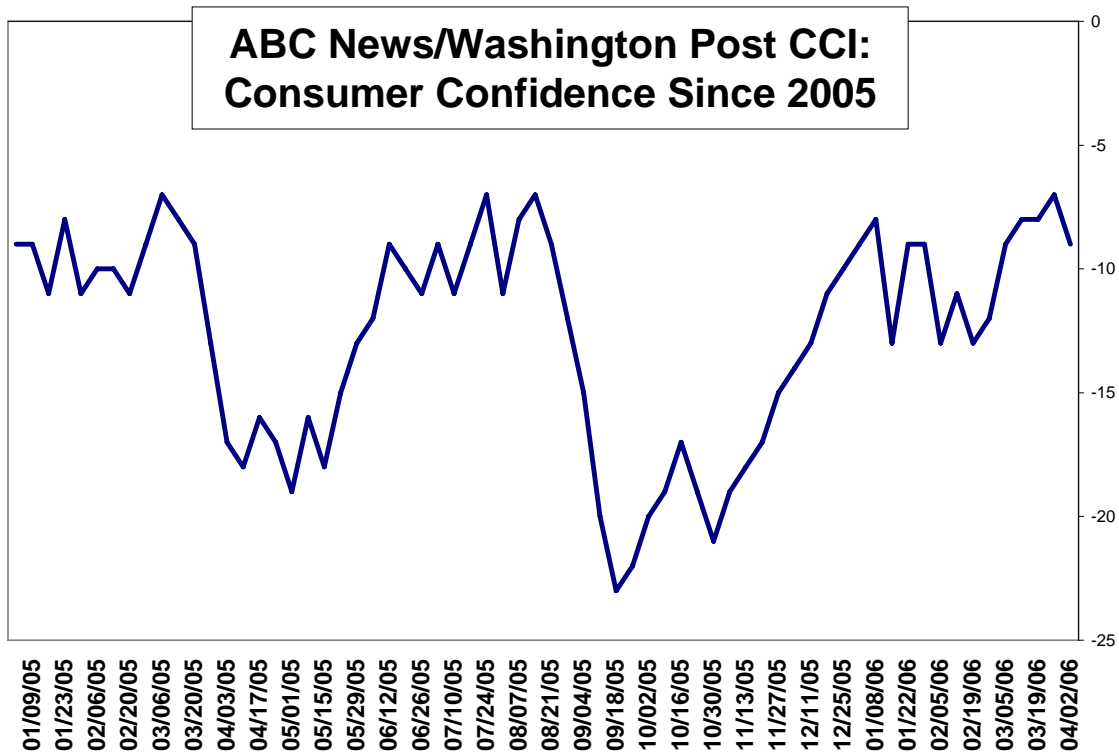


## Confidence Ends Modest Advance

Consumer confidence failed to continue its improvement this week, as gas prices posted another in a string of significant increases.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index, based on views of current economic conditions, stands at -9 on its scale of +100 to -100, back to its level a month ago and matching its long-term average in weekly polls since December 1985.

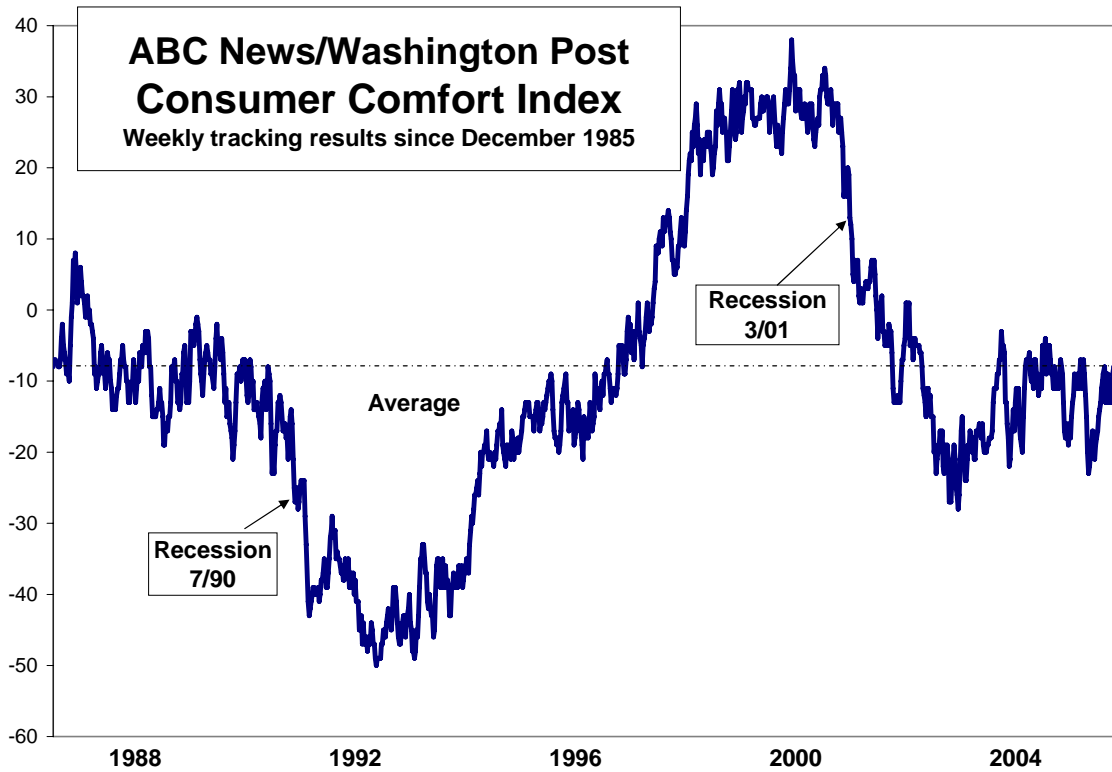
Confidence had shown resilience in the face of rising energy prices recently, gaining six points from Feb. 19 to last week even as gas prices advanced 26 cents a gallon over that time period. But with the average price of gasoline jumping another nine cents to \$2.59 a gallon this week – the highest since late October – confidence might be taking a breather.



**INDEX** – The weekly ABC/Post index is based on Americans’ ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 42 percent rate the economy positively and 36 percent call it a good time to buy things; more, 59 percent, say their personal finances are in good shape. All are within two points of their long-term averages.

ABC News/Washington Post CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	42%	41	40	40
Buying climate	36	39	37	38
Personal finances	59	60	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-9	-7	-10	-9

TREND – The index has been as low as -13 so far this year, and as high as -7 just last week. Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its all-time low was -50 in February 1992. As noted, its current -9 exactly matches its long-term average. It's above last year's average of -13 and very near this year's average so far, -10.

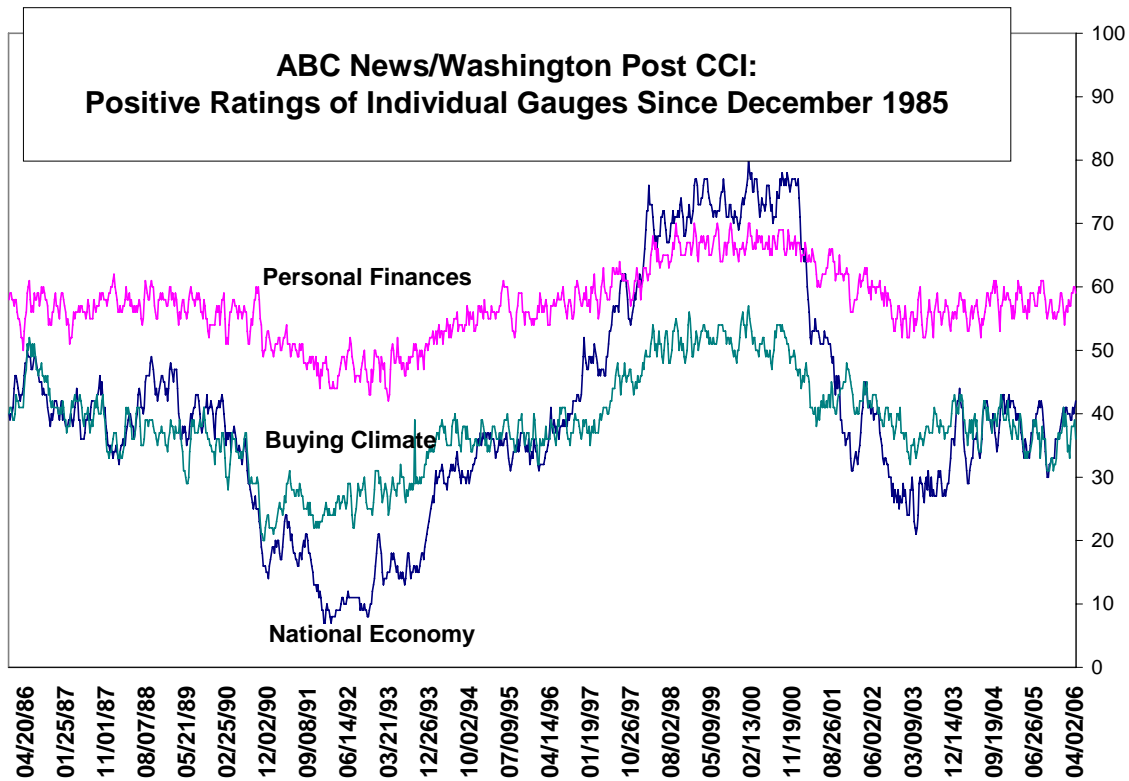


ABC/Post CCI		
Today	-9	
Last week	-7	
Six weeks ago	-13	
2006 average	-10	
2005 high	-7	Aug. 14, July 24, March 6
2005 low	-23	Sept. 18
2005 average	-13	
2004 average	-11	
2003 average	-19	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high

Feb. 9, 1992                      -50    Record low  
 Average since 12/85               -9

**GROUPS** – The CCI is higher in better-off groups. It's +37 among higher-income Americans while -64 among those with the lowest incomes, +5 among college graduates while -34 among those who haven't finished high school, -4 among whites but -42 among blacks and +2 among men while -17 among women.

Regionally, at +6 the index is again this week highest in the West; it's -10 in the South, -12 in the Northeast and -15 in the Midwest. The CCI is +36 among Republicans, but -18 among independents and -32 among Democrats.



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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Forty-two percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 41 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	42	2	40	58	33	25
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-nine percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 60 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	59	7	52	41	27	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-six 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	36	2	34	64	42	22
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 April 2, 2006. 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 Drew Allen.

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

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

04/02/06	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	-9	-7	-9	-9	-17	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-16	-18	-22	-20	-32	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	18	20	18	16	12	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-28	-22	-24	-24	-30	-18	-38	-29
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	2	-1	2	6	-10	9	-16	-3
Women	-17	-11	-18	-24	-22	-11	-36	-22
Age:								

18 - 34	-2	1	-8	-1	-6	1	-28	-11
35 - 44	-7	-3	-5	-12	-24	5	-27	-10
45 - 54	-13	-14	-12	-13	-17	-5	-34	-17
55 - 64	-3	-10	-6	-19	-25	-1	-36	-14
65+	-17	-12	-15	-9	-18	-1	-32	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-64	-51	-48	-54	-66	-33	-75	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-30	-35	-37	-46	-31	-28	-65	-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-23	-19	-17	-29	-18	-12	-44	-28
\$40K To \$49.9K	7	10	-14	24	-13	26	-40	-9
Over \$50K	11	19	26	15	18	26	4	17
\$50K To \$74.9K	-13	-1	15	0	4	17	-14	3
\$75K To \$99.9K	20	28	26	10	18	37	-1	18
Over \$100K	37	39	41	38	32	50	18	36
Region:								
Northeast	-12	-10	-13	-19	-12	-5	-41	-18
Midwest	-15	-12	-10	-11	-26	-3	-27	-16
South	-10	-9	-12	-12	-17	3	-27	-12
West	6	6	3	4	-9	7	-20	-8
Race:								
White	-4	-1	-3	-6	-10	-1	-18	-9
Black	-42	-41	-35	-30	-52	-25	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	36	36	32	34	14	36	9	26
Democrat	-32	-33	-29	-39	-45	-27	-46	-37
Independent	-18	-13	-12	-18	-16	-10	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-34	-36	-41	-35	-50	-24	-63	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-15	-19	-19	-16	-24	-13	-35	-23
College +	5	12	8	1	0	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	0	2	0	-1	-9	4	-17	-5
Rent	-31	-33	-31	-30	-35	-20	-49	-35
Marital Status:								
Single	-21	-17	-12	-9	-25	-8	-31	-19
Married	5	6	1	-2	-4	7	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-23	-22	-29	-25	-36	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	2	5	3	3	-3	5	-13	-3
Part-Time	-9	-1	-10	-11	-26	-1	-35	-17
Not Employed	-23	-25	-26	-26	-29	-15	-43	-24

\*\*\*END\*\*\*