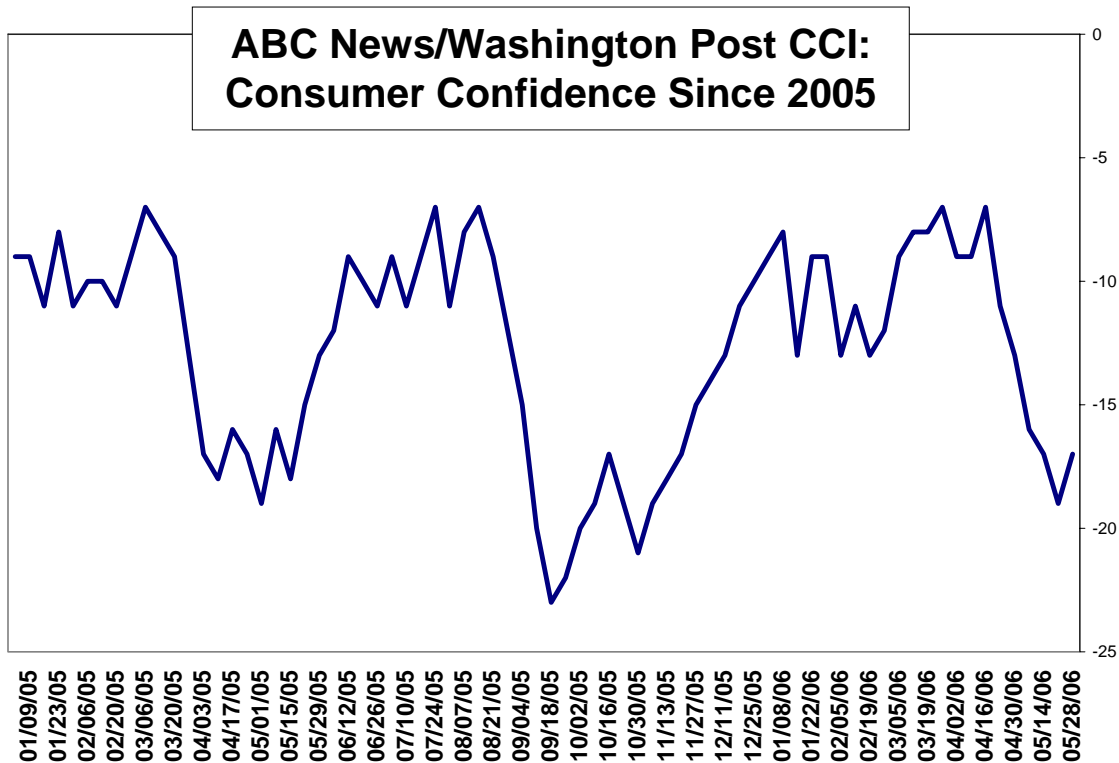


Confidence Pauses After Five-Week Slide

Consumer confidence paused this week after a steep five-week decline, possibly benefiting from moderating gasoline prices. But it's still near its six-month low, and well below its more than 20-year average in weekly ABC News/Washington Post surveys.

The ABC/Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -17 on its scale of +100 to -100 after falling from -7 in mid April to -19 last week. This is the first time in six weeks the index has not lost ground; still, it's six points below its average so far this year, and eight points below its average since this survey began in December 1985.

Recently easing gas prices and strong personal incomes may be helping. Gas as of last week averaged \$2.88 a gallon, down from \$2.95 the week before. And the Commerce Department reported last week that personal income rose a healthy 0.5 percent in April.



INDEX – The index is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their own finances. This week 34 percent rate the economy positively, six points below its long-term average, and 33 percent call it a good time to buy things, five

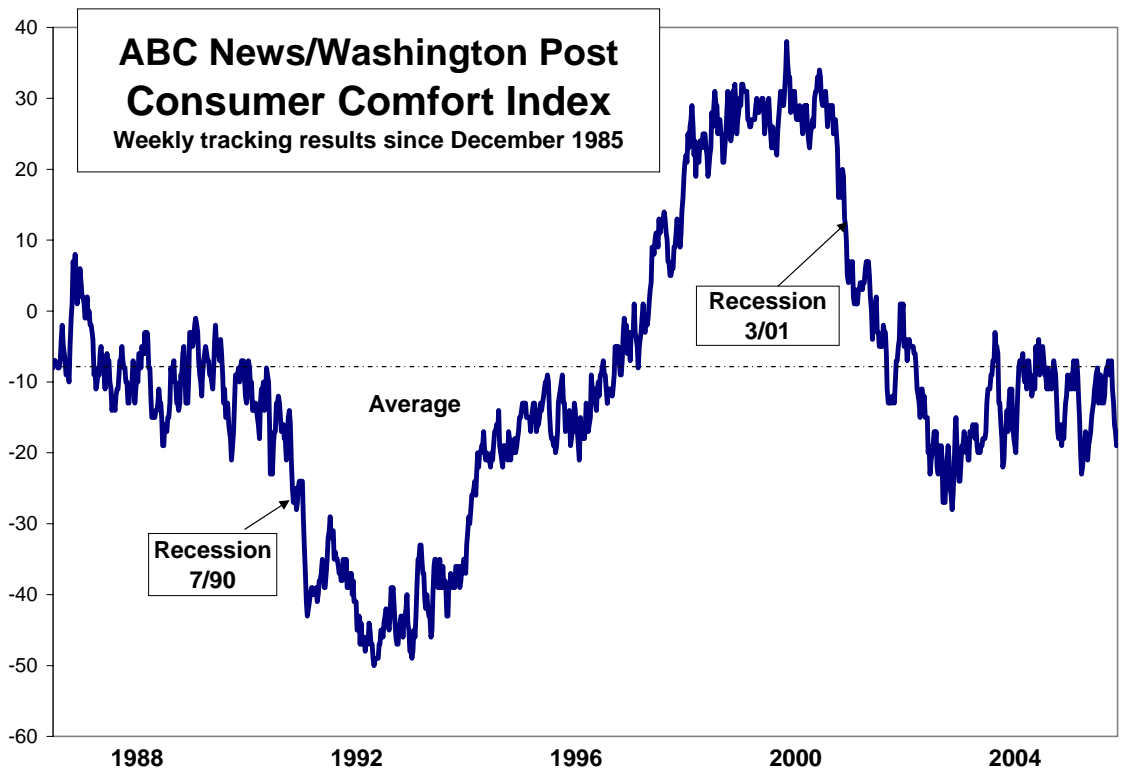
points below average. As usual, more, 57 percent, say their own finances are in good shape, matching its career average.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	34%	33	39	40
Buying climate	33	32	36	38
Personal finances	57	56	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-17	-19	-11	-9

Bush today nominated Henry Paulson as Treasury secretary, replacing John Snow, whose resignation came amid complaints he hadn't successfully made the administration's case that the economy is in good shape. The data in this and other surveys show the challenge Paulson faces: Not only do 66 percent say the economy's hurting, but 60 percent in an ABC/Post poll two weeks ago said they disapprove of how George W. Bush is handling it. Just 38 percent approved, two points from Bush's career low last November.

TREND – The CCI started the year at -8, dipped to -13 in February, rebounded to -7 in March and again in April, its 2006 high, but then plunged 12 points in five weeks as gas prices soared. Last week's -19 was its low for the year.

It's been far worse, bottoming out at -50 in February 1992, but also much better – an all-time high of +38 in January 2000. As noted, it's averaged -11 so far this year, and -9 since December 1985.

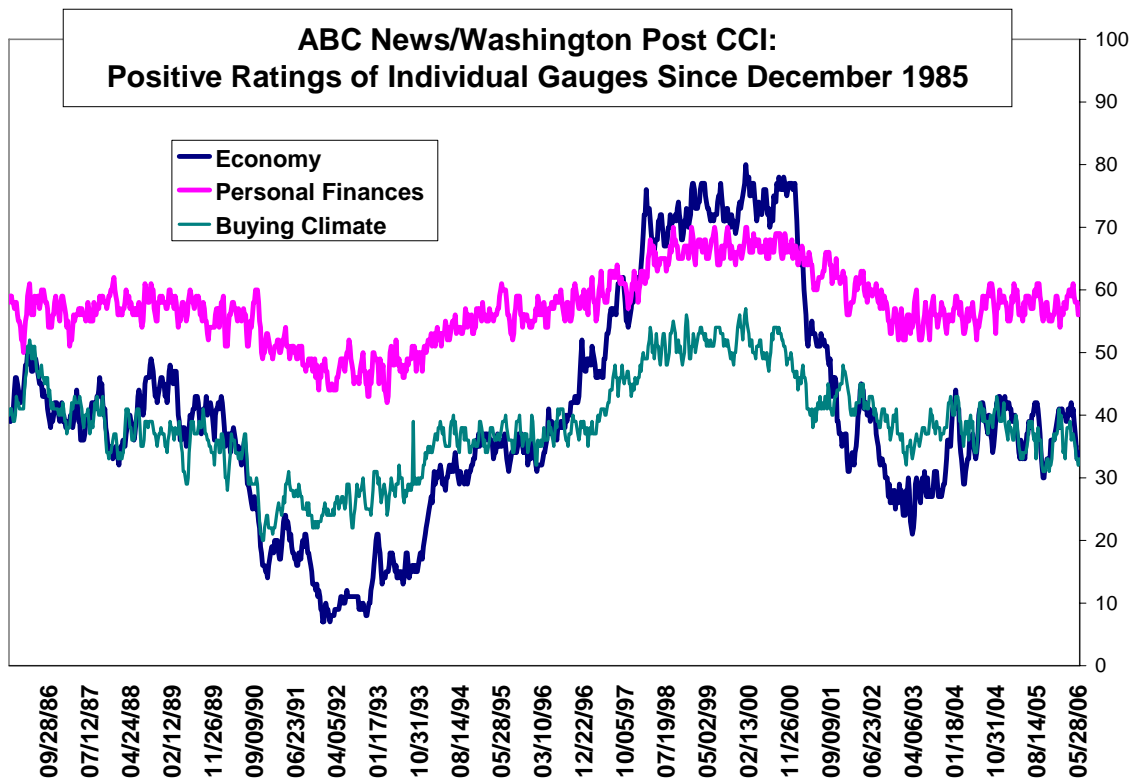


ABC/Post CCI

Today	-17	
Last week	-19	
Six weeks ago	-7	
2006 high	-7	April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19	May 21
2006 average	-11	
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 – As usual, the CCI is higher in better-off groups. It's +30 among top-income Americans while -61 among those with the lowest incomes, -2 among college graduates while -52 among those who haven't finished high school, -11 among whites but -49 among blacks, and -8 among men while -26 among women.

Regionally, at -27 the index continues to be lowest in the Midwest, compared with -18 in the South, -15 in the Northeast and -8 in the West. It's still far higher among Republicans (+26) than among independents (-25) or particularly among Democrats (-42).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-four percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 33 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	34	4	30	66	42	24
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-seven percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 56 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	57	8	49	43	32	11
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-three percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 32 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	33	2	31	67	45	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 May 28, 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 Dalia Sussman.

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

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

05/28/06	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	-17	-19	-13	-12	-13	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-32	-34	-26	-22	-26	-16	-40	-25
Personal Finances	14	12	16	14	18	22	8	16
Buying Climate	-34	-36	-30	-28	-30	-18	-38	-29

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-8	-12	-3	2	-4	9	-14	-2
Women	-26	-27	-22	-26	-20	-11	-36	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-15	-13	-2	-8	-13	1	-28	-11
35 - 44	-14	-21	-15	-16	-2	5	-27	-10
45 - 54	-25	-23	-22	-15	-34	-5	-34	-17
55 - 64	-12	-14	-11	-6	-5	0	-36	-13
65+	-22	-31	-24	-19	-7	-1	-31	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-61	-72	-45	-45	-55	-33	-72	-54
\$15K To \$24.9K	-55	-56	-47	-34	-43	-28	-65	-44
\$25K To \$39.9K	-24	-37	-23	-20	-28	-12	-44	-27
\$40K To \$49.9K	-36	-39	-8	-35	-2	26	-40	-8
Over \$50K	13	18	21	20	16	26	4	17
\$50K To \$74.9K	-4	8	16	3	8	17	-14	4
\$75K To \$99.9K	17	21	19	20	20	37	-1	19
Over \$100K	30	28	28	49	26	50	18	34
Region:								
Northeast	-15	-21	-21	-18	-15	-5	-41	-18
Midwest	-27	-29	-18	-10	-19	-3	-29	-16
South	-18	-16	-10	-14	-2	3	-27	-12
West	-8	-13	-6	-7	-19	7	-19	-6
Race:								
White	-11	-11	-7	-7	-10	-1	-18	-8
Black	-49	-57	-52	-34	-32	-25	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	26	24	28	28	30	38	9	27
Democrat	-42	-46	-40	-30	-38	-27	-46	-36
Independent	-25	-23	-20	-14	-16	-10	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-52	-60	-37	-48	-32	-23	-63	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-24	-27	-23	-20	-27	-13	-35	-23
College +	-2	-1	0	4	4	12	-9	3
Home:								
Own	-8	-10	-6	-7	1	4	-17	-5
Rent	-39	-42	-30	-29	-42	-20	-49	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-27	-26	-13	-12	-21	-8	-29	-18
Married	-7	-9	-1	-5	-2	8	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-31	-36	-41	-33	-25	-22	-49	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-7	-8	0	-1	-6	6	-13	-3
Part-Time	-26	-28	-17	-14	-10	-1	-29	-16
Not Employed	-29	-34	-29	-29	-24	-15	-43	-24

END