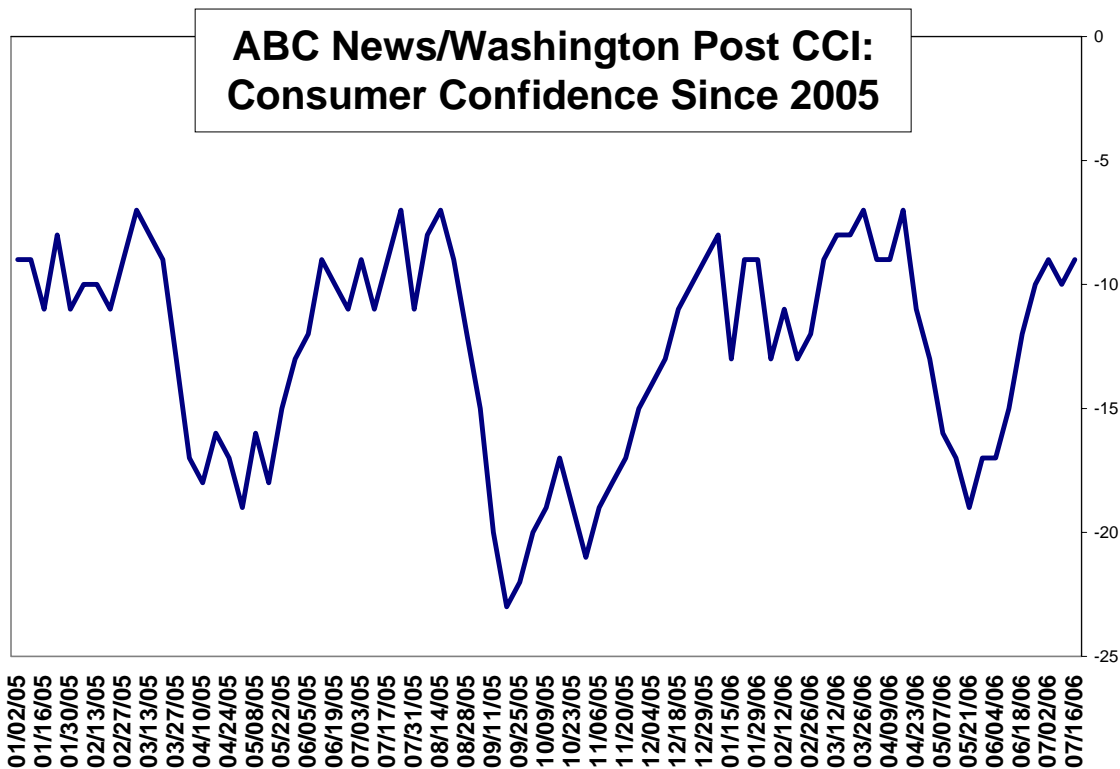


Consumer Confidence Holds For Pessimistic Americans

The latest spike in gas prices hasn't yet nailed consumer confidence, but it's hardly rosy: For the third month in a row, most Americans think the economy is worsening.

Fifty-two percent in the latest ABC News/Washington Post survey of consumer attitudes say the economy is getting worse, about the same as last month, and up from 39 percent in January. Just 14 percent say the economy's improving.

Separately, the ABC/Post Consumer Comfort Index, which measures views of current economic conditions, stands at -9 on its scale of +100 to -100, matching its long-term average in 20 years of weekly polls. It's been fairly steady the past month despite gas that jumped to a national average of \$2.99 a gallon this week, just eight cents from the nominal record after Hurricane Katrina last year.



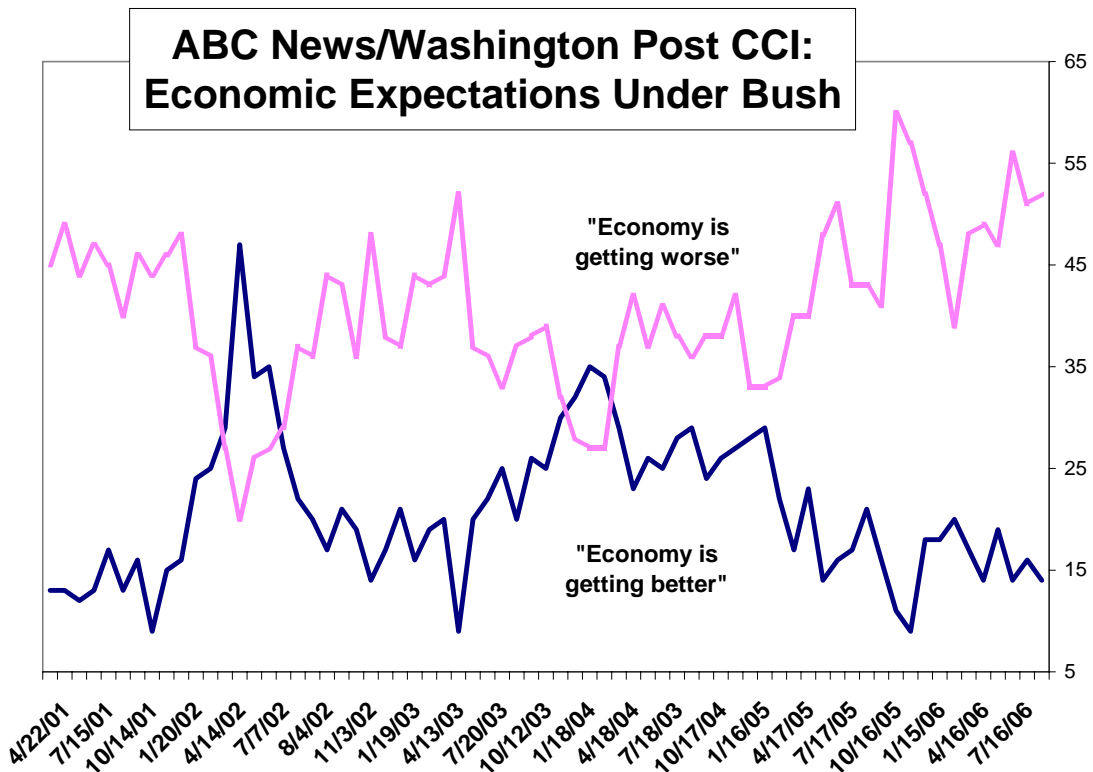
How long it holds is an open question: Consumer confidence historically has been sensitive to gasoline prices, and especially so in the past year.

EXPECTATIONS – Economic expectations have been negative for a long while; optimists last outnumbered pessimists back in January 2004. Though better now than in September 2005 – 60 percent pessimistic after Katrina – pessimism this month is well above its 25-year average of 39 percent.

There's enough room for debate about the economy that partisanship informs the assessment. Sixty-six percent of Democrats and 52 percent of independents say the economy is getting worse. Just 31 percent of Republicans agree.

Pessimism levels also vary by region, from a high of 59 percent in the South to a low of 45 percent in the West.

| | Economy is: | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| | Getting better | Getting worse | Staying the same |
| Now | 14 | 52 | 34 |
| Last month | 16 | 51 | 32 |
| Jan. 2006 | 20 | 39 | 38 |
| Jan. 2004 | 34 | 27 | 37 |
| Avg. since 1981 | 20 | 39 | 40 |
| Worst, Oct. 1990 | 3 | 77 | 19 |
| Best, Aug. 1983 | 50 | 19 | 30 |

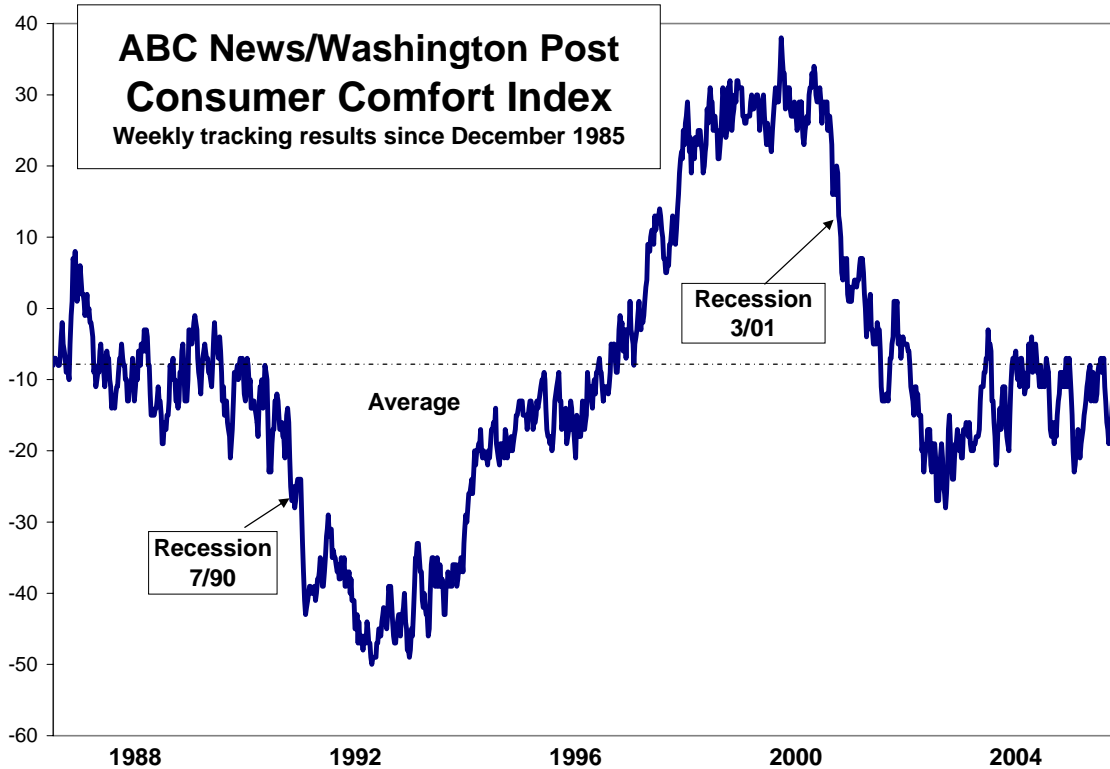


INDEX – The weekly CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 61 percent rate their finances positively, four points above the long-term average. Ratings of the economy and

buying climate, 39 and 36 percent respectively, remain near their 2006 and 20-year averages.

| ABC News/Washington Post CCI | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Positive ratings of: | This week | Last week | 2006 avg. | 20-yr. avg. |
| National economy | 39% | 40 | 39 | 40 |
| Buying climate | 36 | 36 | 36 | 38 |
| Personal finances | 61 | 59 | 58 | 57 |
| Consumer Comfort Index | -9 | -10 | -11 | -9 |

TREND – The index has ranged as high as -7 and as low as -19 this year. As noted, today’s -9 is at its average since this weekly poll began in December 1985, and near this year’s average, -11. The index’s all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its all-time low, -50 in February 1992.

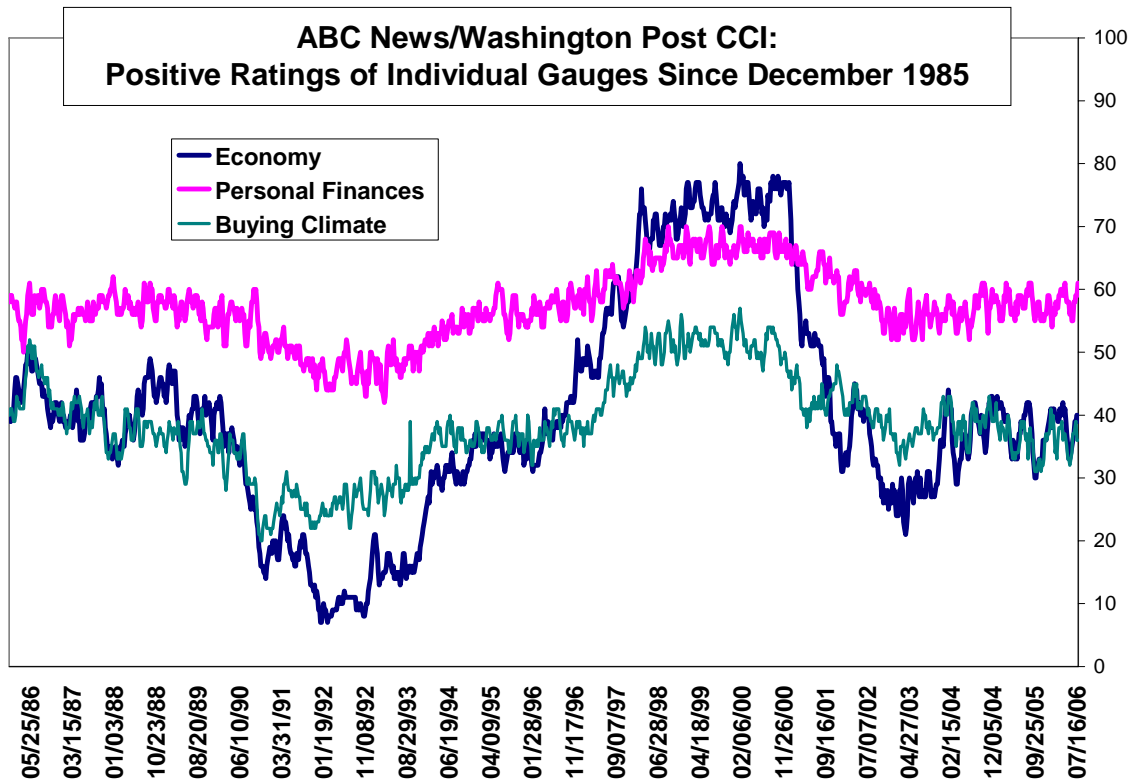


| ABC/Post CCI | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Today | -9 |
| Last week | -10 |
| Two weeks ago | -9 |
| Six weeks ago | -17 |
| 2006 high | -7 April 16, March 26 |
| 2006 low | -19 May 21 |
| 2006 average | -11 |
| 2005 average | -13 |
| 2004 average | -11 |
| 2003 average | -19 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 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 index is higher in better-off groups. It's +28 among higher-income Americans while -53 among those with the lowest incomes, +5 among college graduates while -41 among those who haven't finished high school, -5 among whites but -33 among blacks and +2 among men while -20 among women.

Regionally, the index continues to be better in the West, at +4, compared with -7 in the Midwest, -10 in the Northeast and -19 in the South. And as with expectations, there's a strong political element in current economic sentiment: The index is far higher among Republicans (+27) than independents (-18) or, particularly, Democrats (-28).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-nine percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 40 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 | 39 | 3 | 36 | 61 | 41 | 20 |
| Avg. since 12/85 | 40 | 3 | 37 | 60 | 40 | 20 |

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-one percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 59 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 | 61 | 8 | 53 | 39 | 27 | 12 |
| 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, unchanged from 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 | 3 | 33 | 64 | 43 | 21 |
| 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 July 16, 2006. The results have a three-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents July 5-16; that result has a 4.5-point margin of error. 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 Tanveer Ali.

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

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

| 07/16/06 | 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 | -10 | -12 | -7 | -9 | -7 | -23 | -13 |
| State of Economy | -22 | -21 | -26 | -18 | -18 | -16 | -40 | -25 |
| Personal Finances | 22 | 18 | 16 | 22 | 18 | 22 | 8 | 15 |
| Buying Climate | -28 | -29 | -26 | -26 | -28 | -18 | -38 | -29 |
| ----- | | | | | | | | |
| OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS | | | | | | | | |
| Sex: | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 2 | -3 | -3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | -14 | -2 |
| Women | -20 | -17 | -20 | -20 | -25 | -11 | -36 | -22 |
| Age: | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 18 - 34 | -6 | -5 | -7 | -4 | -17 | 1 | -28 | -10 |
| 35 - 44 | -12 | -11 | -12 | 0 | 5 | 5 | -27 | -11 |
| 45 - 54 | -16 | -16 | -15 | -17 | -13 | -6 | -31 | -17 |
| 55 - 64 | -16 | -20 | -12 | -1 | -15 | 0 | -36 | -13 |
| 65+ | -1 | -6 | -21 | -16 | -3 | -1 | -31 | -16 |
| Income: | | | | | | | | |
| Under \$15K | -53 | -47 | -34 | -51 | -47 | -33 | -72 | -53 |
| \$15K To \$24.9K | -47 | -50 | -54 | -30 | -42 | -28 | -65 | -45 |
| \$25K To \$39.9K | -16 | -21 | -19 | -24 | -25 | -12 | -44 | -27 |
| \$40K To \$49.9K | 5 | 6 | -25 | -5 | -8 | 26 | -41 | -12 |
| Over \$50K | 12 | 13 | 9 | 20 | 17 | 26 | 4 | 17 |
| \$50K To \$74.9K | -10 | -7 | -9 | 9 | 0 | 17 | -14 | 3 |
| \$75K To \$99.9K | 18 | 18 | 9 | 22 | 23 | 31 | -1 | 17 |
| Over \$100K | 28 | 29 | 31 | 30 | 34 | 50 | 18 | 34 |
| Region: | | | | | | | | |
| Northeast | -10 | -9 | -16 | -17 | -10 | -5 | -41 | -19 |
| Midwest | -7 | -8 | -21 | -15 | -3 | -3 | -29 | -16 |
| South | -19 | -17 | -15 | -3 | -11 | 2 | -27 | -13 |
| West | 4 | -3 | 5 | 4 | -11 | 7 | -19 | -4 |
| Race: | | | | | | | | |
| White | -5 | -5 | -8 | -1 | -3 | -1 | -18 | -8 |
| Black | -33 | -35 | -36 | -48 | -50 | -25 | -57 | -42 |
| Politics: | | | | | | | | |
| Republican | 27 | 28 | 27 | 38 | 29 | 38 | 9 | 27 |
| Democrat | -28 | -30 | -34 | -32 | -38 | -27 | -46 | -36 |
| Independent | -18 | -19 | -21 | -23 | -11 | -10 | -31 | -19 |
| Education: | | | | | | | | |
| < High School | -41 | -35 | -43 | -26 | -37 | -23 | -63 | -41 |
| High Sch. Grad. | -19 | -18 | -17 | -14 | -25 | -13 | -35 | -23 |
| College + | 5 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 12 | -9 | 2 |
| Home: | | | | | | | | |
| Own | -2 | -2 | -6 | 0 | -1 | 2 | -17 | -5 |
| Rent | -33 | -35 | -29 | -29 | -33 | -20 | -49 | -33 |
| Marital Status: | | | | | | | | |
| Single | -4 | -9 | -13 | -17 | -25 | -4 | -28 | -17 |
| Married | -3 | -5 | -7 | 8 | 7 | 8 | -14 | -3 |
| Sep/Wid/Div | -36 | -26 | -27 | -30 | -36 | -22 | -49 | -34 |
| Employ. Status: | | | | | | | | |
| Full-Time | -3 | -1 | -5 | 6 | 4 | 6 | -13 | -3 |
| Part-Time | -13 | -10 | -14 | -18 | -24 | -1 | -29 | -15 |
| Not Employed | -17 | -23 | -24 | -21 | -21 | -15 | -43 | -24 |

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 |
|---------|----------------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| 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.

*=less than 1 percent.

END