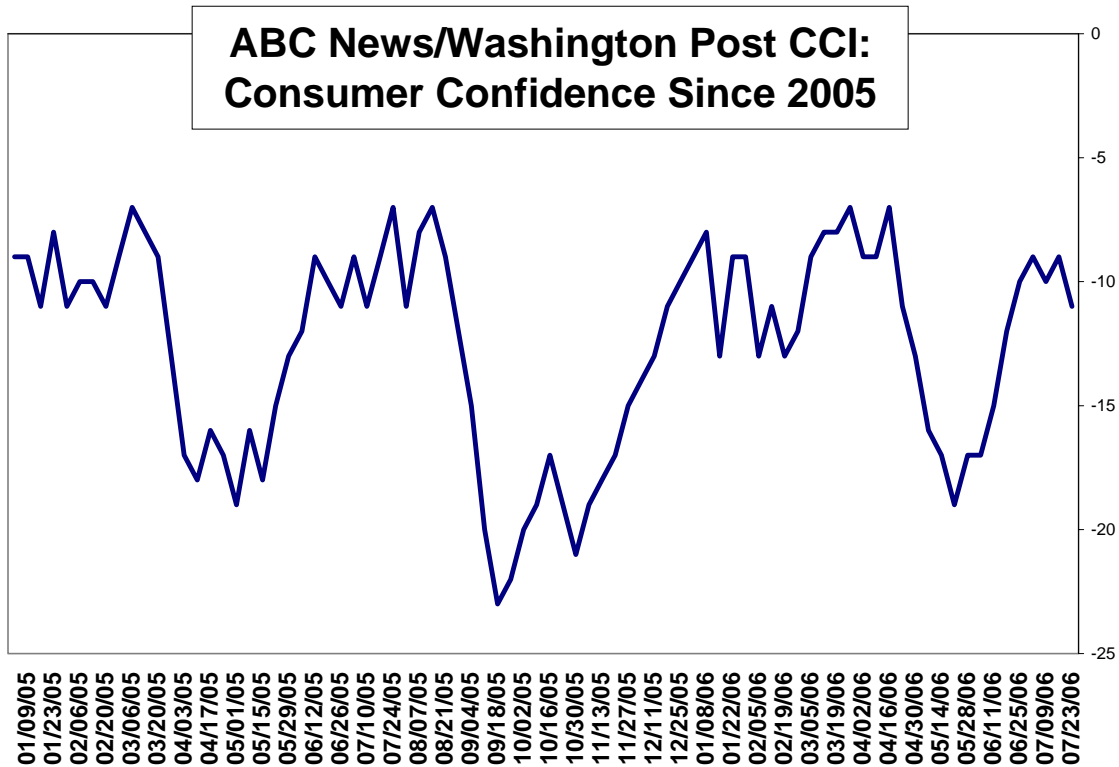


Confidence Holds Despite \$3 Gas

Consumer confidence held essentially steady this week despite \$3 gas, raising the possibility the public's developed a thicker skin when it comes to gas-price spikes.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -11 on its scale of +100 to -100, matching its average for the year and not far off its long-term average, -9, in weekly polls since December 1985. It's hovered from -9 to -11 the past five weeks, while gasoline climbed 13 cents to \$3.00 a gallon, its highest since Hurricane Katrina.

The danger's hardly over: Gas prices historically correlate with consumer sentiment, and sometimes the reaction is a somewhat delayed one. But a separate ABC News poll this week also suggests that Americans are learning to live with it: Just 15 percent plan to cut back on their driving in the weeks ahead, down from 50 percent after the Katrina gas shock in September 2005 and 30 percent when prices jumped this spring.

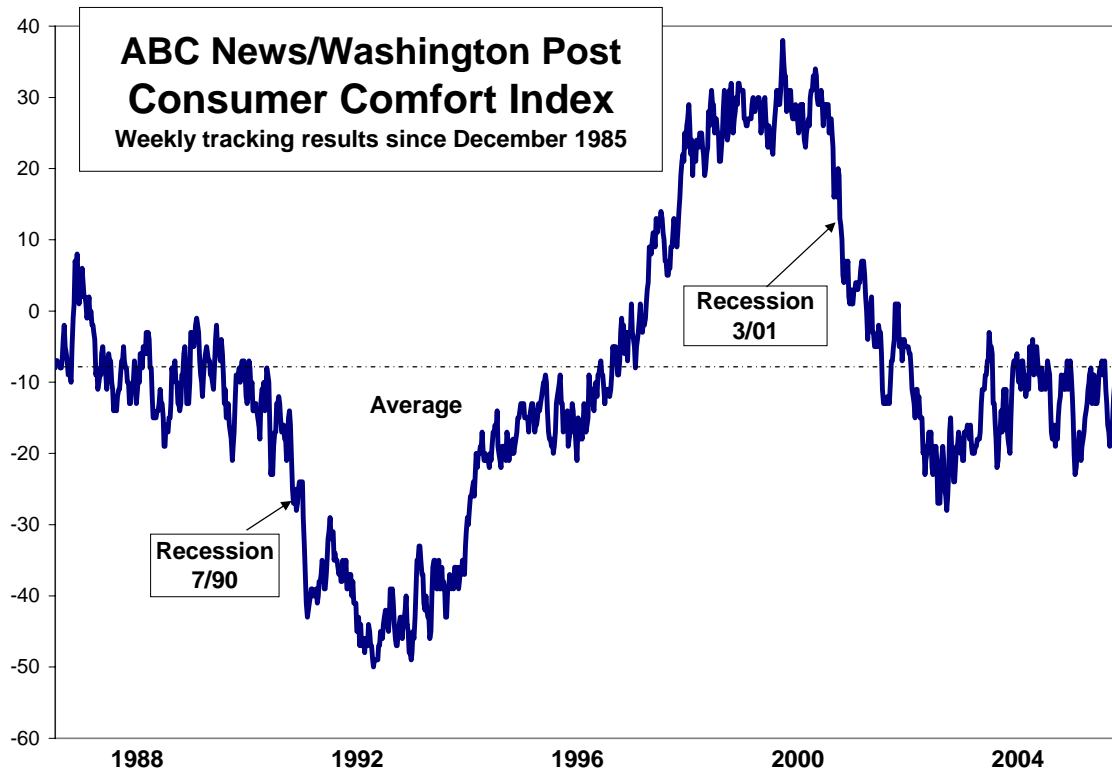


That poll also found that people are mainly spending less on other things (39 percent), saving less (20 percent) or increasing credit-card or other debt (10 percent) to pay for gasoline. When asked what price for gas would make them significantly reduce their driving – no mean feat in a car-based society – the average answer was \$4.16.

INDEX – The weekly CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week, 38 percent say the economy is in good shape and 35 percent call it a good time to buy things; as usual far more, 60 percent, rate their finances positively. Each is near both its long-term and 2006 average.

	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	38%	39	39	40
Buying climate	35	36	36	38
Personal finances	60	61	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-11	-9	-11	-9

TREND – The index peaked at -7 twice this year before dropping to a low of -19 in May. Those compare to an all-time high of +38 in January 2000 and a record low of -50 in February 1992.

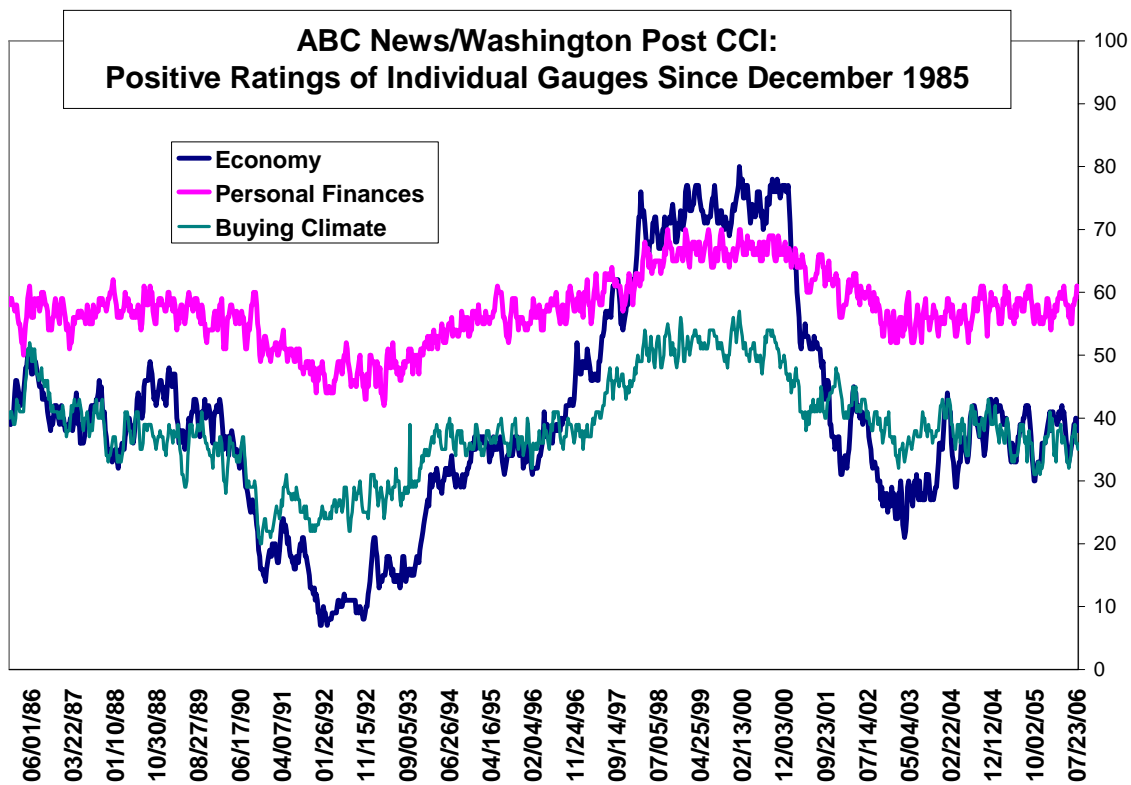


ABC/Post CCI		
This week	-11	
Last week	-9	
2006 high	-7	April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19	May 21
2006 average	-11	
2005 average	-13	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year

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 +27 among higher-income Americans while -58 among those with the lowest incomes, +4 among college graduates while -46 among those who haven't finished high school, -7 among whites but -40 among blacks and +2 among men while -22 among women.

Regionally, the index is best in the West, at +2, compared with -3 in the Northeast, -15 in the South and -22 in the Midwest. A strong political element continues: The index is +25 among Republicans, but -19 among independents and -30 among Democrats.



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-eight percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 39 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	38	3	35	62	41	21
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty 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	60	8	52	40	28	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-five percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 36 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	35	2	33	65	45	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 July 23, 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 Tanveer Ali.

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

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

07/23/06	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	-11	-9	-10	-11	-7	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-24	-22	-22	-22	-16	-16	-40	-25
Personal Finances	20	22	16	18	20	22	8	16
Buying Climate	-30	-28	-24	-28	-26	-18	-38	-29

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	2	2	-3	3	9	9	-14	-2
Women	-22	-20	-16	-22	-23	-11	-36	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-8	-6	-3	-2	-9	1	-28	-9

35 - 44	-7	-12	-19	-9	0	5	-27	-11
45 - 54	-20	-16	-7	-20	-12	-6	-31	-17
55 - 64	-19	-16	-8	-5	-7	0	-36	-13
65+	-5	-1	-18	-20	-8	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-58	-53	-40	-50	-50	-33	-72	-53
\$15K To \$24.9K	-48	-47	-49	-47	-41	-28	-65	-45
\$25K To \$39.9K	-11	-16	-22	-16	-12	-11	-44	-27
\$40K To \$49.9K	-3	5	-25	-9	-23	26	-41	-12
Over \$50K	12	12	12	20	16	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	-15	-10	0	10	-9	17	-15	2
\$75K To \$99.9K	22	18	13	16	22	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	27	28	28	35	45	50	18	34
Region:								
Northeast	-3	-10	-18	-19	-7	-3	-41	-18
Midwest	-22	-7	-11	-16	-8	-4	-29	-16
South	-15	-19	-15	-8	-5	2	-27	-13
West	2	4	6	1	-11	7	-19	-4
Race:								
White	-7	-5	-6	-5	-5	-1	-18	-8
Black	-40	-33	-30	-51	-27	-25	-57	-42
Politics:								
Republican	25	27	23	30	34	38	9	27
Democrat	-30	-28	-30	-35	-41	-27	-46	-36
Independent	-19	-18	-16	-21	-11	-10	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-46	-41	-41	-34	-33	-23	-63	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-18	-19	-18	-16	-23	-13	-35	-23
College +	4	5	5	1	10	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	-2	-2	-5	-4	-2	2	-17	-5
Rent	-34	-33	-26	-26	-24	-20	-49	-33
Marital Status:								
Single	-9	-4	-10	-18	-15	-4	-28	-17
Married	-1	-3	-3	6	6	8	-14	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-36	-29	-40	-37	-22	-49	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-4	-3	-3	0	3	6	-13	-3
Part-Time	-9	-13	-8	-13	-16	-1	-29	-15
Not Employed	-20	-17	-23	-25	-19	-15	-43	-24

END