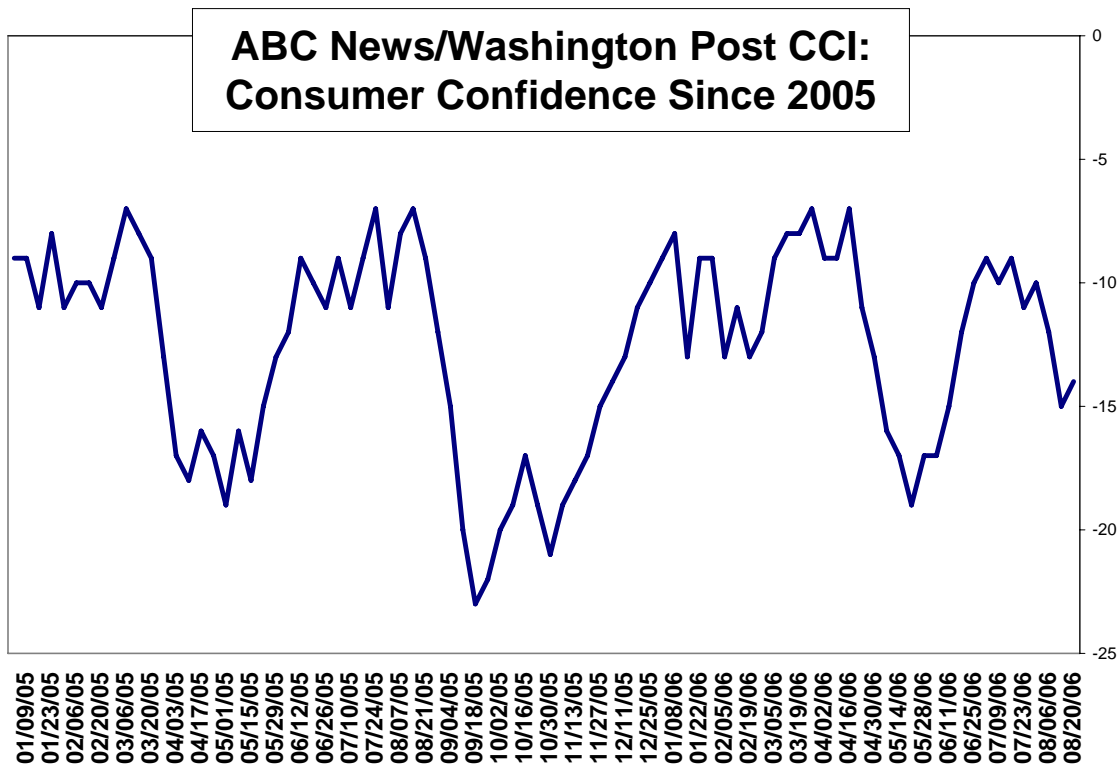


Confidence Stabilizes as Gas Prices Improve

Consumer confidence stabilized this week as gas prices posted their biggest one-week drop in nine months.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index is now at -14 on its scale of +100 to -100, compared with -15 last week. Confidence had fallen six points from mid-July to mid-August amid high pump prices and a weak job market.

The average price of a gallon of gasoline dropped eight cents this week, to \$2.92. They'd been as high as \$3.04 cents just two weeks ago, the second highest nominal price on record.



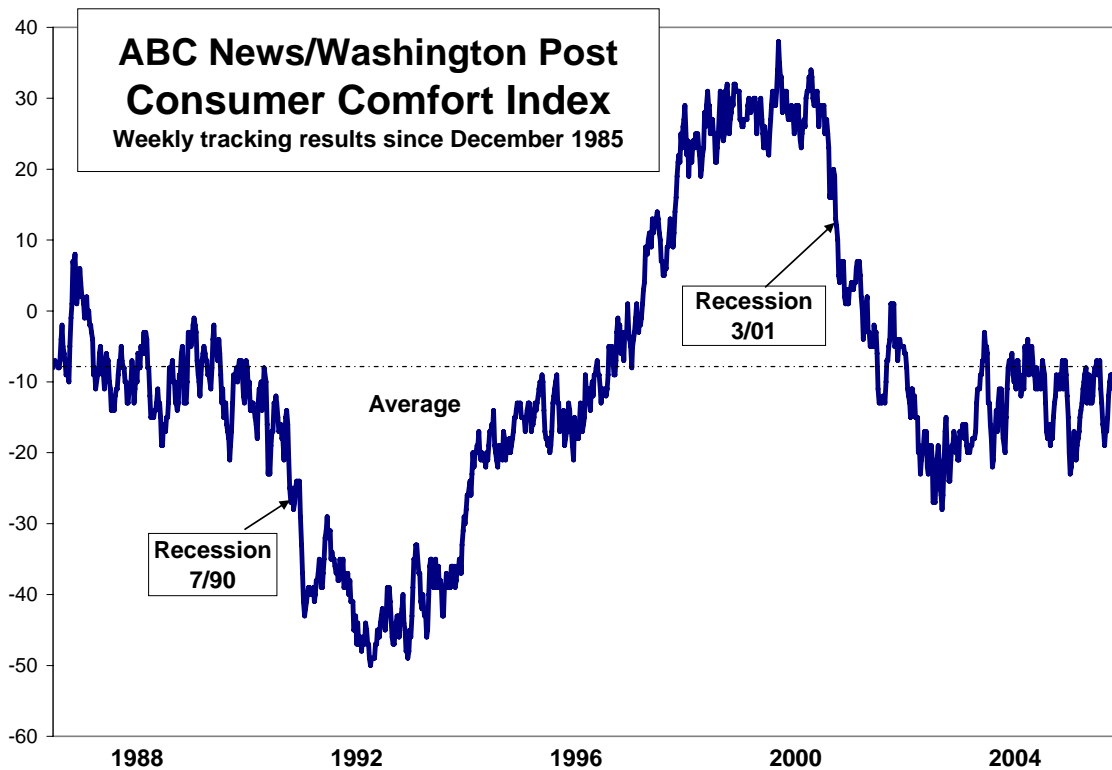
INDEX – The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. Thirty-seven percent say the national economy is in good shape, compared with a long-term average of 40 percent. Thirty-three percent call it a good time to buy things; the average since December 1985 is 38 percent. Fifty-nine percent rate their own finances positively, compared with an average 57 percent.

ABC News/Washington Post CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	37	36	38	40
Buying climate	33	33	36	38
Personal finances	59	59	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-14	-15	-12	-9

TREND – The CCI has averaged -12 so far this year, compared with a long-term average of -9. It bottomed out this year at -19 in May, and peaked at -7 in March and April. It held between -9 and -11 throughout July, before taking a downturn in August.

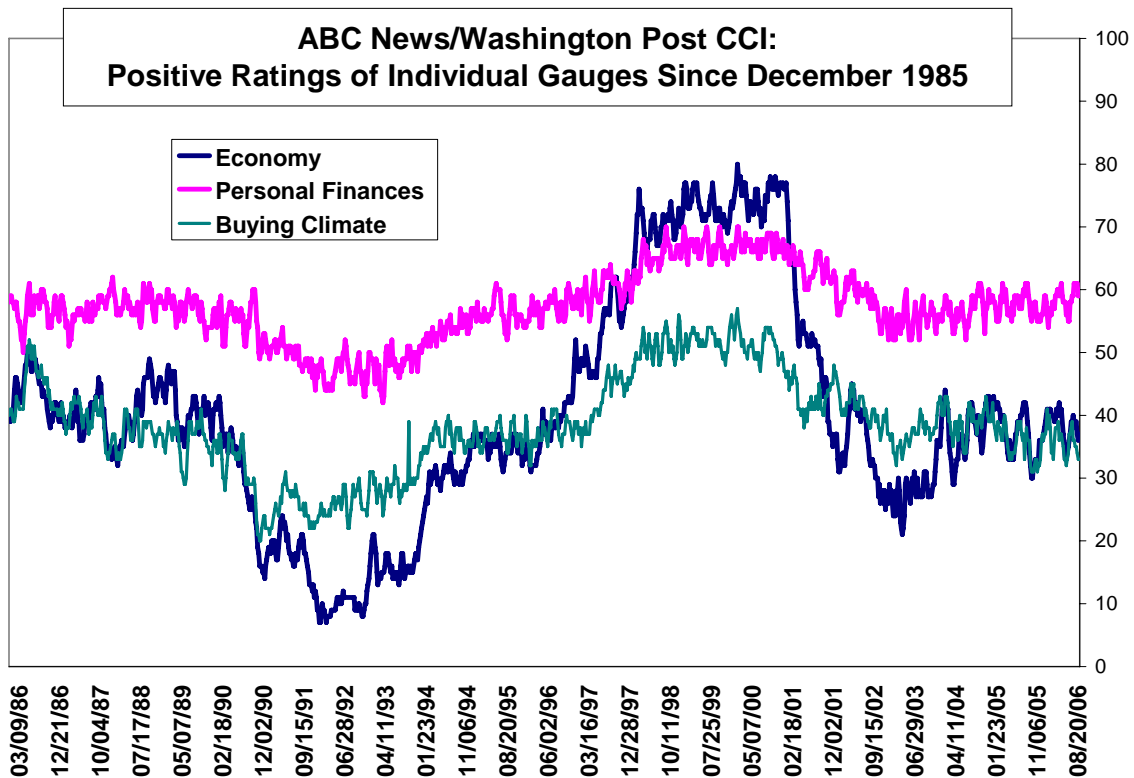
Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992.

ABC/Post CCI		
This week	-14	
Last week	-15	
Five weeks ago	-9	
2006 high	-7	April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19	May 21
2006 average	-12	
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 +42 among higher-income Americans while -69 among those with the lowest incomes, -2 among college graduates while -42 among those who haven't finished high school, -9 among whites but -47 among blacks and +4 among men while -30 among women.

The index continues to be best in the West, at +3, compared with -15 in the South, -17 in the Midwest and -26 in the Northeast. A partisan component to consumer confidence continues: The index is +18 among Republicans, but -20 among independents and -30 among Democrats.



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-seven percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 36 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	37	4	33	63	36	27
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-nine percent say their own finances are excellent or good, unchanged from 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	28	13
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, the same as 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	43	24
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 August 20, 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.

08/20/06	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	-14	-15	-11	-19	-9	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-26	-28	-24	-34	-22	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	18	18	20	12	22	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-34	-34	-30	-36	-28	-18	-38	-30

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	4	2	2	-12	0	7	-14	-2
Women	-30	-29	-22	-27	-18	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-14	-11	-8	-13	-8	1	-28	-10
35 - 44	-6	-14	-7	-21	-5	5	-27	-11
45 - 54	-17	-18	-20	-23	-14	-6	-31	-18
55 - 64	-19	-18	-19	-14	-10	0	-36	-14
65+	-14	-14	-5	-31	-10	-1	-31	-16
Income:								

Under \$15K	-69	-71	-58	-72	-51	-33	-72	-54
\$15K To \$24.9K	-51	-43	-48	-56	-36	-28	-65	-45
\$25K To \$39.9K	-3	-6	-11	-37	-28	-3	-44	-26
\$40K To \$49.9K	-20	-28	-3	-39	1	26	-41	-12
Over \$50K	8	6	12	18	17	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	-17	-20	-15	8	6	17	-20	1
\$75K To \$99.9K	11	7	22	21	16	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	42	41	27	28	34	50	18	34
Region:								
Northeast	-26	-20	-3	-21	-15	-3	-41	-19
Midwest	-17	-16	-22	-29	-13	-4	-29	-16
South	-15	-17	-15	-16	-2	-2	-27	-14
West	3	-4	2	-13	-11	7	-19	-3
Race:								
White	-9	-11	-7	-11	-2	-1	-18	-8
Black	-47	-42	-40	-57	-44	-27	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	18	12	25	24	30	38	9	26
Democrat	-30	-29	-30	-46	-33	-27	-46	-36
Independent	-20	-19	-19	-23	-18	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-42	-46	-46	-60	-26	-23	-63	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-19	-18	-27	-23	-13	-35	-22
College +	-2	-3	4	-1	5	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	-7	-7	-2	-10	-3	2	-17	-6
Rent	-30	-30	-34	-42	-25	-25	-49	-33
Marital Status:								
Single	-24	-22	-9	-26	-18	-4	-28	-17
Married	1	0	-1	-9	1	8	-14	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-37	-42	-38	-36	-25	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-8	-11	-4	-8	-2	6	-13	-3
Part-Time	-15	-6	-9	-28	-11	-1	-29	-15
Not Employed	-22	-23	-20	-34	-20	-15	-43	-24

END