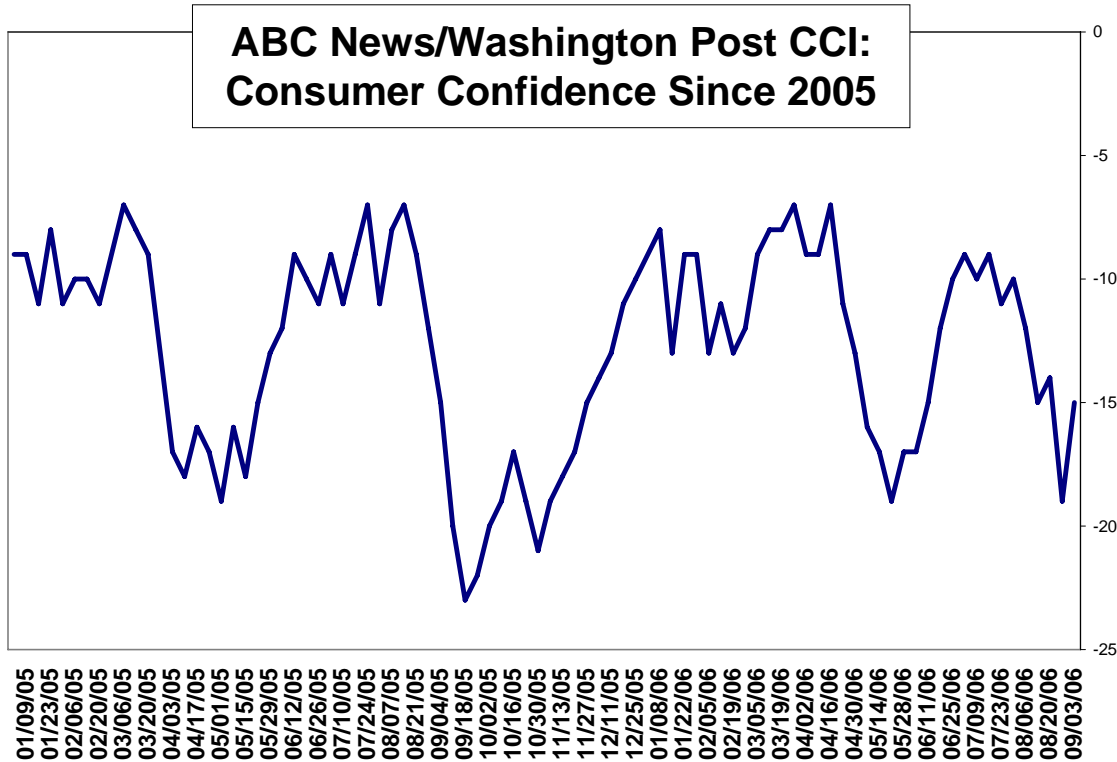


## **Confidence Up, But Still Lags As Fall Campaign Season Begins**

Consumer confidence rebounded this week, perhaps buoyed by easing gasoline prices. But amid income stagnation and soft housing and jobs markets, it's still below average heading into the post-Labor Day congressional election season.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index advanced four points this week to -15 on its scale of +100 to -100, wiping away most of last week's five-point drop. The gyrations could stem from competing economic data – some negative reports countered by lower gasoline prices, down 12 cents this week and 31 cents in the past month to an average \$2.73 per gallon in the latest federal survey.



At -15 the index is below its long-term average, -9. It's not far from its Labor Day level after the 2002 midterm election (-13) but much worse than in 1998 (+29). It's better than at this stage in 1994, when Republicans won control of both houses of Congress.

Labor Day CCI	
9/4/06	-15
9/1/02	-13

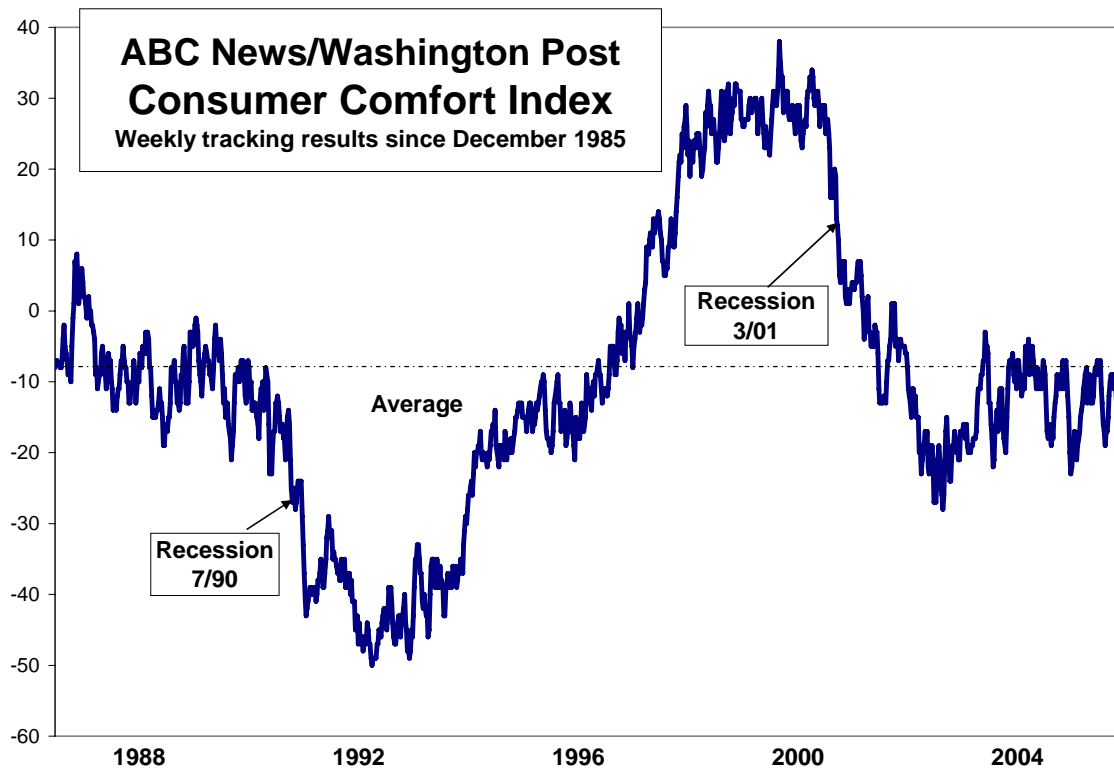
9/6/98 +29  
 9/4/94 -21  
 9/2/90 -24  
 8/31/86 -2

**INDEX** – The CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. Thirty-five 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. And 59 percent rate their own finances positively, nearer its average, 57 percent.

ABC News/Washington Post CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	35	33	38	40
Buying climate	33	32	36	38
Personal finances	59	57	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-15	-19	-12	-9

**TREND** – The CCI bottomed out this year at -19 in May and again last week, and peaked at -7 in March and April. It held between -9 and -11 in July before sliding last month.

The index’s all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992.

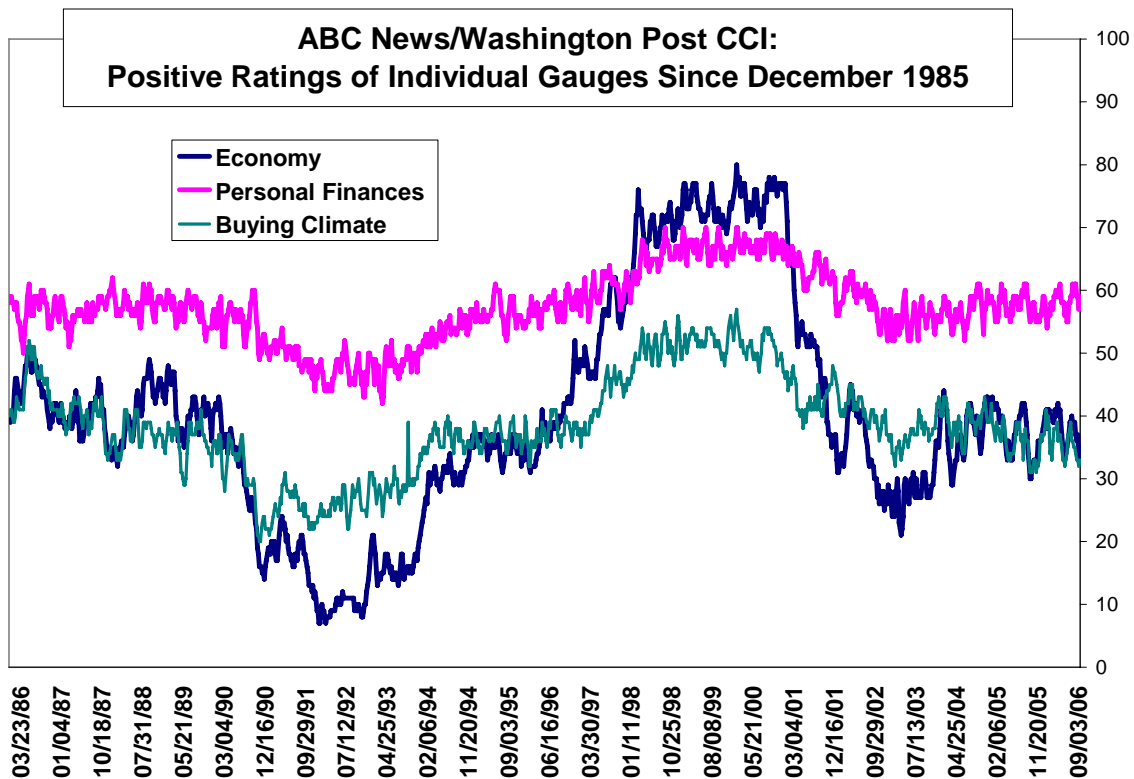


ABC/Post CCI

This week	-15	
Last week	-19	
Last month	-12	
2006 high	-7	April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19	Aug. 27, 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 +25 among higher-income Americans while -66 among those with the lowest incomes, -6 among college graduates while -43 among those who haven't finished high school, -10 among whites but -46 among blacks and -2 among men while -26 among women.

The index continues to be best in the West, at +7, compared with -11 in the South, -26 in the Northeast and -33 in the Midwest. A strong political element continues as well, with Republicans far more sanguine about the economy (a CCI of +28), independents far less so (-23) and Democrats more disgruntled still (-34).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-five 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	35	3	32	65	42	23
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 57 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	6	53	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; 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	4	29	67	44	23
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 Sept. 3, 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 Jon Cohen.

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

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

09/03/06	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	-15	-19	-12	-17	-15	-7	-23	-14

State of Economy	-30	-34	-26	-30	-32	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	18	14	22	10	16	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-34	-36	-32	-32	-28	-18	-38	-30

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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-2	-3	7	-8	-7	7	-14	-2
Women	-26	-32	-29	-25	-21	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-13	-24	-7	-17	-14	1	-28	-10
35 - 44	-5	-7	-15	-8	-2	5	-27	-11
45 - 54	-22	-18	-18	-25	-23	-6	-31	-18
55 - 64	-24	-25	-14	-8	-18	0	-36	-14
65+	-13	-13	-9	-26	-20	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-66	-66	-71	-57	-54	-33	-72	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-61	-62	-42	-58	-37	-28	-65	-46
\$25K To \$39.9K	-10	-19	-6	-23	-28	-3	-44	-25
\$40K To \$49.9K	-34	-23	-22	-34	-24	26	-41	-13
Over \$50K	10	7	12	15	18	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	2	-11	-13	-4	9	17	-20	1
\$75K To \$99.9K	10	8	16	17	8	31	-1	16
Over \$100K	25	31	34	36	35	50	18	34
Region:								
Northeast	-26	-30	-13	-21	-20	-3	-41	-19
Midwest	-33	-26	-13	-22	-14	-4	-33	-17
South	-11	-17	-18	-19	-13	-3	-27	-15
West	7	-1	1	-5	-12	7	-19	-3
Race:								
White	-10	-12	-8	-10	-9	-1	-18	-9
Black	-46	-54	-44	-51	-38	-27	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	28	23	18	24	25	38	9	26
Democrat	-34	-35	-29	-42	-36	-27	-46	-36
Independent	-23	-25	-19	-24	-21	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-43	-33	-48	-51	-25	-23	-63	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-15	-25	-17	-30	-31	-13	-35	-22
College +	-6	-9	2	2	0	12	-9	1
Home:								
Own	-9	-12	-7	-6	-8	2	-17	-6
Rent	-29	-34	-25	-44	-34	-25	-49	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-15	-32	-19	-27	-16	-4	-32	-17
Married	-6	-4	4	-3	-5	8	-14	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-39	-36	-45	-36	-39	-22	-49	-36
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-10	-12	-5	-8	-5	6	-13	-4
Part-Time	-7	-23	-16	-21	-29	-1	-29	-16
Not Employed	-23	-24	-20	-29	-22	-15	-43	-24

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