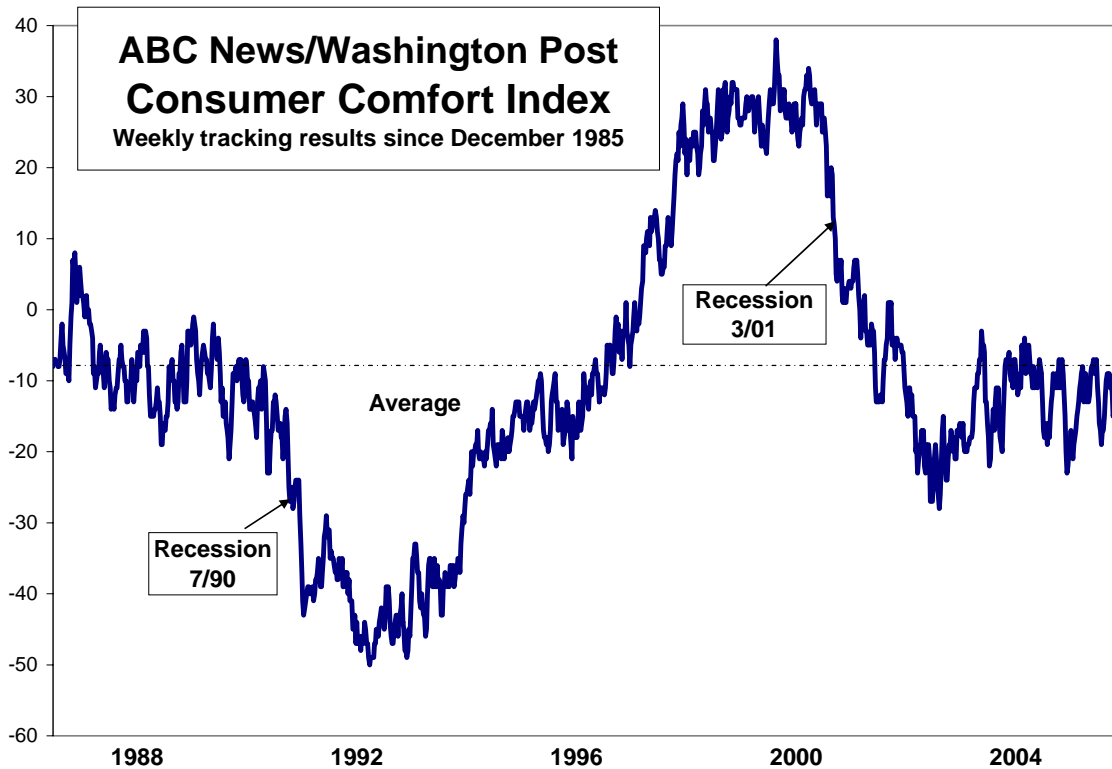


Economic Pessimists Continue to Far Outnumber Optimists

Half of Americans think the economy's getting worse while only 14 percent think it's improving, a sharply negative assessment that's held roughly steady since midwinter.

Assessments of current economic conditions, meanwhile, are stable and below their long-term average. The latest ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -15 on its scale of +100 to -100, compared to its average -9 in weekly surveys since late 1985. It's been between -13 and -15 since mid-August, apart from a dip to -19 Aug. 27.

The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 37 percent say the national economy is in good shape and 34 percent call it a good time to buy things. As usual more, 57 percent, rate their own finances positively, matching its long-term average.



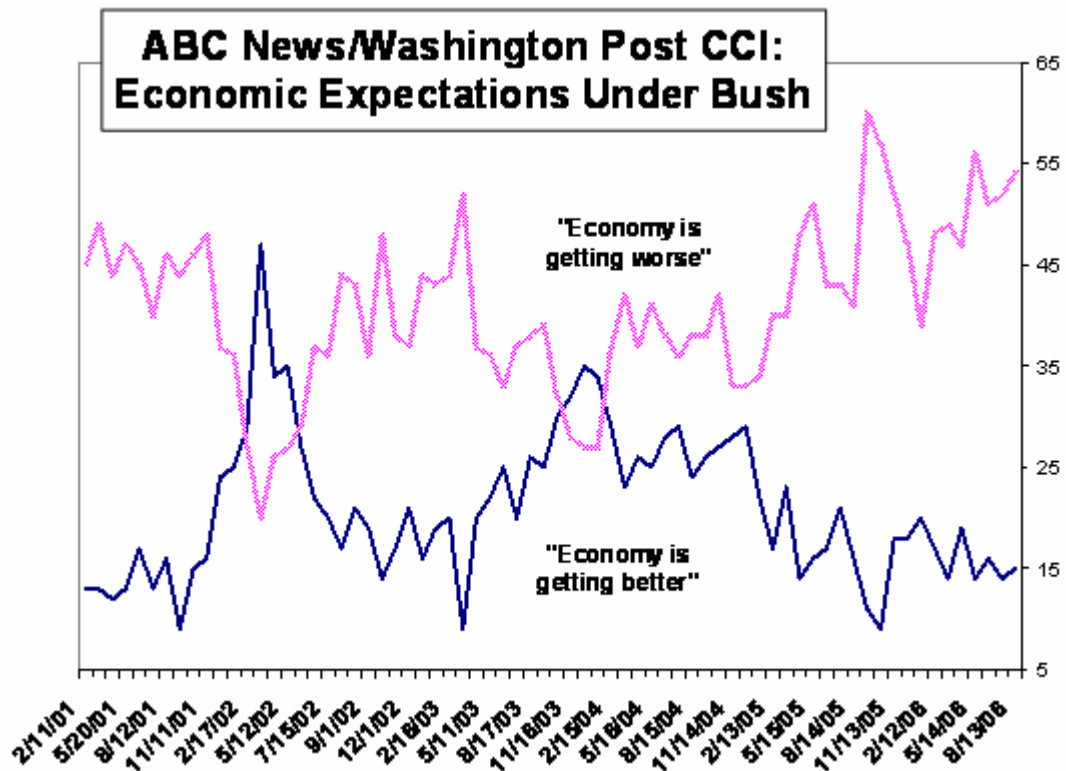
Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Aug. 27	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	37	33	38	40
Buying climate	34	32	36	38

Personal finances	57	57	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-15	-19	-12	-9

DIRECTION – Separately each month the ABC/Post poll measures expectations – whether people think the economy is getting better, worse or holding steady. Since February, about half have said it’s getting worse – 50 percent in this poll, ranging from 47 to 56 percent since Feb. 12. Far fewer say it’s improving – 14 percent now, and a range since midwinter of 14 to 19 percent.

	Economy’s direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
9/17	14%	50	35
8/13	15	54	30
7/16	14	52	34
6/18	16	51	32
5/14	14	56	29
4/16	19	47	33
3/12	14	49	36
2/12	17	48	33

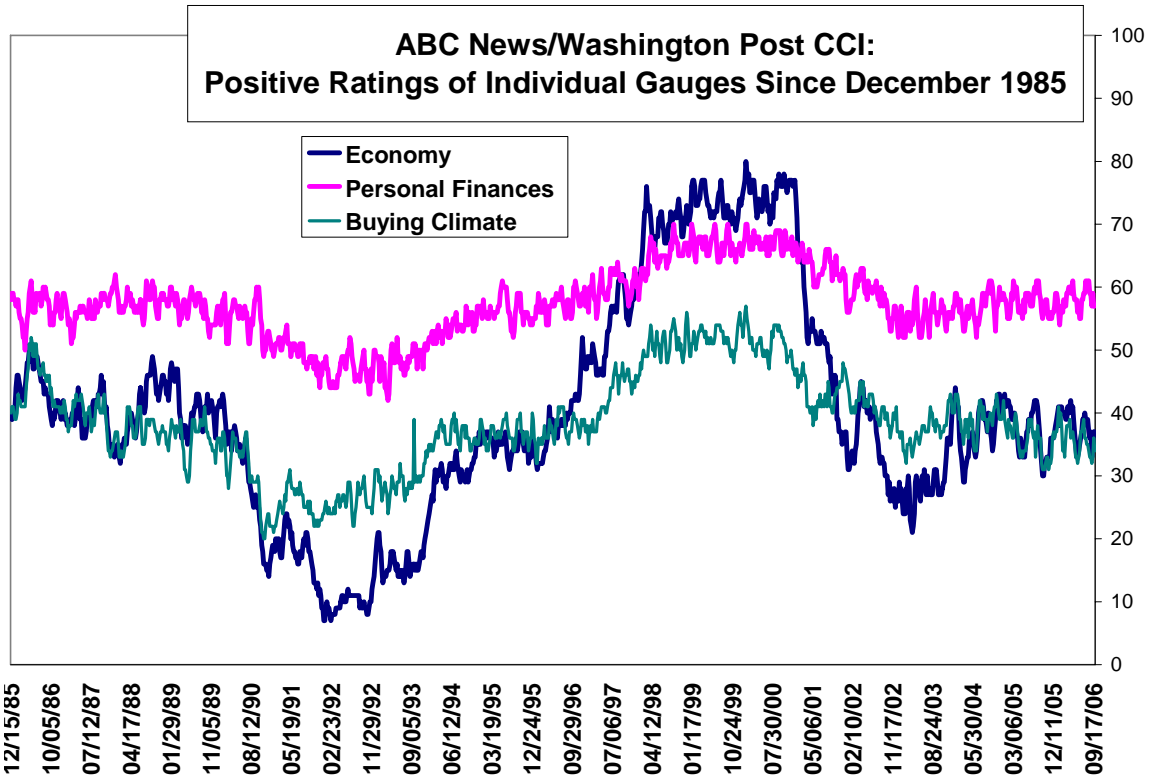
As with the overall index, there’s a vast partisan gap on this question, with independents siding somewhat more with Democrats. Seventy percent of Democrats say the economy’s getting worse, as do 50 percent of independents; only three percent and 12 percent in these groups, respectively, think it’s improving. Among Republicans, by contrast, just 26 percent think the economy’s getting worse, and 29 percent think it’s improving.



	Economy's direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
Democrats	3%	70	24
Independents	12	50	37
Republicans	29	26	44

TREND – The index has ranged this year from a low of -19 in May and again in late August to a high of -7 in March and April. Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992.

	ABC/Post	CCI
This week	-15	
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 -59 among those with the lowest incomes, -2 among college

graduates while -47 among those who haven't finished high school, -11 among whites but -41 among blacks and -6 among men while -23 among women.

The index continues to be best in the West, at -2, compared with -7 in the South, and -28 in the Northeast and Midwest alike.

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, unchanged from 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	41	22
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-seven percent say their own finances are excellent or good, also unchanged. 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	5	52	43	29	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-four 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	34	3	31	66	41	25
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. 17, 2006. The results have a three-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents Sept. 6-17; 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 Gary Langer.

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

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

09/17/06	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	-13	-14	-12	-23	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-26	-26	-26	-26	-40	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	14	14	18	16	10	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-32	-28	-34	-26	-38	-18	-38	-30

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-6	-1	4	-3	-13	7	-13	-2
Women	-23	-25	-30	-20	-31	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-7	-4	-14	-7	-28	1	-28	-10
35 - 44	-15	-8	-6	-12	-13	5	-27	-12
45 - 54	-25	-30	-17	-15	-26	-6	-31	-18
55 - 64	-20	-16	-19	-12	-17	0	-36	-14
65+	-15	-15	-14	-21	-24	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-59	-62	-69	-34	-60	-33	-72	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-54	-58	-51	-54	-60	-28	-65	-47
\$25K To \$39.9K	-21	-14	-3	-19	-29	-3	-44	-25
\$40K To \$49.9K	-16	-28	-20	-25	-24	26	-41	-13
Over \$50K	15	17	8	9	15	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	5	6	-17	-9	9	17	-20	0
\$75K To \$99.9K	21	21	11	9	17	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	25	28	42	31	20	50	18	33
Region:								
Northeast	-28	-23	-26	-16	-22	-3	-41	-19
Midwest	-28	-32	-17	-21	-21	-4	-33	-17
South	-7	-8	-15	-15	-27	-3	-27	-14
West	-2	6	3	5	-16	7	-19	-2
Race:								
White	-11	-9	-9	-8	-17	-1	-18	-8
Black	-41	-46	-47	-36	-51	-27	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	27	33	18	27	13	38	9	26
Democrat	-34	-37	-30	-34	-44	-27	-46	-35
Independent	-22	-20	-20	-21	-22	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-47	-43	-42	-43	-48	-23	-63	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-20	-17	-19	-17	-34	-13	-35	-22
College +	-2	-2	-2	0	-6	12	-9	1
Home:								
Own	-10	-9	-7	-6	-13	2	-17	-6
Rent	-29	-25	-30	-29	-47	-25	-47	-33
Marital Status:								
Single	-15	-10	-24	-13	-27	-4	-32	-17
Married	-6	-5	1	-7	-12	8	-14	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-41	-37	-27	-46	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								

Full-Time	-6	-7	-8	-5	-13	6	-13	-4
Part-Time	-1	-7	-15	-14	-24	-1	-28	-15
Not Employed	-29	-24	-22	-24	-34	-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
9/17/06	14	50	35	1
8/13/06	15	54	30	1
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