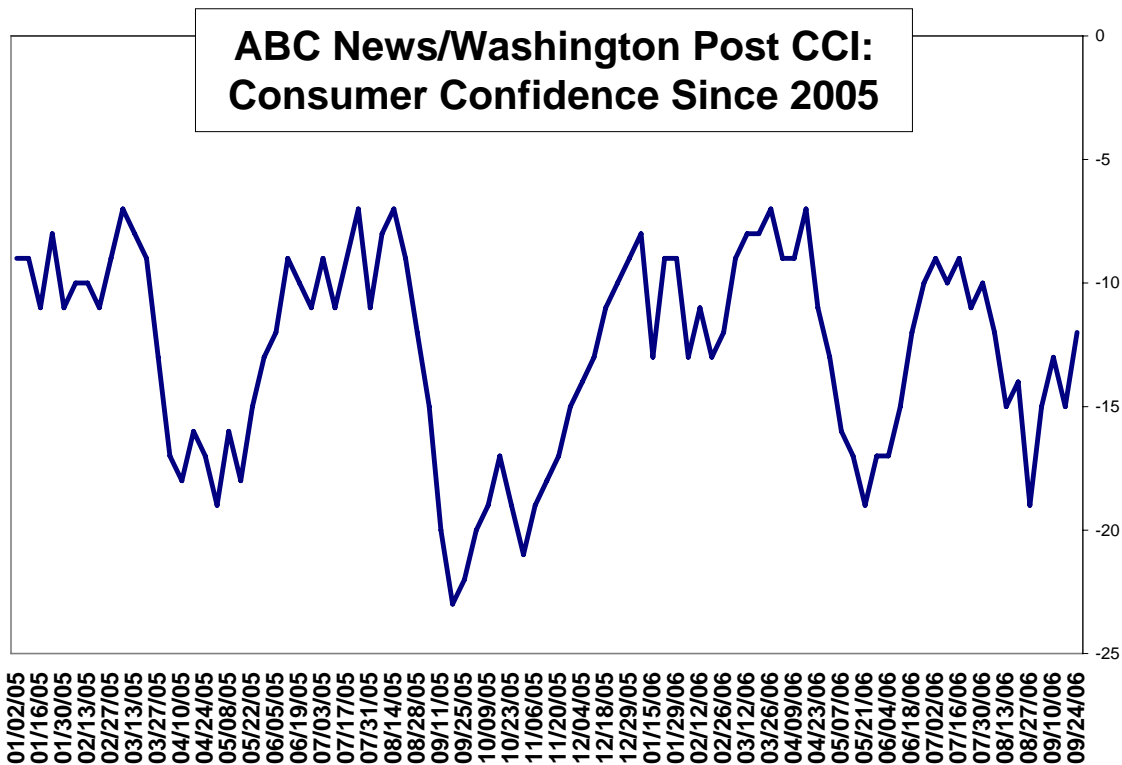


Confidence Improves to Match 2006 Average

Consumer confidence has strengthened to match its 2006 average, fueled by improving ratings of the national economy and the buying climate alike.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -12 on its scale of +100 to -100, up seven points in the last month. The index now matches its average so far this year, but remains below its long-term average, -9 since late 1985.

Rapidly declining gas prices likely are helping. Gas now averages \$2.38 a gallon, down 66 cents since early August. But gasoline isn't the sole factor in views of the economy, and the CCI's been better at other points this year, even when gas was costlier.



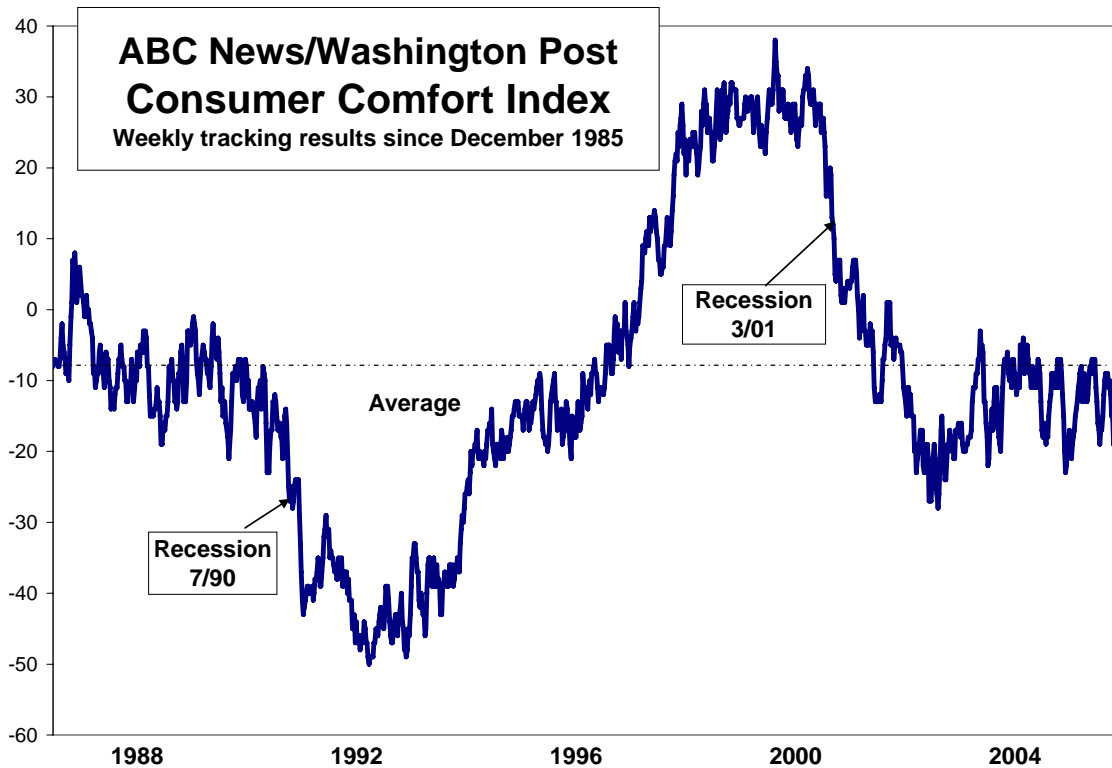
The index is based on Americans' ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 39 percent say the economy's in good shape, up six points in the last month; and 37 percent call it a good time to buy things, up five points since late August.

Positive ratings of personal finances, at 56 percent this week, have held steadier in the last month, but unlike the others were better, 61 percent positive, earlier this summer. All are within a point of their long-term averages since this weekly poll began.

ABC News/Washington Post CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Aug. 27	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	39	33	38	40
Buying climate	37	32	36	38
Personal finances	56	57	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-12	-19	-12	-9

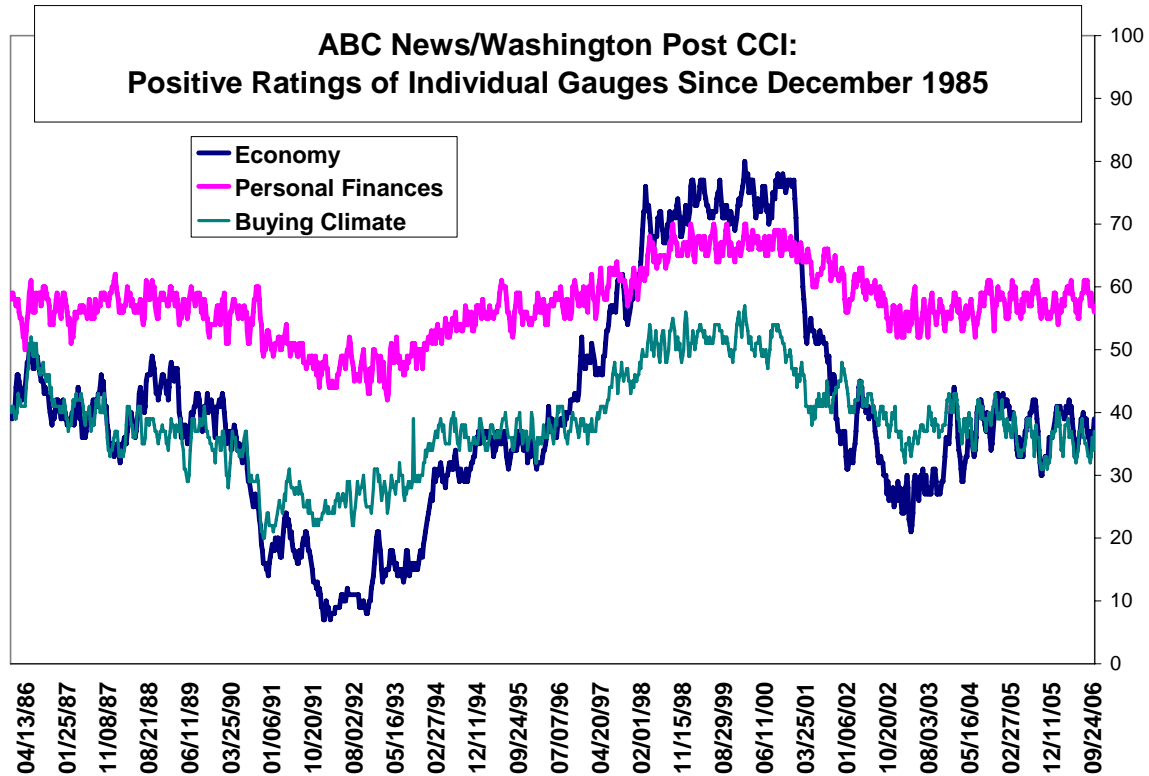
TREND – The index has ranged this year from a high of -7 in March and April to a low of -19 in May and late August. Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992.

ABC/Post CCI	
This week	-12
Last 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 +33 among higher-income Americans while -62 among those with the lowest incomes, +5 among college graduates while -46 among those who haven't finished high school, -8 among whites but -39 among blacks and -2 among men while -20 among women.

The CCI's greatest recent gains have been in the South, and it's much better both in the South (-1) and West (-2) than in the Northeast or Midwest (both -26).



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 37 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	4	35	61	38	23
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-six 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
56	6	50	44	44	16
57	5	52	43	43	15

This week	56	6	50	44	30	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-seven percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 34 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	37	3	34	63	41	22
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. 24, 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.

09/24/06	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	-12	-15	-19	-10	-22	-7	-22	-13
State of Economy	-22	-26	-34	-22	-40	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	12	14	14	16	12	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-26	-32	-36	-24	-38	-18	-38	-30

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-2	-6	-3	-3	-11	7	-12	-2
Women	-20	-23	-32	-16	-32	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-2	-7	-24	-3	-22	1	-24	-9
35 - 44	-16	-15	-7	-19	-12	5	-27	-12
45 - 54	-20	-25	-18	-7	-31	-6	-31	-18
55 - 64	-13	-20	-25	-8	-20	0	-36	-14
65+	-16	-15	-13	-18	-24	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-62	-59	-66	-40	-62	-33	-72	-55

\$15K To \$24.9K	-45	-54	-62	-49	-65	-28	-65	-46
\$25K To \$39.9K	-19	-21	-19	-22	-33	-3	-44	-25
\$40K To \$49.9K	-3	-16	-23	-25	-16	26	-41	-13
Over \$50K	16	15	7	12	12	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	2	5	-11	0	6	17	-20	0
\$75K To \$99.9K	17	21	8	13	13	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	33	25	31	28	18	50	18	34
Region:								
Northeast	-26	-28	-30	-18	-20	-3	-41	-19
Midwest	-26	-28	-26	-11	-20	-4	-33	-17
South	-1	-7	-17	-15	-25	-1	-25	-14
West	-2	-2	-1	6	-19	7	-19	-2
Race:								
White	-8	-11	-12	-6	-17	-1	-18	-8
Black	-39	-41	-54	-30	-47	-27	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	24	27	23	23	9	38	9	26
Democrat	-31	-34	-35	-30	-44	-27	-46	-35
Independent	-19	-22	-25	-16	-19	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-46	-47	-33	-41	-45	-23	-63	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-21	-20	-25	-18	-35	-13	-35	-21
College +	5	-2	-9	5	-7	12	-9	1
Home:								
Own	-6	-10	-12	-5	-16	2	-17	-6
Rent	-29	-29	-34	-26	-39	-25	-44	-33
Marital Status:								
Single	-12	-15	-32	-10	-18	-4	-32	-17
Married	0	-6	-4	-3	-14	8	-14	-3
Sep/Wid/Div	-42	-38	-36	-29	-49	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-2	-6	-12	-3	-9	6	-12	-3
Part-Time	-6	-1	-23	-8	-22	-1	-28	-14
Not Employed	-26	-29	-24	-23	-39	-15	-43	-24

END