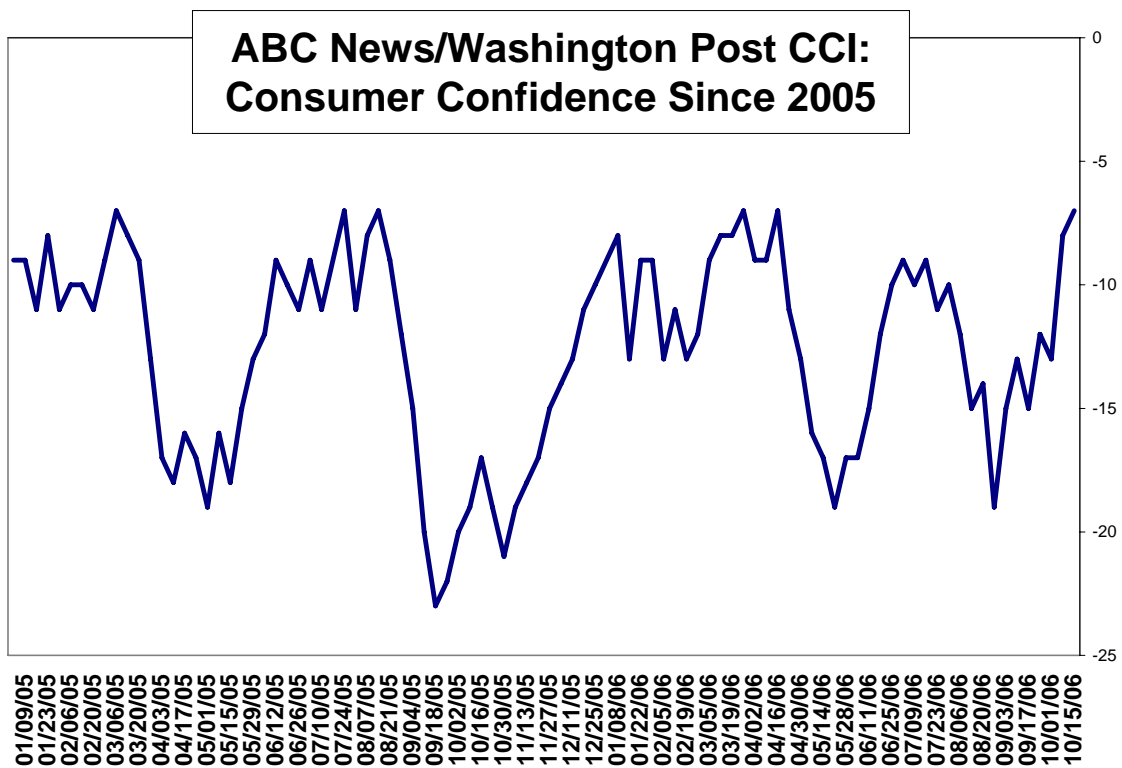


Confidence Matches '06 High; Pessimism Ticks Lower

Consumer confidence now matches its best level of the year, aided by factors such as 10 consecutive weeks of reduced gas prices and a strong stock market. And expectations are less bleak as well: Economic pessimists are now at their fewest in 10 months.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -7 on its scale of +100 to -100, up eight points in a month to tie its 2006 best, last seen in the spring. It's now five points above its average for 2006 and 12 points above its low for the year, fewer than two months ago.

Looking ahead, 45 percent of Americans say the economy's getting worse – a substantial number, but the fewest since January and down from 54 percent in mid-August.



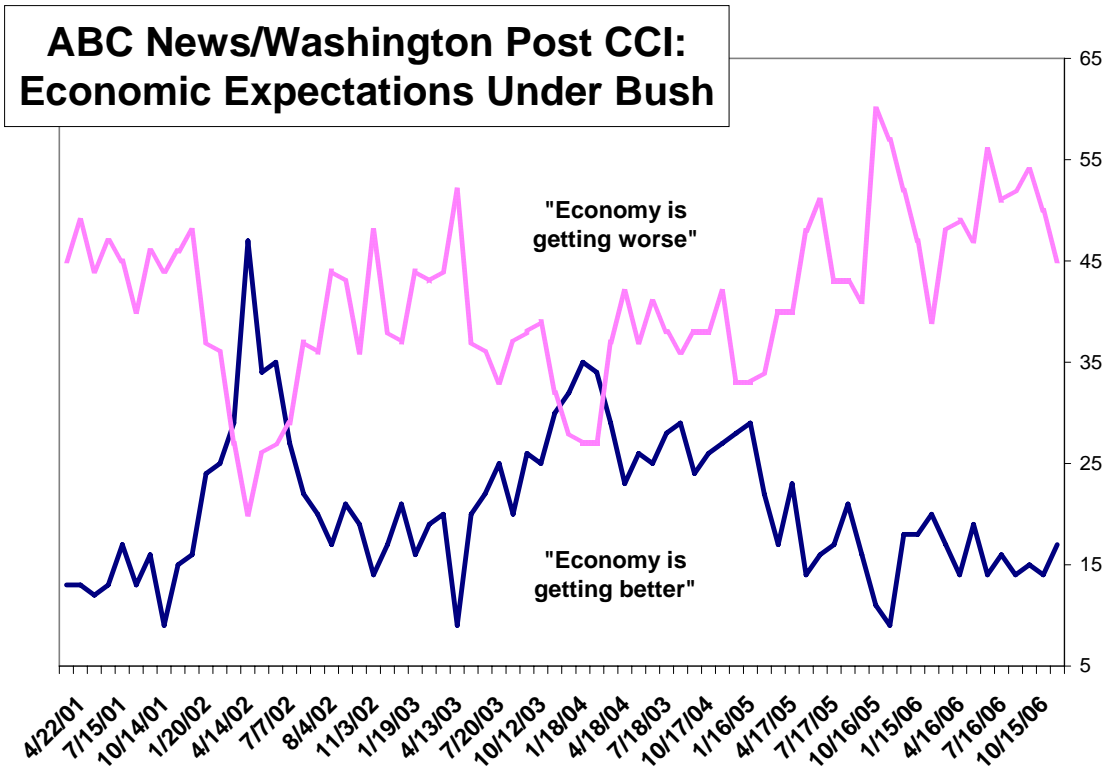
The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. Forty-three percent say the economy's in good shape, the most since December 2004 and five points above its average for the year. Thirty-

seven percent call it a good time to buy things, about average. As usual, many more, 59 percent, rate their own finances positively.

ABC News/Washington Post CCI				
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	43	42	38	40
Buying climate	37	37	36	38
Personal finances	59	59	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-7	-8	-12	-9

DIRECTION – Separately each month the ABC/Post poll measures expectations – whether people think the economy is getting better, worse or holding steady. As noted, 45 percent say it's worsening, down from 50 percent last month and 54 percent in August.

Still, that's higher than average – 39 percent have been pessimistic on average in polls dating back 25 years. And far fewer – just 17 percent – say the economy's improving.



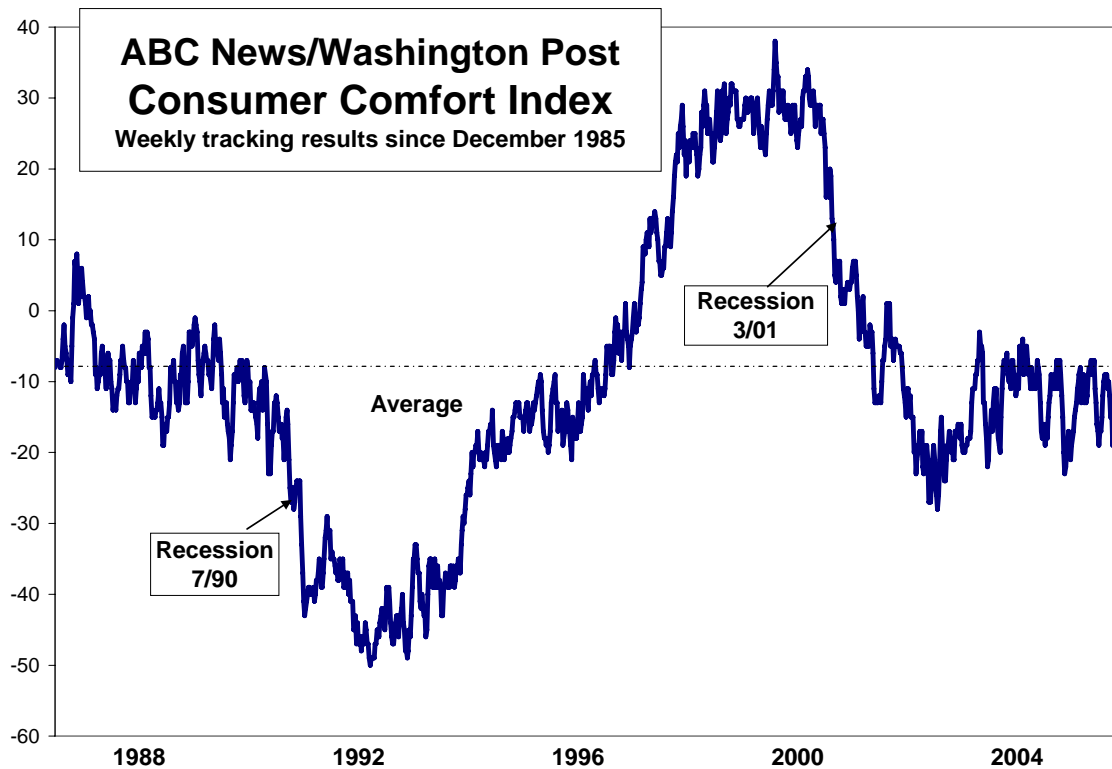
	Economy's direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
10/15	17%	45	36
9/17	14	50	35
8/13	15	54	30
7/16	14	52	34
6/18	16	51	32
5/14	14	56	29
4/16	19	47	33

3/12	14	49	36
2/12	17	48	33
1/15	20	39	38

Six in 10 Democrats say the economy's getting worse, compared with just 15 percent of Republicans. But, critically in an election year, independents agree more with the Democrats – 53 percent of them say the economy's getting worse.

	Economy's direction		
	Better	Worse	Same
Democrats	7%	60	32
Independents	11	53	33
Republicans	39	15	43

TREND – The CCI is up 12 points since the end of August, when it bottomed out at -19, and now matches its best this year, reached previously in March and April. Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992. It's averaged -12 so far this year and -9 since December 1985.

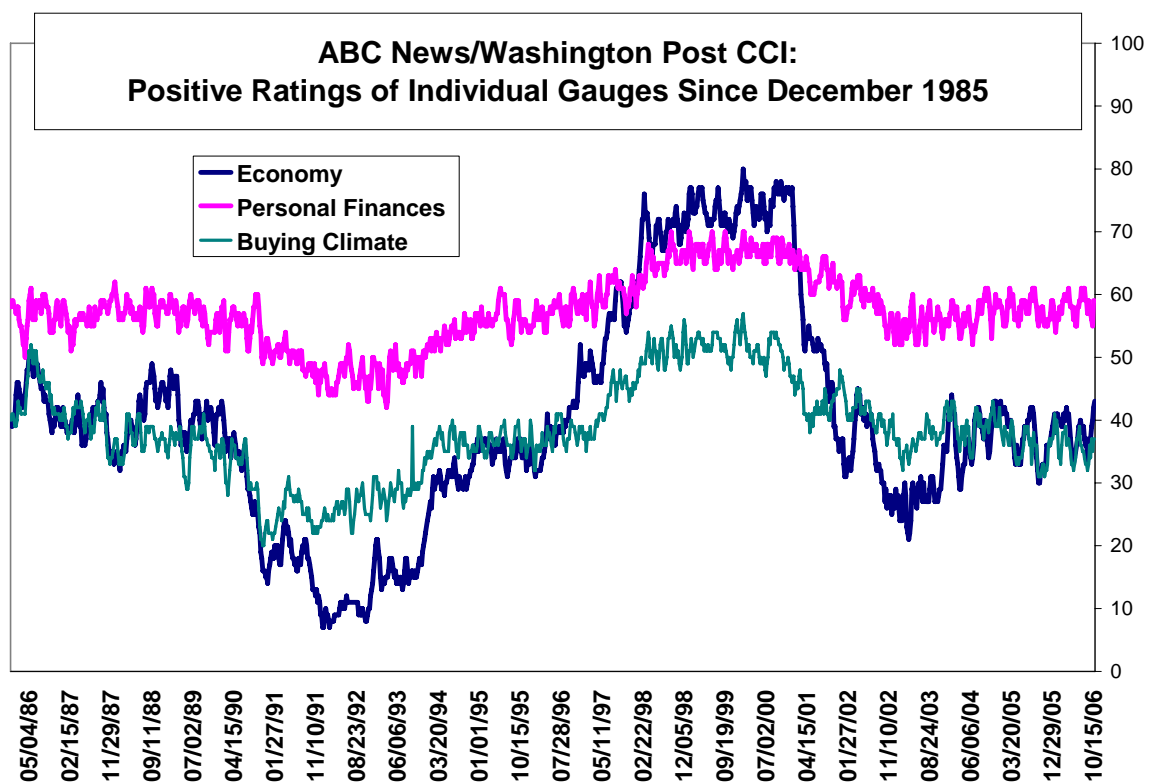


	ABC/Post CCI	
This week	-7	
Last week	-8	
Two weeks ago	-13	
2006 high	-7	April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19	Aug. 27, May 21

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 +46 among higher-income Americans while -60 among those with the lowest incomes, +4 among college graduates while -28 among those who haven't finished high school, -3 among whites but -34 among blacks and +10 among men while -24 among women.

The index is better in the South (+1) and West (-2) than it is in the Midwest (-13) and Northeast (-23). And three weeks before Election Day, a strong political element continues, with Republicans far more positive about the economy (a CCI of +35) than either independents (-19) or Democrats (-27).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-three percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 42 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	43	5	38	57	39	18
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	9	50	41	28	13
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, also 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	37	3	34	63	44	19
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 Oct. 15, 2006. The results have a three-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents Oct. 4-15; 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 Dalia Sussman.

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

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

10/15/06	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	-7	-8	-15	-9	-17	-7	-21	-13
State of Economy	-14	-16	-26	-22	-34	-14	-34	-24
Personal Finances	18	18	14	22	16	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-26	-26	-32	-28	-34	-18	-38	-29
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	OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS							
Sex:								
Men	10	4	-6	2	-4	10	-12	-1

Women	-24	-20	-23	-20	-29	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-1	-5	-7	-6	-5	1	-24	-8
35 - 44	-13	-11	-15	-12	-24	5	-27	-12
45 - 54	-14	-9	-25	-16	-21	-6	-30	-17
55 - 64	-3	-1	-20	-16	-28	0	-36	-13
65+	-12	-15	-15	-1	-19	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-60	-57	-59	-53	-54	-33	-72	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-22	-29	-54	-47	-58	-22	-62	-44
\$25K To \$39.9K	-10	-10	-21	-16	-28	-3	-44	-24
\$40K To \$49.9K	12	15	-16	5	-12	26	-41	-11
Over \$50K	22	19	15	12	15	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	6	6	5	-10	0	17	-20	0
\$75K To \$99.9K	13	11	21	18	15	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	46	41	25	28	30	50	24	35
Region:								
Northeast	-23	-22	-28	-10	-41	-3	-41	-19
Midwest	-13	-16	-28	-7	-20	-4	-33	-17
South	1	-3	-7	-19	-14	1	-19	-13
West	-2	3	-2	4	0	7	-16	-1
Race:								
White	-3	-4	-11	-5	-16	-1	-18	-8
Black	-34	-36	-41	-33	-36	-27	-57	-42
Politics:								
Republican	35	31	27	27	9	38	9	27
Democrat	-27	-22	-34	-28	-33	-22	-46	-34
Independent	-19	-23	-22	-18	-22	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-28	-25	-47	-41	-41	-23	-63	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-16	-20	-20	-19	-26	-13	-31	-21
College +	4	5	-2	5	-4	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	-2	-2	-10	-2	-12	2	-17	-5
Rent	-20	-23	-29	-33	-31	-20	-44	-32
Marital Status:								
Single	-15	-22	-15	-4	-15	-4	-32	-17
Married	3	7	-6	-3	-9	8	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-27	-26	-38	-36	-38	-22	-49	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	5	5	-6	-3	-3	6	-12	-3
Part-Time	-29	-19	-1	-13	-24	-1	-29	-14
Not Employed	-20	-22	-29	-17	-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
10/15/06	17	45	36	3
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.

END