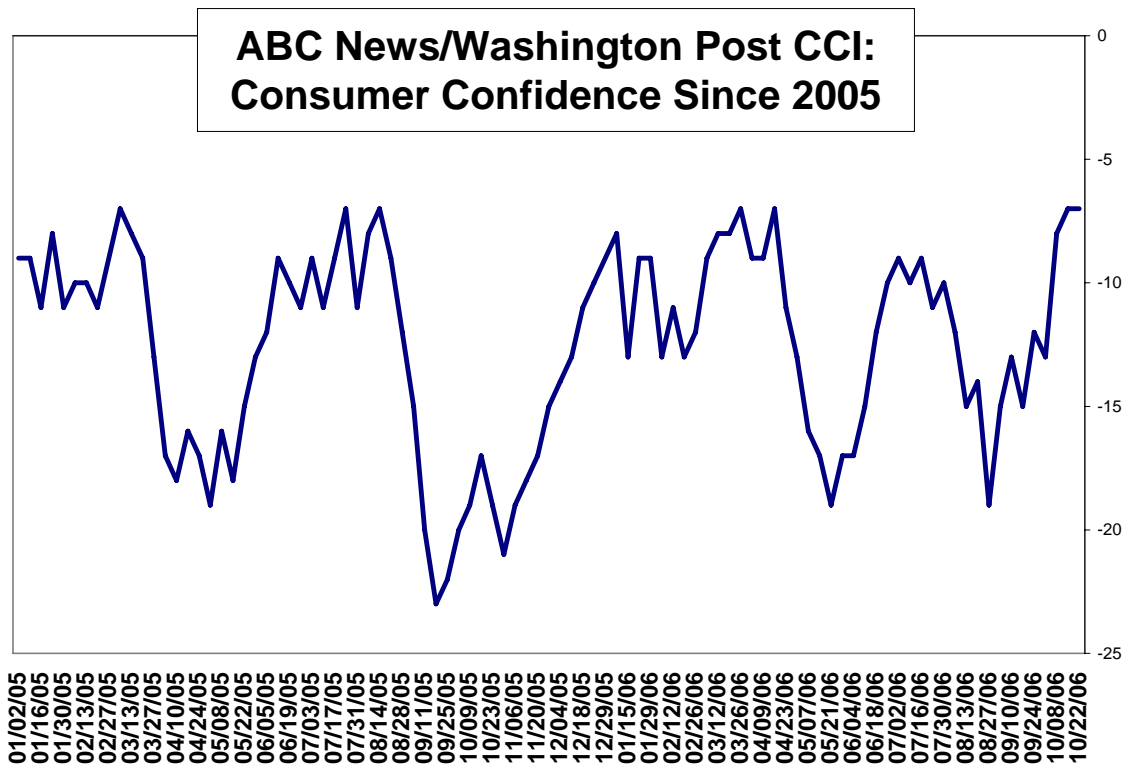


Confidence Holds at '06 High

Consumer confidence is steady at its best of the year, holding well above its 2006 low reached less than two months ago.

The latest ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -7 on its scale of +100 to -100, unchanged from last week to match its best of the year. The index is up eight points since mid-September, and 12 points since matching its worst level of the year on Aug. 27. Gas prices have dropped 64 cents in that time.

Two weeks before Election Day, that should be good news for the Republicans. But a separate ABC/Post poll released this week found that the economy was not bringing Republicans much in the way of votes. The economy trails Iraq as the top voting issue, and even those who do call the economy the most important issue in their vote broadly favor the Democratic candidate in their district.



One reason the economy doesn't have more clout is because the gains are not evenly spread. In the separate ABC/Post poll, 24 percent say they're getting ahead financially, but as many, 23 percent, say they're falling behind, and most, 52 percent, are simply

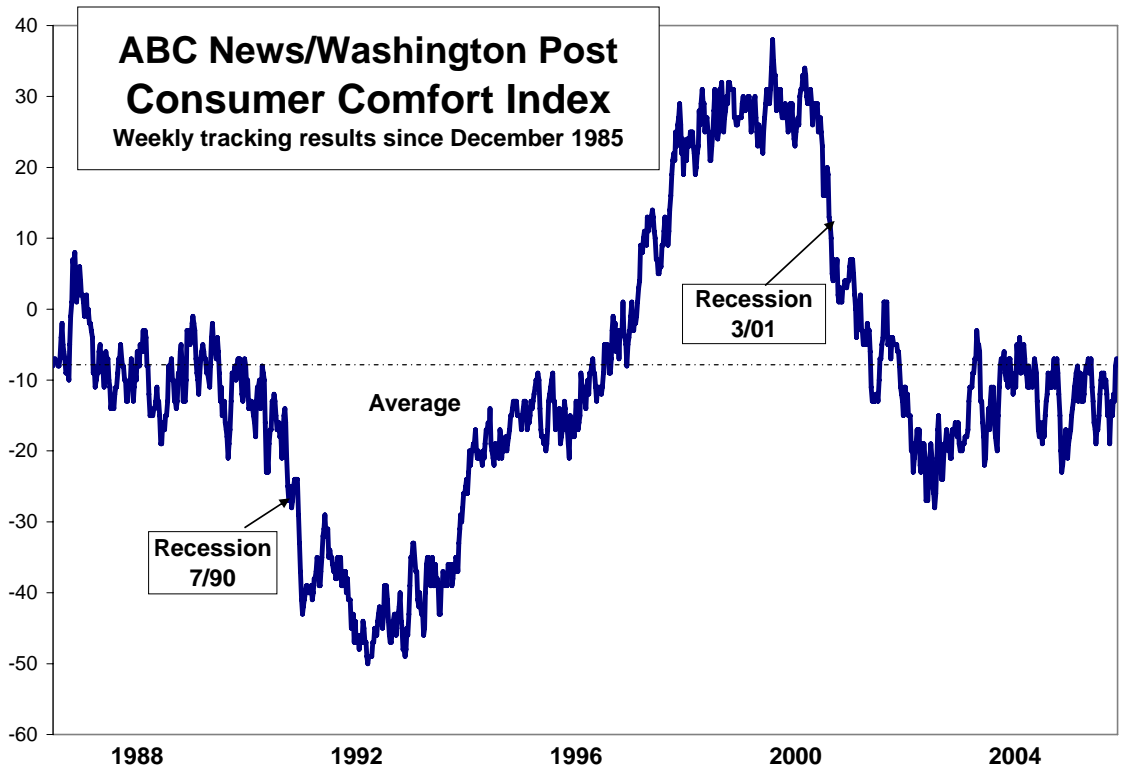
maintaining their standard of living, not improving it. Both those falling behind and those in the big middle group favor the Democrat in their district.

Moreover, among independents – the quintessential swing voters – the CCI is just -19, near its level among Democrats, -25. It's a much higher +33 among Republicans.

INDEX – The CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. Forty-two percent rate the economy positively, compared with an average 38 percent this year and 40 percent overall. Thirty-eight percent call it a good time to buy things, matching the long-term average. And 60 percent say their own finances are in good shape, compared with an average 58 percent this year and 57 percent in polls since 1985.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	42	43	38	40
Buying climate	38	37	36	38
Personal finances	60	59	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-7	-7	-12	-9

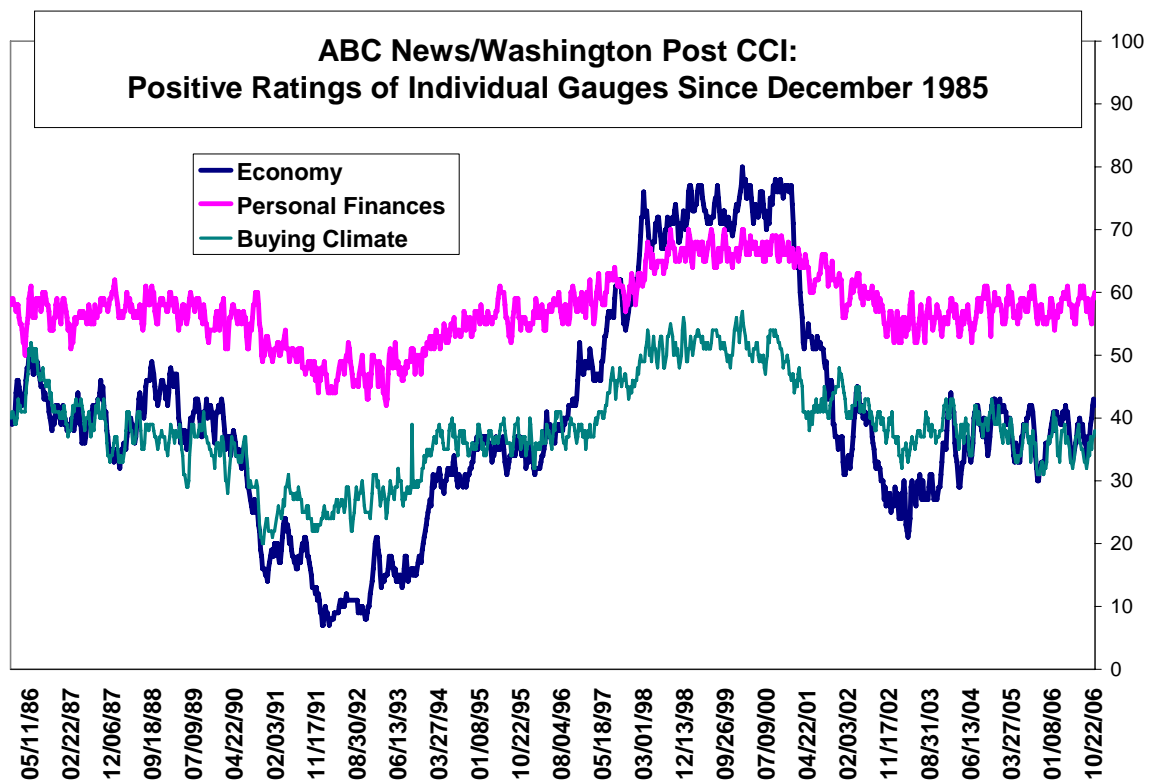
TREND – The CCI has been this high only three other times this year – last week, once in April and once in March. It's been as low as -19 in August and in May. Its all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its record low, -50 in February 1992. It's averaged -12 so far this year and -9 since December 1985.



	ABC/Post	CCI
This week	-7	
Last week	-7	
Three weeks ago	-13	
2006 high	-7	Oct. 15 and 22, 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 -52 among those with the lowest incomes, +5 among college graduates while -31 among those who haven't finished high school, -2 among whites but -42 among blacks and +10 among men while -23 among women.

The index is lower in the Northeast (-23) than it is in the South (0), West (-3) or Midwest (-9).



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-two percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 43 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	42	4	38	58	41	17
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 59 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	60	7	53	40	27	13
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-eight percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 37 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	38	2	36	62	41	21
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. 22, 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.

10/22/06	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	-7	-12	-11	-19	-7	-21	-12
State of Economy	-16	-14	-22	-24	-34	-14	-34	-24
Personal Finances	20	18	12	20	12	22	8	16

Buying Climate	-24	-26	-26	-30	-34	-18	-38	-29
----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	10	10	-2	2	-2	10	-12	-1
Women	-23	-24	-20	-22	-33	-11	-36	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	1	-1	-2	-8	-11	1	-24	-8
35 - 44	-16	-13	-16	-7	-26	5	-27	-12
45 - 54	-18	-14	-20	-20	-16	-6	-30	-17
55 - 64	3	-3	-13	-19	-25	3	-36	-12
65+	-8	-12	-16	-5	-19	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-52	-60	-62	-58	-49	-33	-72	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-30	-22	-45	-48	-58	-22	-62	-44
\$25K To \$39.9K	-8	-10	-19	-11	-34	-3	-44	-24
\$40K To \$49.9K	3	12	-3	-3	-20	26	-41	-11
Over \$50K	21	22	16	12	14	26	4	16
\$50K To \$74.9K	2	6	2	-15	-1	17	-20	0
\$75K To \$99.9K	14	13	17	22	5	31	-1	17
Over \$100K	46	46	33	27	37	50	24	35
Region:								
Northeast	-23	-23	-26	-3	-38	-3	-38	-19
Midwest	-9	-13	-26	-22	-24	-4	-33	-17
South	0	1	-1	-15	-18	1	-19	-13
West	-3	-2	-2	2	5	7	-16	-1
Race:								
White	-2	-3	-8	-7	-16	-1	-18	-7
Black	-42	-34	-39	-40	-42	-27	-57	-42
Politics:								
Republican	33	35	24	25	10	38	9	28
Democrat	-25	-27	-31	-30	-36	-22	-46	-34
Independent	-19	-19	-19	-19	-24	-10	-31	-20
Education:								
< High School	-31	-28	-46	-46	-37	-23	-63	-43
High Sch. Grad.	-15	-16	-21	-18	-26	-13	-31	-20
College +	5	4	5	4	-6	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	-3	-2	-6	-2	-12	2	-17	-5
Rent	-18	-20	-29	-34	-36	-18	-44	-32
Marital Status:								
Single	-13	-15	-12	-9	-22	-4	-32	-17
Married	4	3	0	-1	-8	8	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-28	-27	-42	-38	-37	-22	-49	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	8	5	-2	-4	-7	8	-12	-3
Part-Time	-25	-29	-6	-9	-20	-1	-29	-14
Not Employed	-24	-20	-26	-20	-32	-15	-43	-24

END