

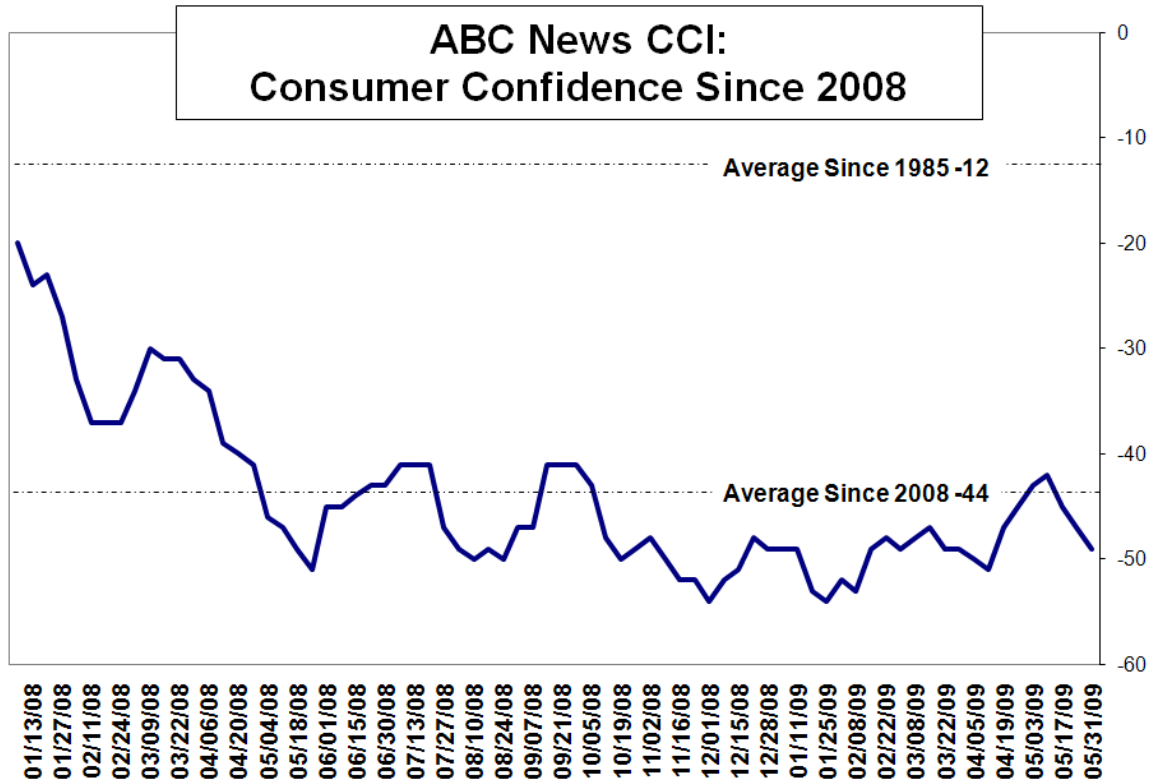
## Confidence Runs Out of Gas in May

Rising gasoline prices have cut short an advance in public ratings of the current economy, pushing consumer confidence back near its record low in nearly a generation.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index has dropped 7 points below its mid-May high. No wonder: The average price of a gallon of unleaded gasoline has gained 48 cents since the end of April. Rising gas prices historically have depressed consumer views.

The CCI now stands at -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, worsening in the last three weeks after hitting -42 on May 10, its best of the year. The index now matches its 2009 average and is just 5 points from its record low in 23 years of weekly polls, -54 on Jan. 25.

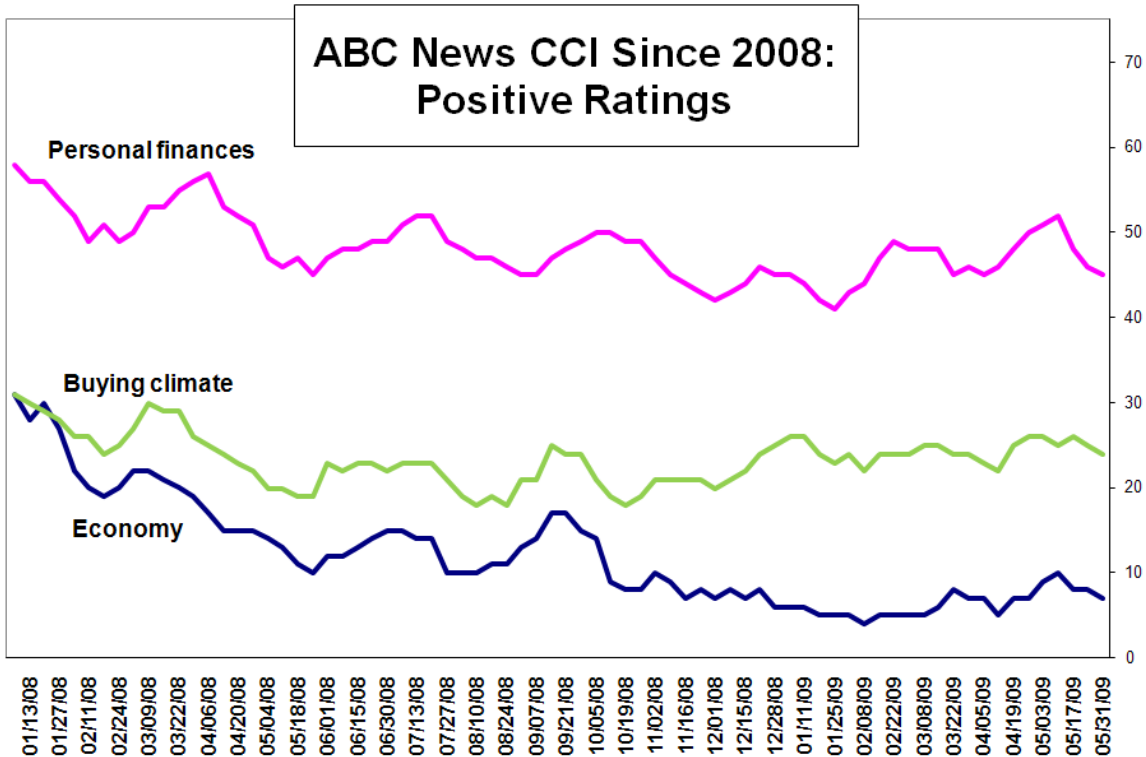
The index is based on Americans' views of current economic conditions. Expectations for the future, which ABC measures separately, improved last month to their best in five years. Current sentiment, though, is the measure more firmly rooted in today's reality.



INDEX – The CCI’s changes stem mostly from ratings of personal finances, which have swung from 45 percent positive in early April to 52 percent May 10, then back to 45 percent now – 12 points below their long-term average.

Positive ratings of the other two other elements of the CCI – the national economy and the buying climate – are steadier, and as usual, much lower. Twenty-four percent say it’s a good time to buy things, stuck in a tight 2-point range the last seven weeks, 13 points below average and just 6 points above the record low in October and August.

In the worst of the three measures, only 7 percent rate the economy positively, in single digits for 32 of the last 34 weeks and 31 points below the long-term average.

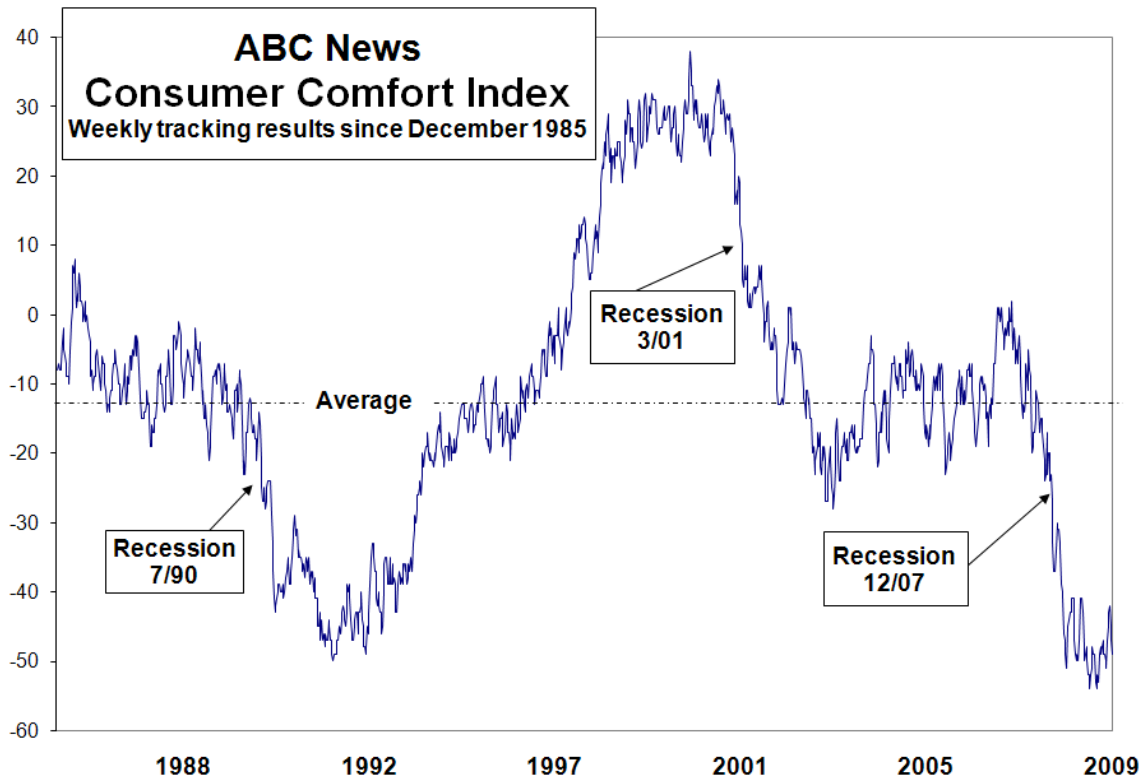


Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI		Averages	
	This week	Last week	2009	'85-'09
National economy	7%	8	6	38
Buying climate	24	25	24	37
Personal finances	45	46	46	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-47	-49	-12

TREND – The CCI advanced, in fits and starts, from a recent low of -51 in mid-April to its mid-May level, then took its sharpest three-week decline since October.

That extends a rough ride for confidence this year. The index's 2009 average so far, -49, is 37 points below its long-term average and 7 points below its 2008 average – itself the second worst on record, after 1992's -44.

The CCI has been below -40 for a record 58 weeks and hasn't seen positive territory for over two years. It's far below its record high, +38 in January 2000.



	ABC News	CCI
This week	-49	
Last week	-47	
2009 high	-42	May 10
2009 low	-54	Jan. 25, record low
2009 average	-49	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Average since 12/85	-12	

**GROUPS** – The index is higher as usual among better-off Americans, but still negative across the board for the 14<sup>th</sup> straight week – all but two weeks this year. It's -11 among those with the highest incomes but -80 among those with the lowest (the worst since February), -37 among those who've attended college vs. -58 among high school dropouts, -43 among men while -53 among women, -45 among homeowners compared with -56 among renters and -48 among whites (2 points from the low) vs. -56 among blacks.

Partisan differences remain, with the index at -35 among Republicans vs. -54 among Democrats and -52 among independents. That 19-point Republican-Democratic gap is smaller than last year's average difference, 41 points, and the long-term difference in data since 1990, 33 points.

In the past three weeks the index has dropped most sharply in the West, among men and independents.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Seven percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 8 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 4 percent Feb. 8.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	7	1	6	93	44	49
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	40	22

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Forty-five percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 46 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 41 percent Jan. 25.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	45	5	40	55	38	17
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Twenty-four percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 25 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 18 percent Oct. 19, Aug. 10 and Aug. 24, 2008.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	24	3	21	76	45	31
Avg. since 12/85	37	3	35	63	41	21

**METHODOLOGY** – Interviews for the ABC News 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 May 31, 2009. The results have a 3-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 Peyton M. Craighill.

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

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

05/31/09	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
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Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-49	-47	-43	-49	-45	-41	-54	-48
State of Economy	-86	-84	-82	-90	-76	-66	-92	-82
Personal Finances	-10	-8	2	-4	-6	4	-18	-6
Buying Climate	-52	-50	-48	-52	-54	-48	-64	-55
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-43	-37	-32	-45	-43	-28	-49	-42
Women	-53	-57	-52	-51	-48	-39	-59	-52
Age:								
18 - 34	-50	-39	-34	-45	-47	-32	-60	-46
35 - 44	-47	-51	-39	-46	-37	-27	-62	-46
45 - 54	-42	-52	-49	-49	-45	-31	-61	-49
55 - 64	-65	-63	-48	-54	-55	-40	-65	-51
65+	-40	-40	-49	-52	-44	-31	-56	-46
Income:								
Under \$15K	-80	-77	-67	-72	-85	-51	-85	-74
\$15K To \$24.9K	-71	-49	-49	-74	-70	-41	-83	-67
\$25K To \$39.9K	-56	-58	-61	-57	-58	-47	-71	-60
\$40K To \$49.9K	-64	-66	-43	-58	-42	-16	-68	-48
Over \$50K	-28	-31	-22	-30	-28	-17	-41	-28
\$50K To \$74.9K	-35	-41	-30	-46	-39	-24	-54	-40
\$75K To \$99.9K	-35	-37	-22	-33	-34	-14	-52	-31
Over \$100K	-11	-15	-14	-7	-13	5	-34	-13
Region:								
Northeast	-61	-56	-51	-62	-61	-42	-62	-53
Midwest	-49	-45	-53	-45	-42	-31	-58	-47
South	-45	-49	-44	-44	-40	-39	-59	-48
West	-43	-38	-23	-47	-46	-19	-56	-41
Race:								
White	-48	-45	-42	-48	-43	-35	-50	-44
Black	-56	-59	-48	-57	-61	-46	-81	-63
Politics:								
Republican	-35	-34	-35	-34	-11	-10	-42	-27
Democrat	-54	-56	-44	-57	-62	-43	-70	-59
Independent	-52	-47	-44	-48	-51	-39	-55	-48
Education:								
< High School	-58	-54	-67	-59	-50	-50	-77	-64
High Sch. Grad.	-65	-61	-51	-49	-52	-38	-65	-52
College +	-37	-38	-32	-46	-40	-30	-50	-40
Home:								
Own	-45	-46	-40	-45	-38	-35	-49	-42
Rent	-56	-50	-49	-56	-63	-48	-80	-61

Marital Status:								
Single	-52	-46	-42	-48	-44	-34	-69	-51
Married	-44	-40	-33	-44	-41	-26	-46	-39
Sep/Wid/Div	-55	-65	-63	-61	-61	-52	-70	-63
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-39	-37	-36	-39	-40	-29	-47	-38
Part-Time	-49	-44	-42	-40	-51	-30	-66	-48
Not Employed	-58	-58	-50	-60	-50	-47	-66	-56

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