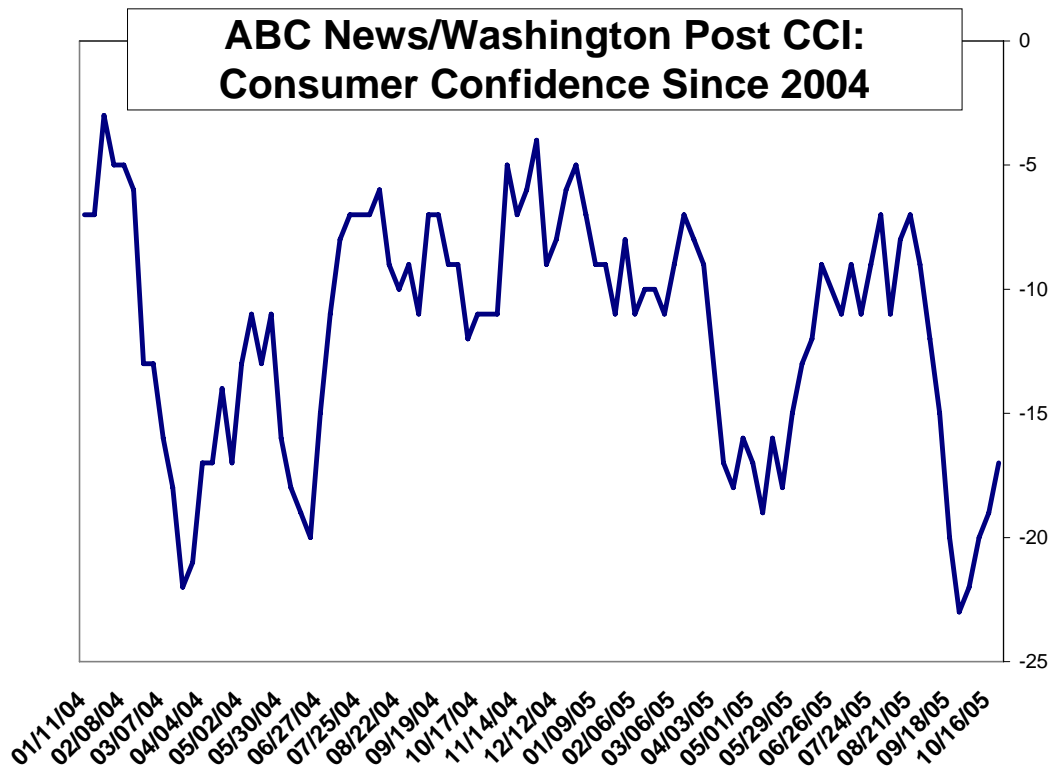


Confidence is Edging Up, But Outlook Remains Bleak

Overall consumer confidence is up from its post-hurricane lows, apparently benefiting from easing gasoline prices. But optimism about the economy's future has hit a two-year low, while pessimism remains at levels unseen in 13 years.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index now stands at -17 on its scale of +100 to -100, up from -23 a month ago in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent spike in gas prices. A gallon of unleaded regular has dropped by 34 cents from its Sept. 5 peak, including 12 cents in the last week alone.

While a bit better, the index is still off its annual and long-term averages. And ominously, just nine percent of Americans express positive expectations for the future economy, the fewest since the pre-war jitters of March 2003. Far more, 57 percent, think the economy's getting worse, well above the 24-year average of 38 percent.

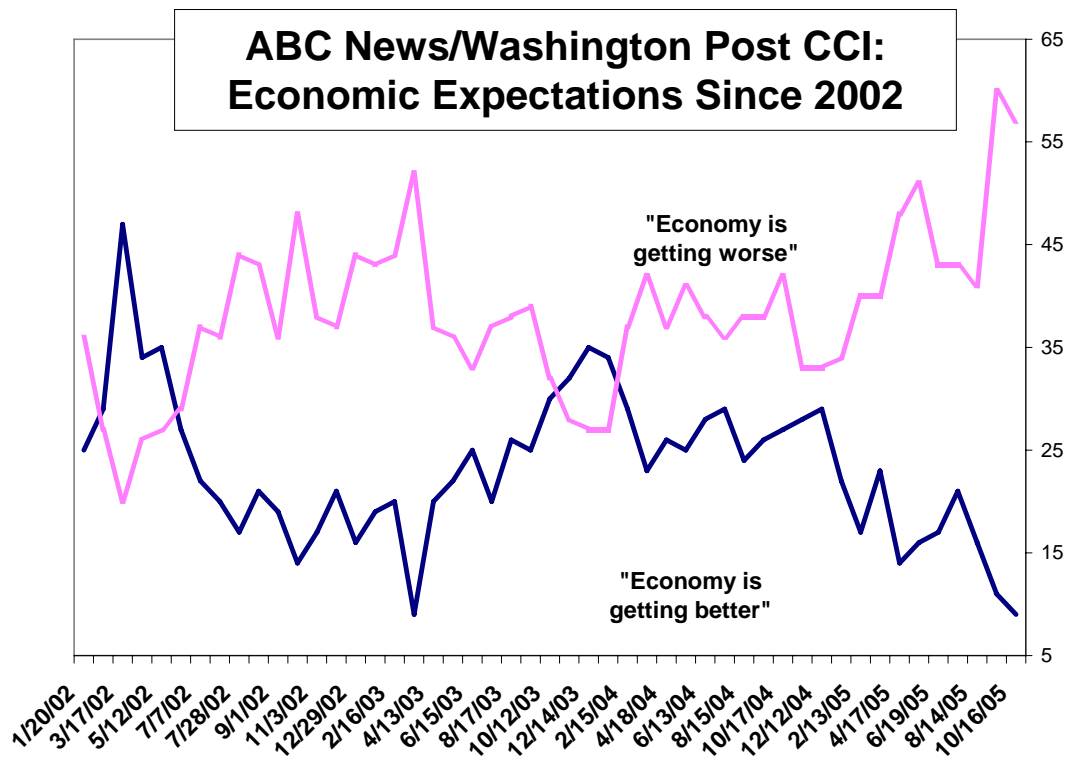


EXPECTATIONS – This survey measures economic expectations separately from the views of current economic conditions included in the Consumer Comfort Index, because

they sometimes move in different directions. Expectations took a very sharp hit last month: Sixty percent of Americans said the economy was getting worse, up a huge 19 points from August to the most since December 1991.

Little has happened subsequently to change that view: About as many, 57 percent, still express pessimism about the economy, now the most since September 1992.

	Economy is:		
	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same
Now	9%	57	32
Mid-September	11	60	27
Mid-August	16	41	40
Avg. since 1981	21	38	40

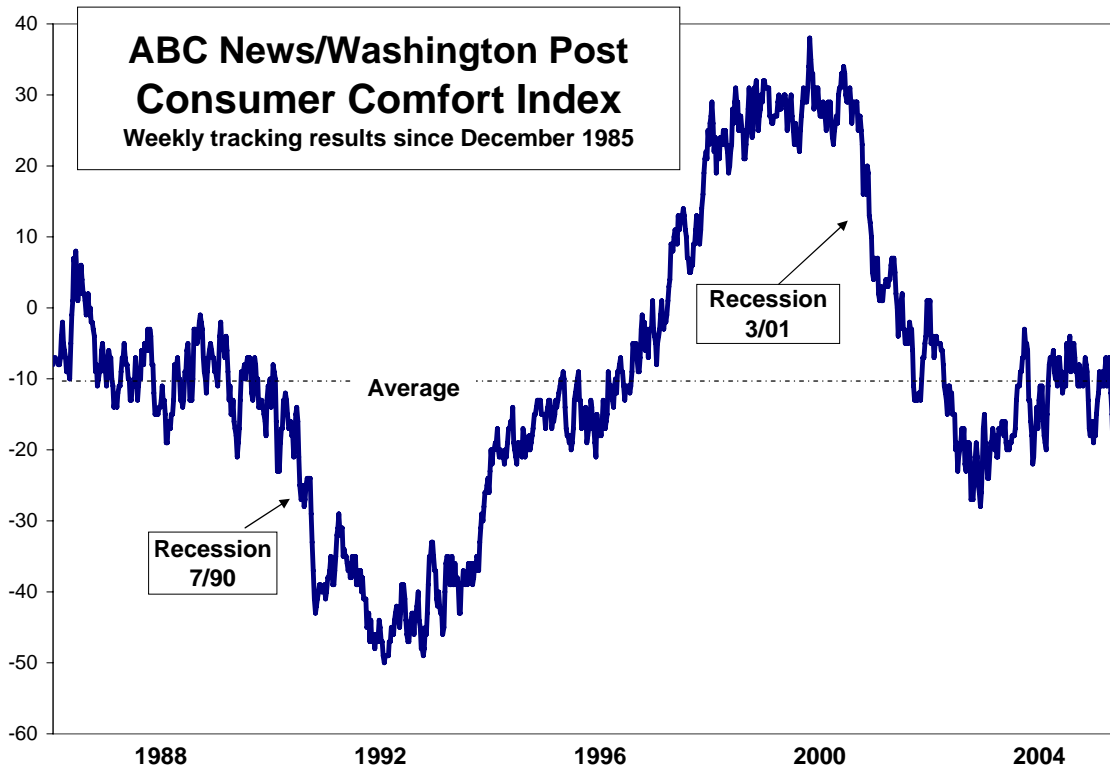


INDEX – The weekly ABC/Post CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 33 percent both rate the economy positively and call it a good time to buy things, respectively seven and six points off their long-term averages in weekly polls since late 1985.

It’s personal finances that are keeping the ship afloat: Fifty-eight percent say their own finances are in good shape, about the average, 57 percent, in weekly polls since 1985.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Last week	2005 avg.	19-yr. avg.
National economy	33%	32	37	40
Buying climate	33	32	36	39

Personal finances	58	58	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-17	-19	-13	-9



TREND – At -17, the index is up six points from its low from the year, -23 on Sept. 18, but below its 2005 average, -13, and its long-term average, -9.

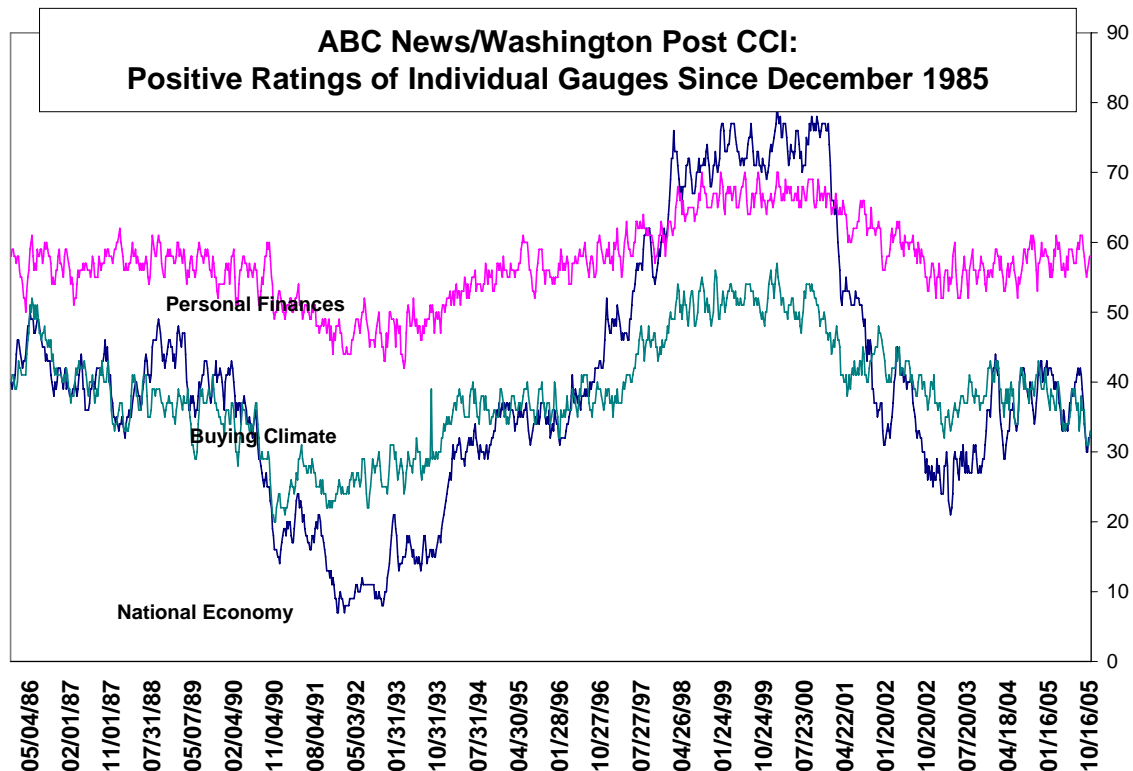
The CCI's best of this year was -7 in March; it's battled gas prices ever since, dipping to -19 in May, fighting back to -7 in July and mid-August, then falling again, particularly after Katrina hit and gasoline soared. While current sentiment has gained again in the last few weeks, expectations, as noted, remain very disturbed.

While it's been much better – an all-time high of +38 in January 2000 – the CCI also has been far worse, averaging -44 across 1992, including a record low -50 that February.

	ABC/Post CCI	
Today	-17	
Last month	-23	(2005 low)
2005 high	-7	Aug. 14, July 24, March 6
2005 average	-13	
2004 average	-11	
2003 average	-19	
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 CCI is higher in better-off groups. It's +30 among higher-income Americans while -54 among those with the lowest incomes, -4 among college graduates while -41 among those who haven't finished high school, -16 among whites but -36 among blacks and -4 among men while -29 among women.

In one change this week, a modest rise in confidence among Democrats and a modest decline among Republicans have narrowed the partisan confidence gap to its lowest since October 2003, before the presidential election. Still, with Republicans at +9 and Democrats at -33, a significant gap remains.



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-three percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 32 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	33	3	30	67	42	25
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-eight percent say their own finances are excellent or good, which is 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	58	7	51	42	28	14
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Thirty-three percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 32 percent a week ago. 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	33	3	30	67	41	26
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	20

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. 16, 2005. The results have a three-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents Oct. 5-16; 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.

The Washington Post replaced Money magazine as cosponsor of this index at the start of this year. The survey methodology remains the same.

Analysis by Jon Cohen.

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

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

10/16/05	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	-17	-19	-23	-9	-11	-4	-23	-12
State of Economy	-34	-36	-40	-18	-26	-14	-40	-24
Personal Finances	16	16	10	18	12	22	6	16
Buying Climate	-34	-36	-38	-28	-18	-14	-38	-27

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-4	-10	-13	8	3	9	-16	-2
Women	-29	-26	-31	-25	-24	-13	-32	-20
Age:								

18 - 34	-5	-12	-28	-17	-16	3	-28	-9
35 - 44	-24	-12	-13	5	-16	6	-27	-10
45 - 54	-21	-24	-26	-13	3	10	-34	-13
55 - 64	-28	-35	-17	-15	-10	-2	-35	-14
65+	-19	-20	-24	-3	-9	-1	-32	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-54	-71	-60	-47	-42	-35	-75	-54
\$15K To \$24.9K	-58	-65	-60	-42	-42	-13	-65	-42
\$25K To \$39.9K	-28	-29	-29	-25	-29	-8	-37	-23
\$40K To \$49.9K	-12	-7	-24	-8	7	17	-37	-11
Over \$50K	15	14	15	17	22	35	10	19
\$50K To \$74.9K	0	1	9	0	4	28	-9	6
\$75K To \$99.9K	15	19	17	23	36	37	4	22
Over \$100K	30	25	20	34	42	51	18	37
Region:								
Northeast	-41	-32	-22	-10	-5	2	-41	-15
Midwest	-20	-15	-21	-3	-11	-3	-26	-14
South	-14	-19	-27	-11	-13	4	-27	-9
West	0	-10	-16	-11	-10	5	-21	-9
Race:								
White	-16	-15	-17	-3	-4	2	-17	-7
Black	-36	-44	-51	-50	-39	-20	-56	-41
Politics:								
Republican	9	13	13	29	39	42	9	27
Democrat	-33	-40	-44	-38	-44	-27	-46	-37
Independent	-22	-18	-22	-11	-20	-7	-30	-17
Education:								
< High School	-41	-40	-48	-37	-45	-21	-55	-38
High Sch. Grad.	-26	-33	-34	-25	-9	-2	-35	-20
College +	-4	-3	-6	10	0	10	-7	3
Home:								
Own	-12	-12	-13	-1	-4	7	-16	-3
Rent	-31	-38	-47	-33	-27	-20	-49	-33
Marital Status:								
Single	-15	-17	-27	-25	-21	-11	-31	-20
Married	-9	-9	-12	7	4	15	-14	1
Sep/Wid/Div	-38	-43	-46	-36	-31	-22	-49	-33
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-3	-3	-13	4	5	12	-13	-1
Part-Time	-24	-22	-24	-24	-20	-1	-35	-16
Not Employed	-34	-39	-34	-21	-26	-15	-43	-23

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
10/16/05	9	57	32	2
9/18/05	11	60	27	2
8/14/05	16	41	40	3
7/17/05	21	43	33	2
6/19/05	17	43	38	1
5/15/05	16	51	32	1
4/17/05	14	48	34	3
3/13/05	23	40	35	1
2/13/05	17	40	39	3
1/16/05	22	34	42	2

12/12/04	29	33	38	1
11/14/04	28	33	37	2
10/17/04	27	42	30	1
9/12/04	26	38	35	1
8/15/04	24	38	36	2
7/18/04	29	36	33	2
6/13/04	28	38	34	*
5/16/04	25	41	32	2
4/18/04	26	37	35	2
3/14/04	23	42	34	1
2/15/04	29	37	32	2
1/18/04	34	27	37	1
12/14/03	35	27	37	2
11/16/03	32	28	38	2
10/12/03	30	32	35	3
9/14/03	25	39	34	2
8/17/03	26	38	36	1
7/20/03	20	37	42	1
6/15/03	25	33	43	0
5/11/03	22	36	41	0
4/13/03	20	37	43	0
3/16/03	9	52	39	0
2/16/03	20	44	36	0
1/19/03	19	43	37	0

Call for full trend.

*=less than 1 percent.

END