

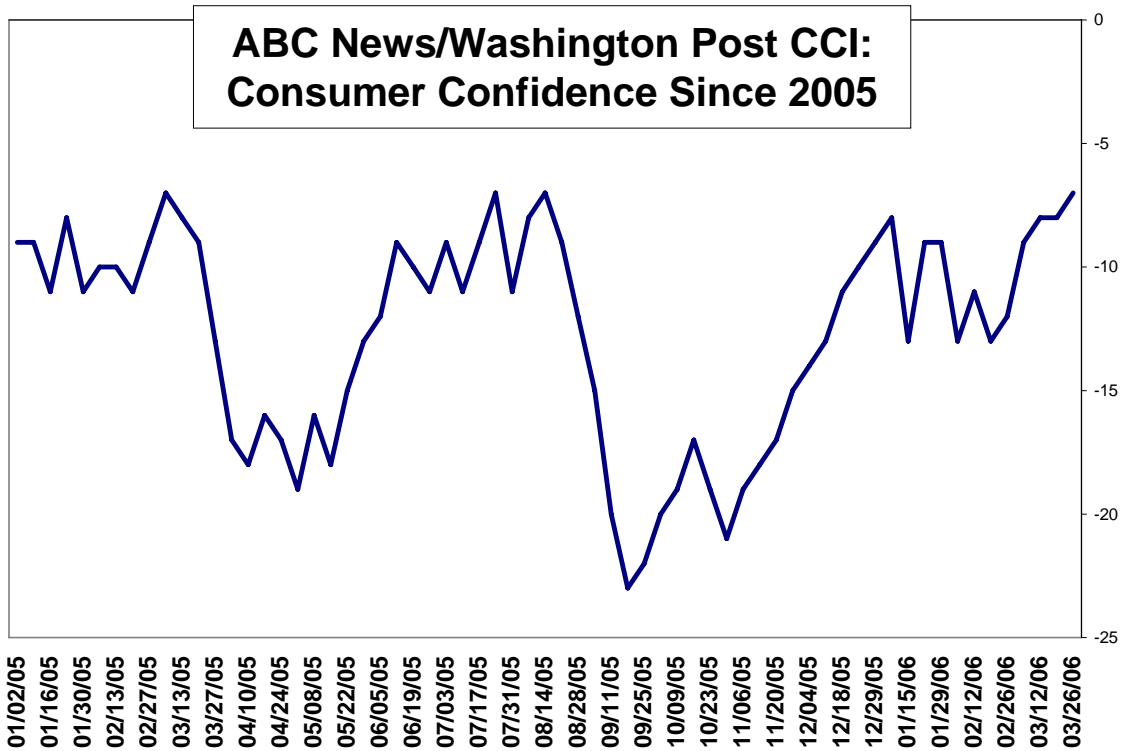
Confidence Matches 15-Month High

Buoyed by positive economic news, consumer confidence has edged up over the past month to match its 15-month high.

A healthy job market and strong stock market have propped up Americans' assessments of their personal financial situations and lifted confidence despite steep energy prices. At -7 on its scale of +100 to -100, the ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index is up five points from a month ago and is as high as it's been at any point since December 2004.

In raising a key interest rate for the 15th consecutive time today, the Federal Reserve noted that "economic growth has rebounded strongly in the current quarter.

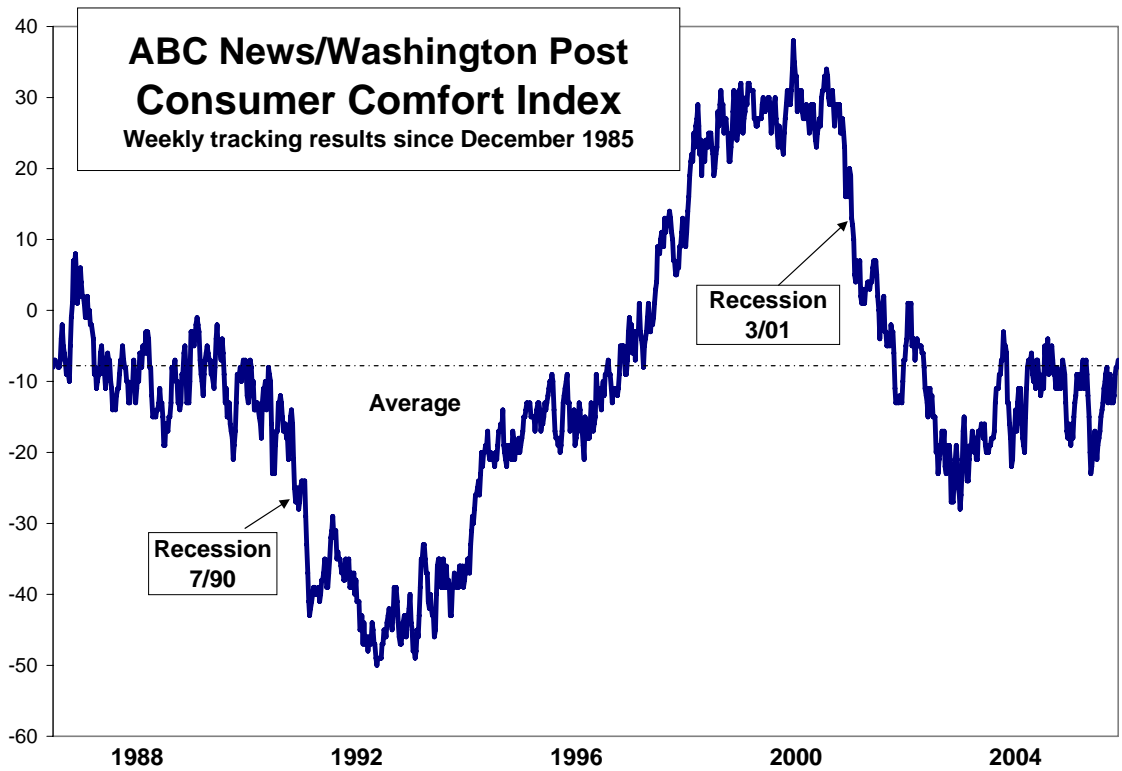
Still, the index remains in negative territory, close to its long-term average in weekly polls since December 1985, -9. High energy prices could be one drag on consumer confidence – although they've stabilized this week (down a penny from last week), they'd been up significantly over the previous four weeks and, at \$2.50 a gallon, are 16 percent higher than a year ago.



INDEX – The weekly ABC/Post index is based on Americans’ ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 60 percent say their own finances are in good shape (matching its best level in seven months), 41 percent say the economy’s in good shape and 39 percent call it a good time to buy things.

	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	41%	40	40	40
Buying climate	39	38	37	38
Personal finances	60	60	57	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-7	-8	-10	-9

TREND – The index has been as high as +38 in January 2000 and as low as -50 in February 1992. As noted its current -7 ties its best since December 2004; the CCI last reached -7 on Aug. 14, 2006, before Hurricane Katrina. It’s above last year's average of -13, as well as the previous three years' averages.

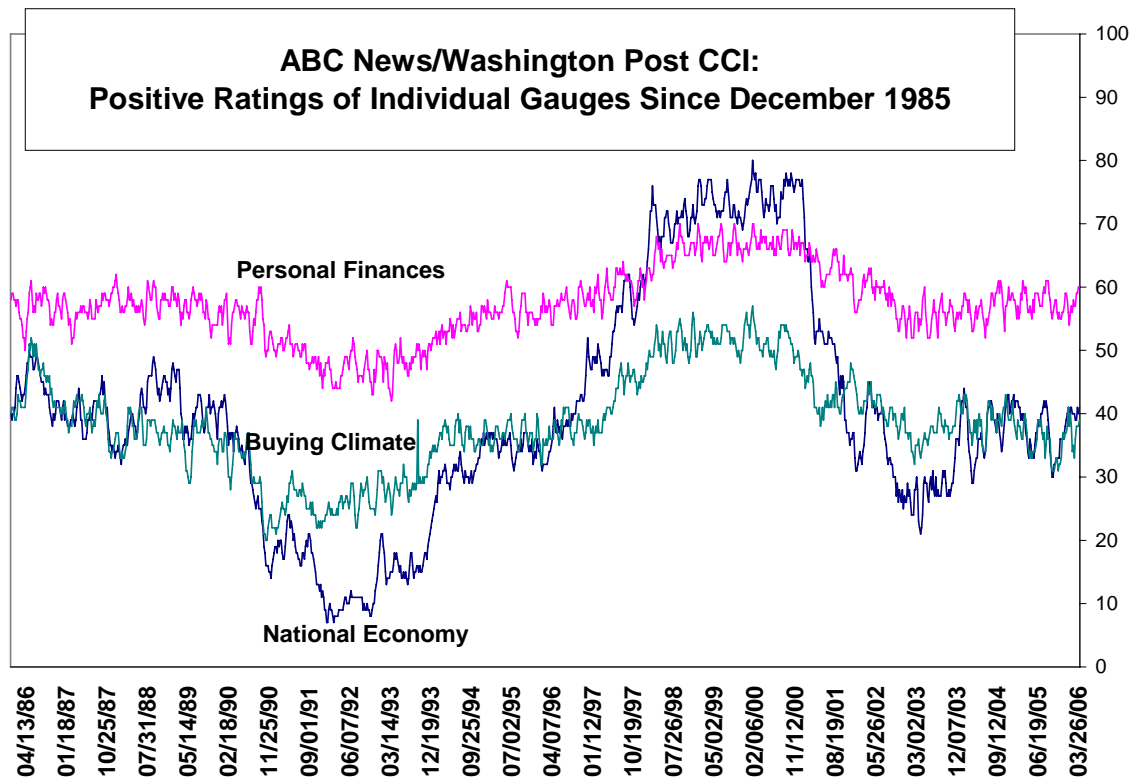


	ABC/Post CCI	
Today	-7	
Last week	-8	
Last month	-12	
2005 high	-7	Aug. 14, July 24, March 6
2005 low	-23	Sept. 18
2005 average	-13	

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 – The CCI is higher in better-off groups. It's +39 among higher-income Americans while -51 among those with the lowest incomes, +12 among college graduates while -36 among those who haven't finished high school, -1 among whites but -41 among blacks and -1 among men while -11 among women.

Regionally, at +6 the index is again this week highest in the West; it's -9 in the South, -10 in the Northeast and -12 in the Midwest. The CCI is +36 among Republicans, but -13 among independents and -33 among Democrats.



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-one percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 40 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	41	3	38	59	36	23

Avg. since 12/85 40 3 37 60 40 20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was also 60 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-nine percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 38 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	39	3	36	61	40	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 March 26, 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 Jon Cohen.

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

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

03/26/06	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	-12	-10	-13	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-18	-20	-22	-22	-28	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	20	20	14	18	16	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-22	-24	-28	-26	-26	-18	-38	-29

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-1	0	2	3	-4	9	-16	-3
Women	-11	-14	-26	-21	-20	-11	-36	-22

Age:								
18 - 34	1	0	-8	-5	-3	1	-28	-11
35 - 44	-3	-6	-16	-9	-20	5	-27	-10
45 - 54	-14	-15	-15	-16	-13	-5	-34	-17
55 - 64	-10	-11	-6	-9	-25	-1	-36	-15
65+	-12	-10	-19	-11	-12	-1	-32	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-51	-41	-45	-53	-54	-33	-75	-55
\$15K To \$24.9K	-35	-28	-34	-42	-18	-18	-65	-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-19	-19	-20	-34	-17	-12	-44	-28
\$40K To \$49.9K	10	-2	-35	25	-19	26	-40	-9
Over \$50K	19	19	20	19	17	26	4	17
\$50K To \$74.9K	-1	-1	3	6	1	17	-14	3
\$75K To \$99.9K	28	30	20	18	23	37	-1	18
Over \$100K	39	39	49	38	29	50	18	35
Region:								
Northeast	-10	-8	-18	-16	-13	-5	-41	-18
Midwest	-12	-11	-10	-18	-22	-3	-27	-16
South	-9	-10	-14	-6	-11	3	-27	-12
West	6	2	-7	-2	-4	7	-20	-8
Race:								
White	-1	-3	-7	-7	-6	-1	-18	-9
Black	-41	-28	-34	-29	-51	-25	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	36	32	28	34	21	36	9	26
Democrat	-33	-29	-30	-37	-35	-27	-46	-37
Independent	-13	-13	-14	-23	-19	-10	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-36	-36	-48	-48	-38	-24	-63	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-19	-20	-20	-14	-22	-13	-35	-23
College +	12	10	4	3	1	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	2	-1	-7	-1	-7	4	-17	-5
Rent	-33	-28	-29	-33	-27	-20	-49	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-17	-11	-12	-8	-19	-8	-31	-19
Married	6	4	-5	-2	-3	7	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-22	-28	-33	-28	-28	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	5	2	-1	1	-2	5	-13	-3
Part-Time	-1	-1	-14	-9	-18	-1	-35	-17
Not Employed	-25	-23	-29	-26	-25	-15	-43	-24

END