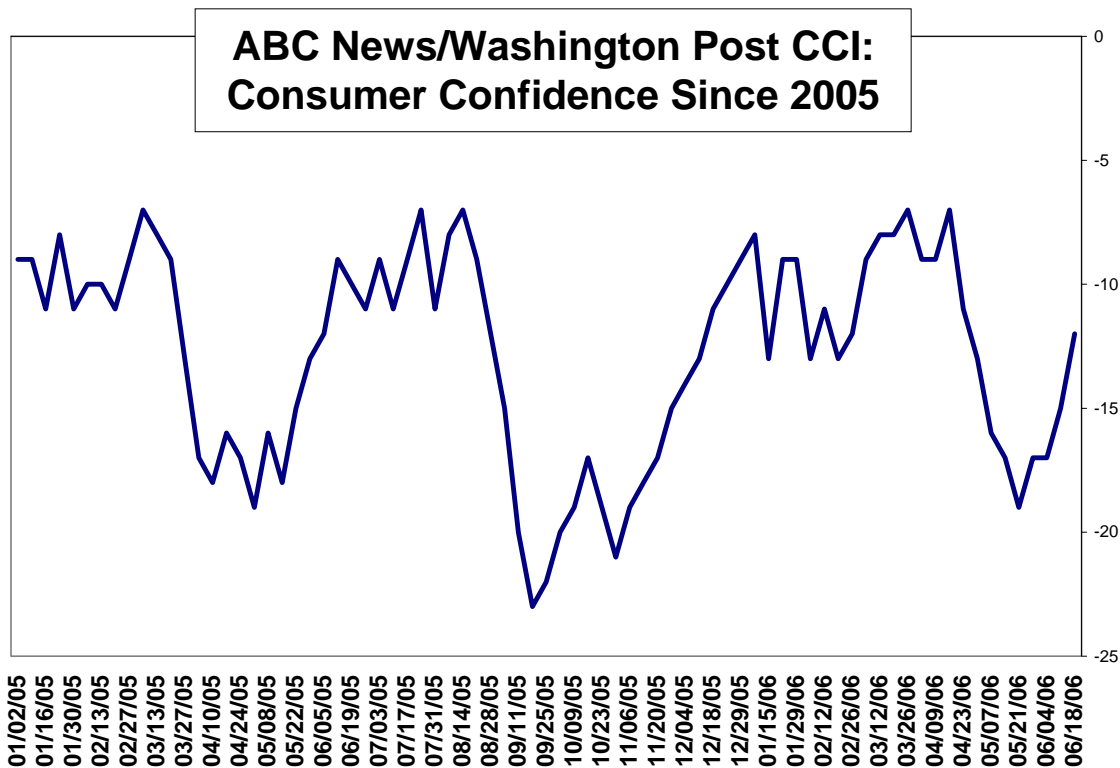


Confidence Advances, But Hold the Champagne

Consumer confidence advanced this week to its best in nearly two months, led by improved ratings of personal finances. But confidence remains below its long-term average – and most Americans still think the economy’s headed in the wrong direction.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index reached -12 on its scale of +100 to -100, up three points – its first three-point gain since March – to its best since April 23. Moderating gas prices likely have helped: The index fell to a 2006 low of -19 a month ago as gas spiked to an average \$2.95 a gallon. Gas has eased to \$2.87 now.

Despite the gas-price trend, 51 percent of Americans say the economy is getting worse – the second month in a row more than half have said so – while just 16 percent say it’s improving. Similarly, majority pessimism lasted for three months in the gas-price run-up after Hurricane Katrina last summer.

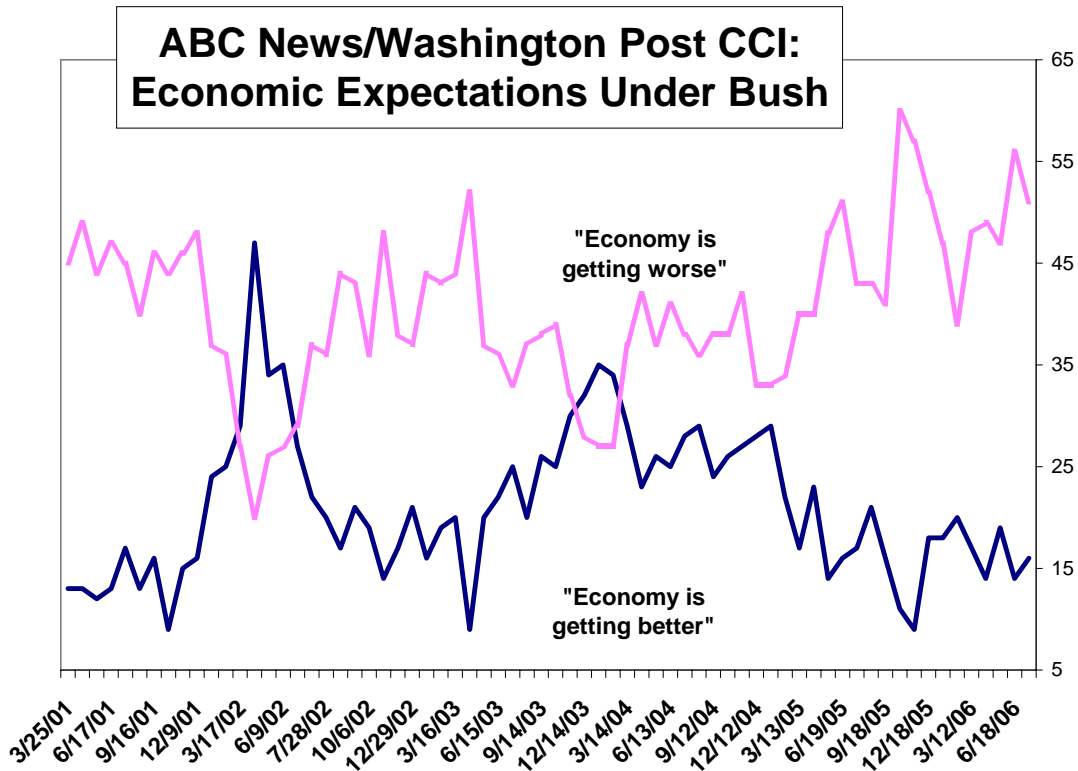


EXPECTATIONS – Economic pessimism is nothing new: More people have said the economy is getting worse than have said it’s improving steadily since February 2004. But

the gap between optimists and pessimists is bigger now than its average during that time, 35 points vs. 23 points. (It was bigger still immediately after Katrina.)

The 51 percent who say the economy is worsening is not significantly different, given sampling tolerances, from the 56 percent who said so last month.

	Economy is:		
	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same
Now	16%	51	32
Last month	14	56	29
Jan. 2006	20	39	38
Jan. 2004	34	27	37
Avg. since 1981	20	38	40
Worst, Oct. 1990	3	77	19
Best, Aug. 1983	50	19	30

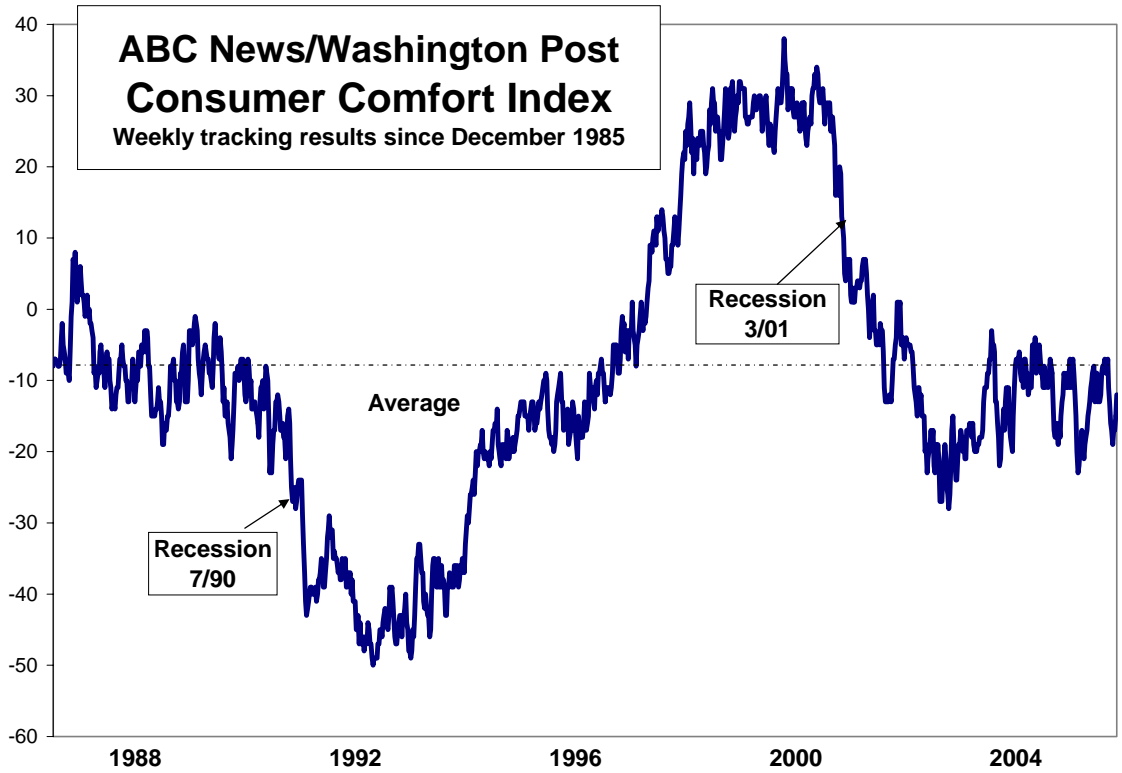


INDEX – The weekly CCI, measured separately from expectations, is based on Americans’ ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 58 percent rate their finances positively, up three points. Ratings of the economy and buying climate, both 37 percent positive, are flatter.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Last week	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	37%	36	38	40
Buying climate	37	37	36	38

Personal finances	58	55	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-12	-15	-12	-9

TREND – At -12 the CCI is three points below its long-term average since this weekly poll began in December 1985. It's been as high as -7 this year and as low as -19. The index's all-time high was +38 in January 2000; its all-time low, -50 in February 1992.

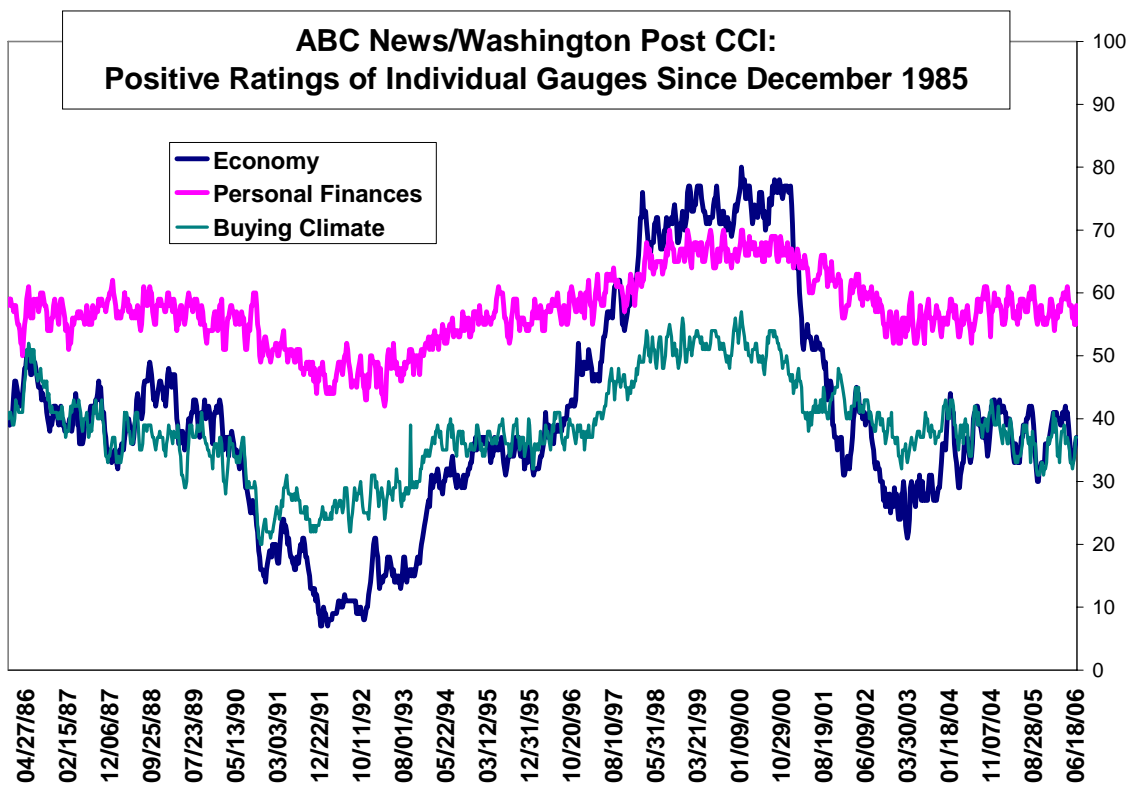


	ABC/Post	CCI	
Today	-12		
Last week	-15		
Two weeks ago	-17		
Four weeks ago	-19		
2006 high	-7		April 16, March 26
2006 low	-19		May 21
2006 average	-12		
2005 average	-13		
2004 average	-11		
2003 average	-19		
2000 average	+29		Best full year
1992 average	-44		Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38		Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50		Record low
Average since 12/85	-9		

GROUPS –As usual, the index is higher in better-off groups. It's +31 among higher-income Americans while -34 among those with the lowest incomes, 0 among college graduates while -43 among those who haven't finished high school, -8 among whites but -36 among blacks and -3 among men while -20 among women.

Regionally, the index continues to be better in the West, at +5, compared with -21 in the Midwest, -16 in the Northeast and -15 in the South. Confidence remains far higher among Republicans (+27) than independents (-21) or, particularly, Democrats (-34).

Democrats also are much more pessimistic about the direction of the economy: Sixty-nine percent say it's getting worse, compared with 46 percent of independents and 31 percent of Republicans.



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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Thirty-seven percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 36 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	37	4	33	63	37	26
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-eight percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 55 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	58	9	49	42	29	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, unchanged from 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	4	33	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 June 18, 2006. The results have a three-point error margin. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents June 7-18; 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 Tanveer Ali.

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

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

06/18/06	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	-12	-15	-19	-8	-10	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-26	-28	-34	-20	-24	-16	-40	-25
Personal Finances	16	10	12	20	16	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-26	-26	-36	-24	-22	-18	-38	-29

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-3	-4	-12	0	-2	9	-14	-2
Women	-20	-24	-27	-14	-18	-11	-36	-23
Age:								

18 - 34	-7	-8	-13	0	-13	1	-28	-11
35 - 44	-12	-12	-21	-6	-13	5	-27	-10
45 - 54	-15	-25	-23	-15	-6	-5	-31	-17
55 - 64	-12	-12	-14	-11	-13	0	-36	-13
65+	-21	-21	-31	-10	-3	-1	-31	-16
Income:								
Under \$15K	-34	-43	-72	-41	-52	-33	-72	-53
\$15K To \$24.9K	-54	-52	-56	-28	-45	-28	-65	-45
\$25K To \$39.9K	-19	-18	-37	-19	-20	-12	-44	-27
\$40K To \$49.9K	-25	-41	-39	-2	17	26	-41	-11
Over \$50K	9	8	18	19	16	26	4	17
\$50K To \$74.9K	-9	-7	8	-1	-3	17	-14	3
\$75K To \$99.9K	9	10	21	30	37	37	-1	18
Over \$100K	31	25	28	39	25	50	18	35
Region:								
Northeast	-16	-19	-21	-8	-8	-5	-41	-18
Midwest	-21	-23	-29	-11	-19	-3	-29	-16
South	-15	-15	-16	-10	-5	2	-27	-12
West	5	-3	-13	2	-11	7	-19	-5
Race:								
White	-8	-12	-11	-3	-5	-1	-18	-8
Black	-36	-39	-57	-28	-48	-25	-57	-44
Politics:								
Republican	27	22	24	32	28	38	9	27
Democrat	-34	-39	-46	-29	-30	-29	-46	-37
Independent	-21	-18	-23	-13	-20	-10	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-43	-49	-60	-36	-48	-23	-63	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-17	-22	-27	-20	-17	-13	-35	-23
College +	0	0	-1	10	6	12	-9	2
Home:								
Own	-6	-6	-10	-1	4	4	-17	-5
Rent	-29	-39	-42	-28	-41	-20	-49	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-13	-18	-26	-11	-17	-8	-29	-18
Married	-7	-6	-9	4	-1	8	-14	-2
Sep/Wid/Div	-27	-35	-36	-28	-25	-22	-49	-34
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-5	-7	-8	2	-2	6	-13	-3
Part-Time	-14	-18	-28	-1	-12	-1	-29	-16
Not Employed	-24	-26	-34	-23	-18	-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
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.

*=less than 1 percent.

END