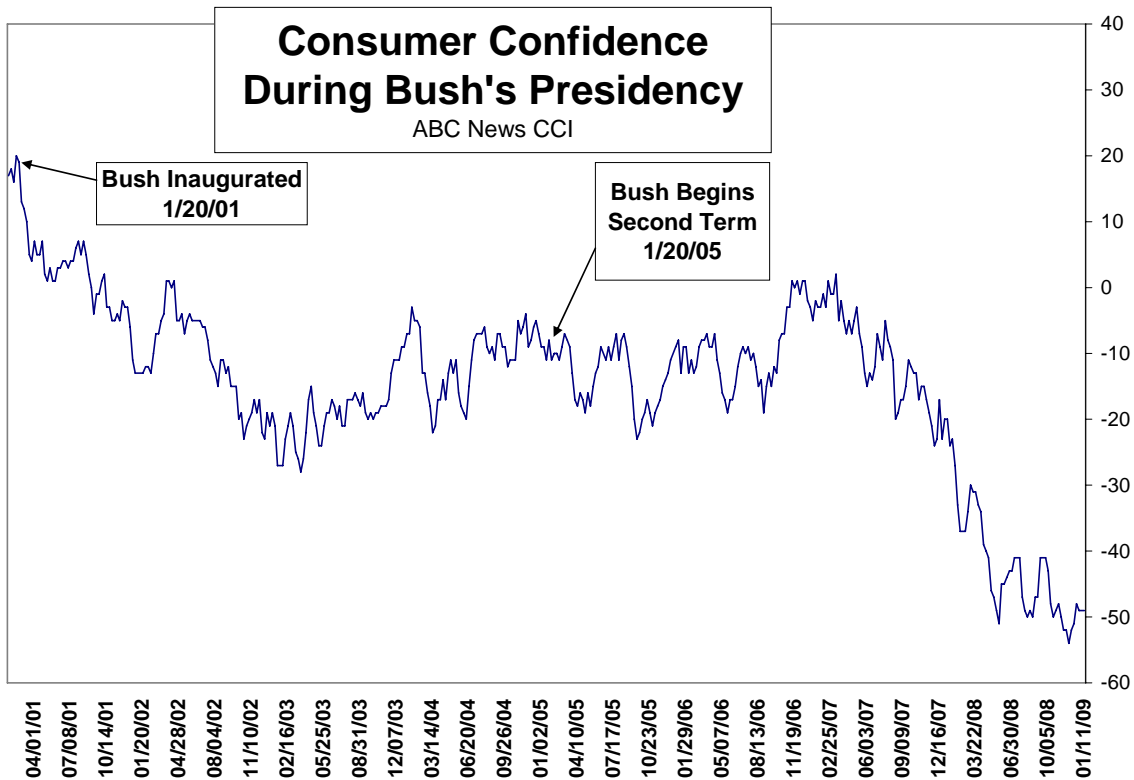


A Razz on the Economy as Bush Heads South

For a counterpoint to George W. Bush’s swan song look no further than the long-running razz that is consumer confidence: It’s never been worse for a departing president in nearly a quarter century of ongoing ABC News polls.

Sixty-five percent of Americans now rate the economy as “poor,” a record in 23 years of weekly polls. Another 29 percent say it’s merely “not so good,” for a net negative rating of 94 percent, matching the all-time high. The previous worst for a departing president was 81 percent negative as Bush’s father bowed out in January 1993.

Overall, the ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at a dismal -49 on its scale of +100 to -100, unchanged the past three weeks and below -40 for a record 38 weeks straight. That compares to its long-term average, -11 since late 1985.



The CCI has averaged -14 across Bush’s two terms in office, -10 in his first term but -19 in his second, cratering at -42 the past year. That compares with +1 in Bill Clinton’s two

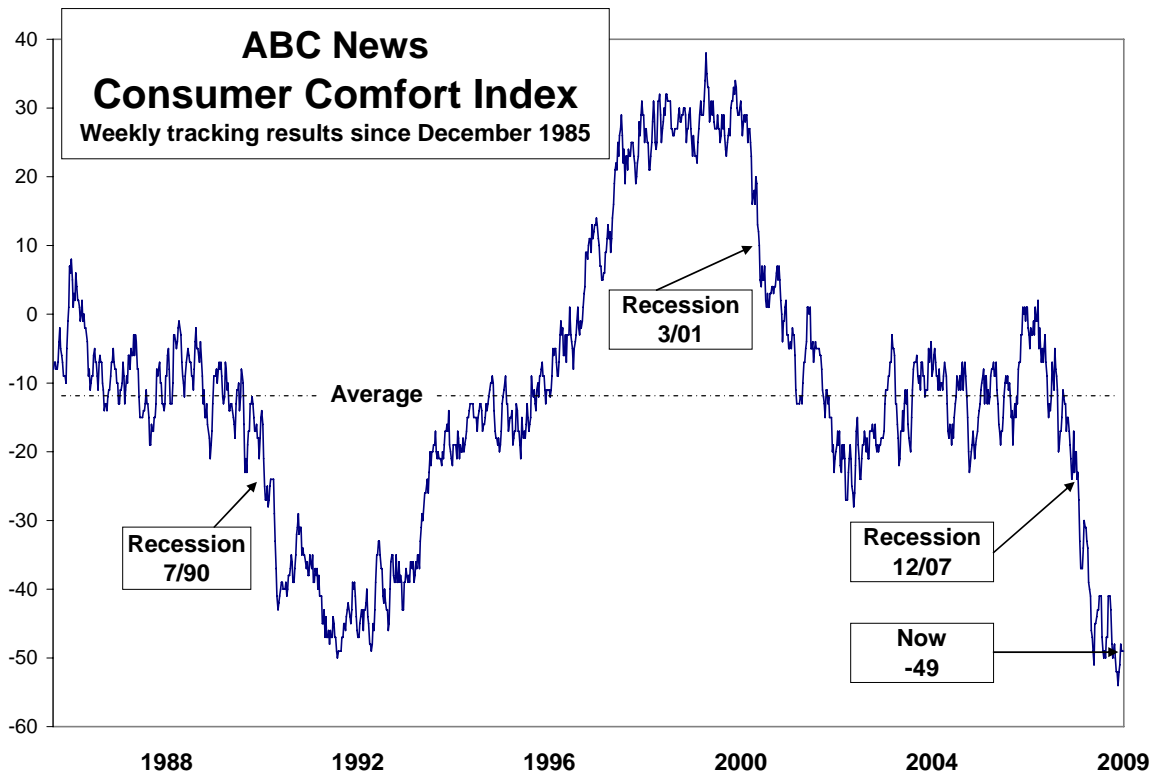
terms (-20 in the first, +22 in the second), -30 in Bush's father's single term and -8 in available data for Ronald Reagan (his last three years in office).

In addition to the housing and credit crises, the economy shed half a million jobs in December, capping a year of layoffs that accelerated in the last four months, with almost two million jobs lost. Adding insult to injury, gas prices have reversed track, rising 17 cents in two weeks to \$1.78 nationally – but still 42 percent below their level last year.

INDEX –ABC's CCI is based on Americans' ratings of the economy, their personal finances and the buying climate. As noted, only 6 percent rate the economy positively, 9 points below the 2008 average and 33 points below the long-term average.

Just 44 percent rate their own finances positively, 2 points from the low last hit in December. That's 13 points off the long-term average and below a majority for 25 straight weeks, the longest such streak since 1992-93.

Ratings of the buying climate are further from their floor: While just 26 percent call it a good time to spend money, that compares with a low of 18 percent in October and August. It's 12 points off the long-term average.

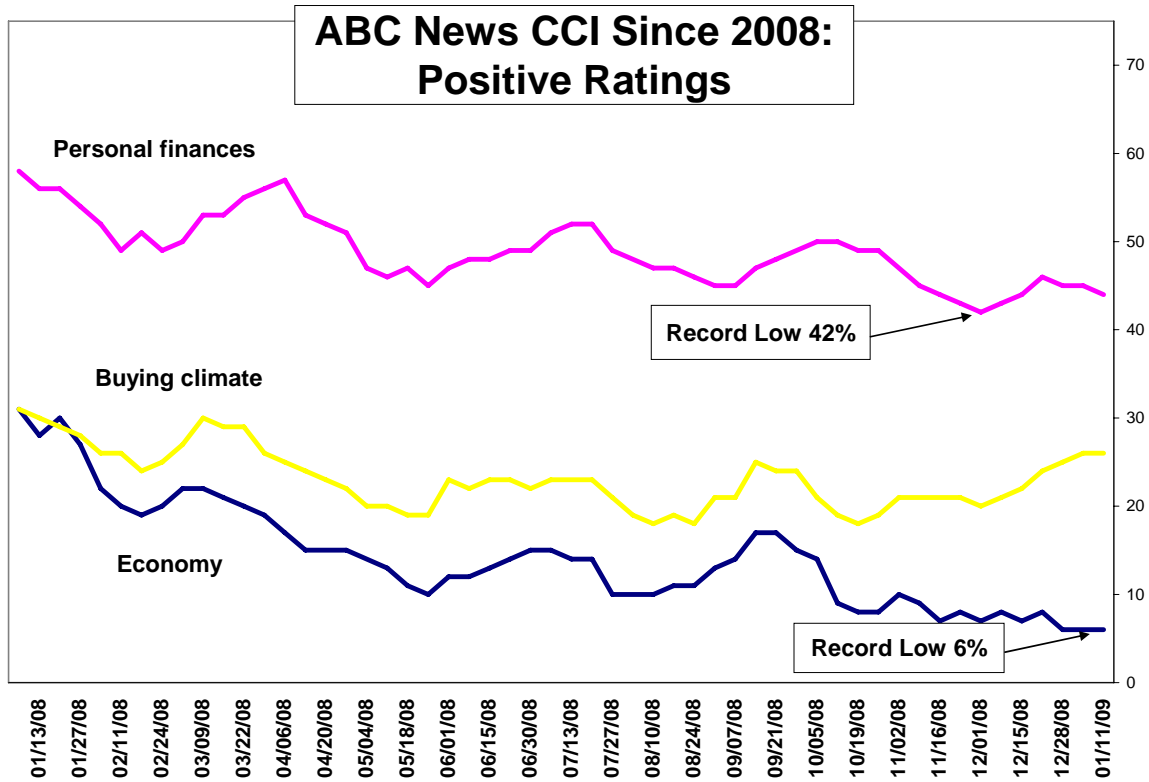


ABC News CCI

Positive ratings of:	This week	Last week	Averages	
			2008	'85-'09
National economy	6%	6	15	39
Buying climate	26	26	23	38
Personal finances	44	45	49	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-49	-49	-42	-11

TREND – The CCI has been stagnant for three weeks, hovering 5 points from its record low, -54 on Dec. 1, after a tumultuous 2008. It began last year at -20 but sustained several significant drops to a then-record low of -51 in late May. It struggled to -41 in July and September, but those gains were lost quickly, followed by new lows of -52 and -54 in November and December.

The index is miles from its best, +38 in January 2000.



ABC News CCI	
This week	-49
Last week	-49
2008 high	-20 Jan. 6
2008 low	-54 Dec. 1, record low
2008 average	-42
2000 average	+29 Best full year
1992 average	-44 Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38 Record high

GROUPS – The CCI is higher among better off groups, but negative across the board for the 29th straight week. It’s -31 among those with the highest incomes but -77 among those with the lowest, -43 among those who’ve been to college vs. -71 among high school dropouts, -44 among men vs. -53 among women, -43 among homeowners vs. -67 among renters and -46 among whites vs. -62 among blacks.

Partisan differences remain: The index is -33 among Republicans vs. -60 among Democrats, and -51 among independents. But that 27-point partisan gap is milder than the 2008 average, -41.

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

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Six percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good, tying its record low the last two weeks. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	6	1	5	94	29	65
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	35	61	40	21

PERSONAL FINANCES – Forty-four percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 45 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent Dec. 1, 2008, and March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	44	4	40	56	37	19
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-six percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things, the same as 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	26	2	24	74	45	29
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	35	62	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 Jan. 11, 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 Scott F. Clement.

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

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

01/11/09	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	-49	-49	-51	-48	-24	-23	-54	-43
State of Economy	-88	-88	-86	-82	-44	-40	-88	-72
Personal Finances	-12	-10	-12	0	12	14	-16	-2
Buying Climate	-48	-48	-56	-62	-40	-40	-64	-54

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-44	-40	-41	-40	-12	-11	-49	-37
Women	-53	-56	-59	-55	-34	-34	-59	-48
Age:								
18 - 34	-47	-43	-48	-46	-11	-11	-58	-39
35 - 44	-52	-58	-49	-44	-29	-26	-58	-42
45 - 54	-51	-50	-56	-53	-27	-21	-61	-44
55 - 64	-54	-52	-55	-41	-32	-32	-64	-46
65+	-45	-43	-46	-53	-34	-31	-55	-43
Income:								
Under \$15K	-77	-77	-58	-81	-61	-51	-87	-72
\$15K To \$24.9K	-66	-67	-69	-73	-47	-39	-83	-63
\$25K To \$39.9K	-63	-60	-58	-63	-40	-32	-67	-55
\$40K To \$49.9K	-55	-49	-62	-56	-21	-16	-62	-44
Over \$50K	-32	-35	-39	-23	-7	-4	-41	-24
\$50K To \$74.9K	-31	-47	-51	-38	-22	-17	-57	-39
\$75K To \$99.9K	-36	-33	-36	-25	-16	0	-48	-25
Over \$100K	-31	-26	-24	-6	15	18	-31	-8
Region:								
Northeast	-42	-47	-51	-59	-31	-27	-62	-48
Midwest	-57	-50	-53	-47	-27	-21	-57	-42
South	-52	-52	-57	-47	-27	-27	-57	-43
West	-42	-40	-37	-39	-8	-3	-56	-38
Race:								
White	-46	-46	-48	-43	-21	-21	-48	-40
Black	-62	-61	-55	-68	-39	-33	-81	-61
Politics:								
Republican	-33	-36	-39	-20	11	11	-40	-17
Democrat	-60	-62	-58	-65	-35	-35	-70	-57
Independent	-51	-44	-49	-47	-40	-33	-55	-45
Education:								
< High School	-71	-68	-53	-69	-57	-37	-77	-60
High Sch. Grad.	-50	-51	-53	-48	-22	-22	-61	-47
College +	-43	-42	-48	-41	-13	-13	-50	-34

Home:								
Own	-43	-43	-46	-43	-21	-20	-47	-37
Rent	-67	-65	-66	-63	-31	-31	-80	-57
Marital Status:								
Single	-51	-48	-53	-54	-21	-20	-69	-46
Married	-41	-42	-43	-38	-14	-13	-46	-34
Sep/Wid/Div	-64	-64	-68	-64	-54	-49	-69	-60
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-40	-43	-43	-36	-15	-15	-47	-34
Part-Time	-53	-50	-53	-58	-19	-8	-66	-43
Not Employed	-58	-55	-61	-58	-36	-35	-66	-52

END