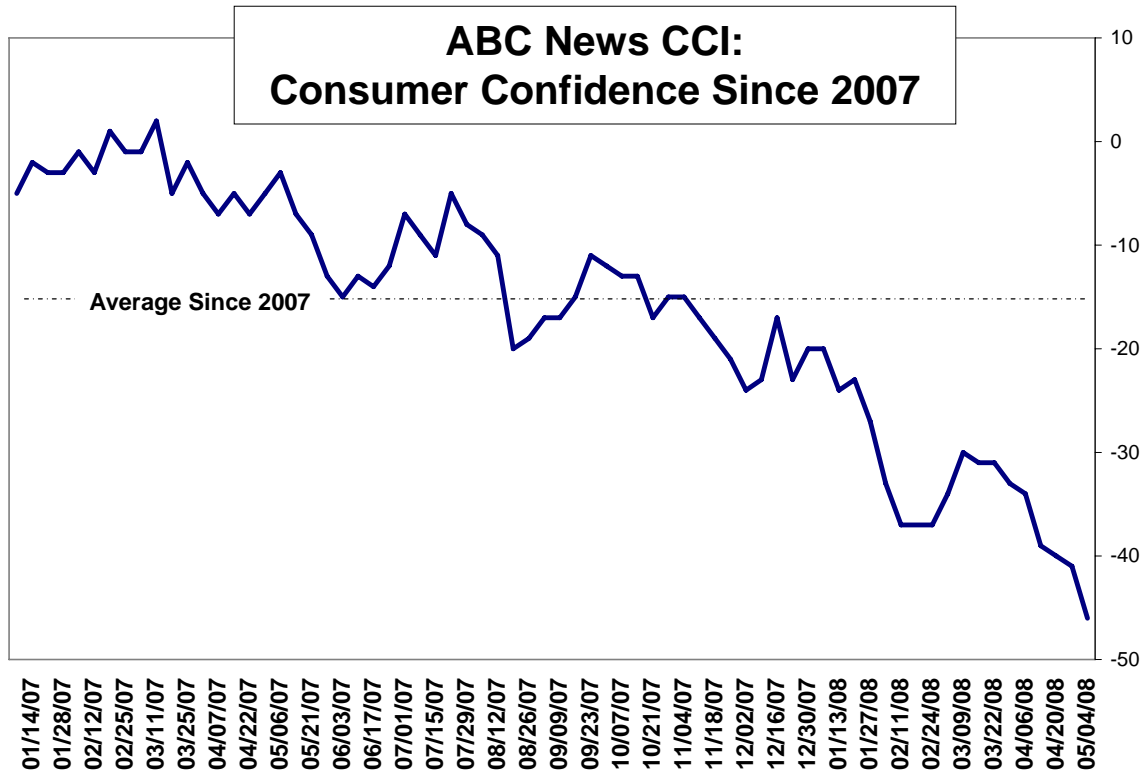


# Confidence Drops Again, Nearing its 22-Year Low

Consumer confidence fell steeply this week to within sight of its all-time low in 22 years of weekly surveys.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index dropped 5 points to -46 on its scale of +100 to -100, its lowest in 15 years and just 4 points from its all-time low in early 1992. With gasoline prices soaring, ratings of the buying climate tied their record low; assessments of the national economy and personal finances are their worst since 1993.

It's the index's second 5-point fall in the last four weeks; that's only happened twice before in weekly polls since December 1985. The CCI has fallen by 26 points in the 17 weeks since the start of the year, a drop exceeded once, early in the 1990-91 recession.



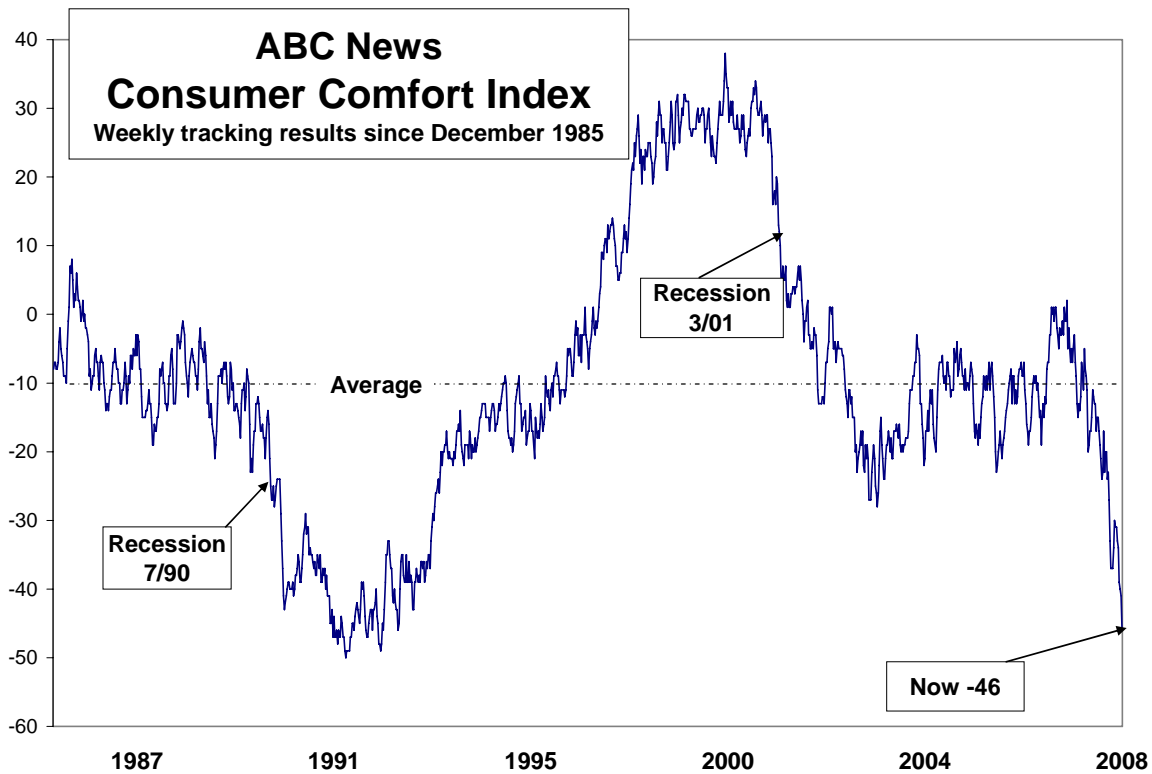
The index customarily falls in periods of rising gasoline prices; since 2007 the CCI and the price of gas have correlated at a strong  $-.75$ . Gas is up 50 cents per gallon this year, including a 28-cent jump in the last four weeks alone. Separately, the Bureau of Labor

Statistics reported Friday that 260,000 jobs have been lost since the beginning of the year; the CCI also correlates with employment, among other economic indicators.

INDEX – Only 20 percent of Americans now say it’s a good time to buy things they want and need, tying the record low set in October and November 1990, down 11 points since the beginning of the year and just over half the long-term average, 38 percent.

Even fewer, 14 percent, rate the national economy positively – down 17 points on the year, the fewest since August 1993 and only 7 points better than the record low in late 1991 and early 1992. Its long-term average is 40 percent.

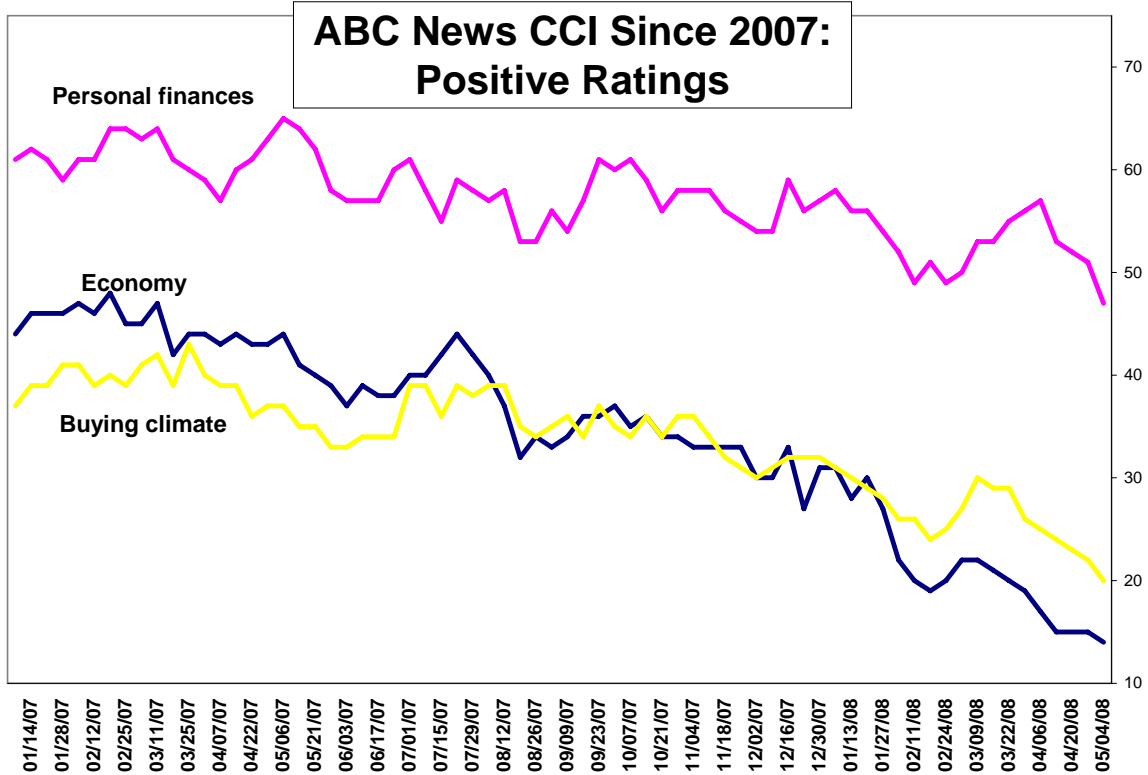
In the traditionally strongest measure, 47 percent rate their personal finances positively – down 10 points in the past four weeks to the fewest since November 1993. Positive ratings of personal finances are well below their long-term average of 57 percent and only 5 points off their record low, 42 percent in March 1993.



Positive ratings of:	ABC News CCI			Averages	
	This week	Last week	2008	'85-'08	
National economy	14%	15	21	40	
Buying climate	20	22	26	38	
Personal finances	47	51	53	57	
Consumer Comfort Index	-46	-41	-33	-10	

TREND – Confidence has been falling the past year, with significant declines in each of the past four quarters. Its 12-point drop in the past four weeks has been matched just 16 times in 22 years, and it follows an even rarer 14-point drop in four weeks in January and February. As noted, its 26-point drop since the year began is even more unusual, exceeded only by a 27-point drop across 17 weeks ending in October 1990.

The index is a far cry from its long-term average, -10. Its high was +38 in January 2000; its low, -50 in February 1992.



ABC News CCI	
This week	-46
Last week	-41
2008 low	-46
2008 high	-20
2008 average	-33
2000 average	+29
1992 average	-44
Jan. 16, 2000	+38
Feb. 9, 1992	-50
Average since 12/85	-10

GROUPS – The CCI as usual is higher in better-off groups, though the index is negative across the board. It's -10 among higher-income Americans while -74 among the least well-off, -34 among college-educated adults while -63 among high-school dropouts, -43 among whites but -70 among blacks and -39 among men while -53 among women.

The woe is well spread: Regionally, the index is about equally weak in the West, -53; Northeast, -50; and Midwest, -48. It's less grim, -38, in the South.

Sharp partisan differences remain: The index is -20 among Republicans, but -42 among independents and -64 among Democrats.

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

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Fourteen percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 15 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was 7 percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	14	1	13	86	43	43
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	36	60	40	20

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Forty-seven percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 51 percent last week. The best was 70 percent, last reached in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	47	6	41	53	36	17
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Twenty percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 22 percent last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000; the worst, 20 percent this week and in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	20	1	19	80	46	34
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 May 4, 2008. 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 Scott F. Clement.

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

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

05/04/08	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-46	-41	-34	-33	-3	-3	-27	-15
State of Economy	-72	-70	-66	-56	-12	-12	-46	-29
Personal Finances	-6	2	14	4	30	30	6	15
Buying Climate	-60	-56	-50	-48	-26	-22	-44	-31
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-39	-33	-27	-23	12	12	-19	-7
Women	-53	-49	-37	-43	-18	-6	-35	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-42	-39	-22	-29	2	6	-32	-10
35 - 44	-58	-48	-36	-33	-9	3	-31	-15
45 - 54	-42	-41	-39	-37	-3	2	-29	-16
55 - 64	-44	-36	-32	-37	-4	-4	-36	-18
65+	-46	-41	-39	-36	-6	-2	-37	-20
Income:								
Under \$15K	-74	-74	-68	-58	-44	-31	-70	-54
\$15K To \$24.9K	-64	-66	-57	-55	-33	-27	-58	-43
\$25K To \$39.9K	-52	-47	-41	-56	-27	-15	-49	-28
\$40K To \$49.9K	-57	-49	-44	-27	-14	7	-47	-18
Over \$50K	-29	-25	-18	-13	22	26	-9	9
\$50K To \$74.9K	-53	-43	-38	-32	14	21	-28	-6
\$75K To \$99.9K	-23	-21	-26	-10	14	25	-19	5
Over \$100K	-10	-8	12	9	36	49	1	27
Region:								
Northeast	-50	-47	-37	-39	-20	-4	-38	-22
Midwest	-48	-46	-45	-31	-5	2	-30	-19
South	-38	-33	-33	-32	3	3	-31	-15
West	-53	-44	-14	-34	4	10	-21	-4
Race:								
White	-43	-40	-32	-31	4	4	-25	-11
Black	-70	-54	-47	-40	-46	-20	-54	-40
Politics:								
Republican	-20	-20	-5	-5	44	44	4	20
Democrat	-64	-57	-42	-49	-24	-15	-47	-32
Independent	-42	-36	-38	-38	-19	-8	-40	-23
Education:								
< High School	-63	-57	-37	-53	-26	-24	-57	-40
High Sch. Grad.	-57	-51	-37	-45	-15	-13	-38	-23
College +	-34	-29	-27	-18	13	13	-14	-1
Home:								
Own	-40	-36	-28	-28	0	1	-23	-9
Rent	-61	-57	-44	-50	-13	-12	-44	-31
Marital Status:								
Single	-49	-45	-31	-32	-6	-6	-39	-17
Married	-37	-33	-23	-23	5	5	-18	-5

Sep/Wid/Div	-67	-60	-58	-60	-23	-23	-56	-37
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-37	-34	-24	-29	6	10	-24	-7
Part-Time	-44	-36	-28	-27	-5	-4	-39	-16
Not Employed	-58	-52	-42	-41	-15	-7	-43	-23

\*\*\*END\*\*\*