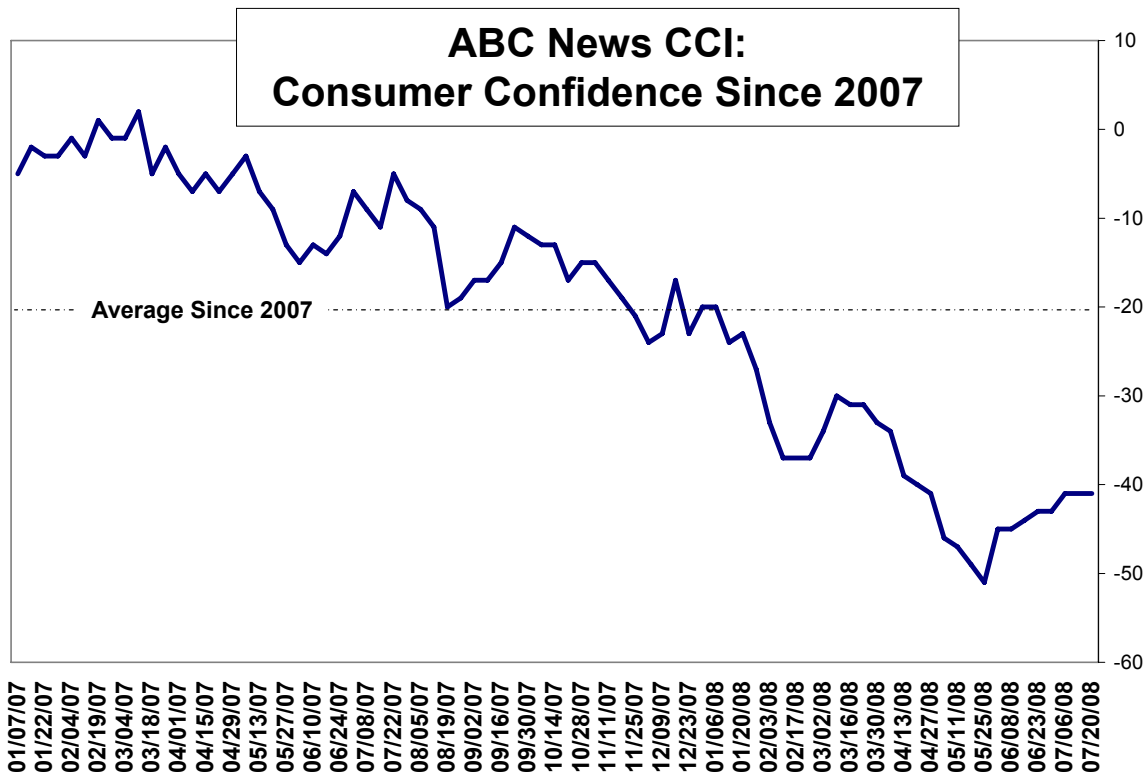


## **Relief for Gas Prices, But Not for Confidence**

Consumer confidence has yet to break out of its rut despite a glimmer of relief in gas prices.

The ABC News Consumer Comfort Index stands at -41 on its scale of +100 to -100, marking 50 straight weeks in negative double digits, a streak not seen since 2003. Confidence – flat for the past three weeks – has been at or below -40 for 14 weeks, the longest stretch since November 1992.

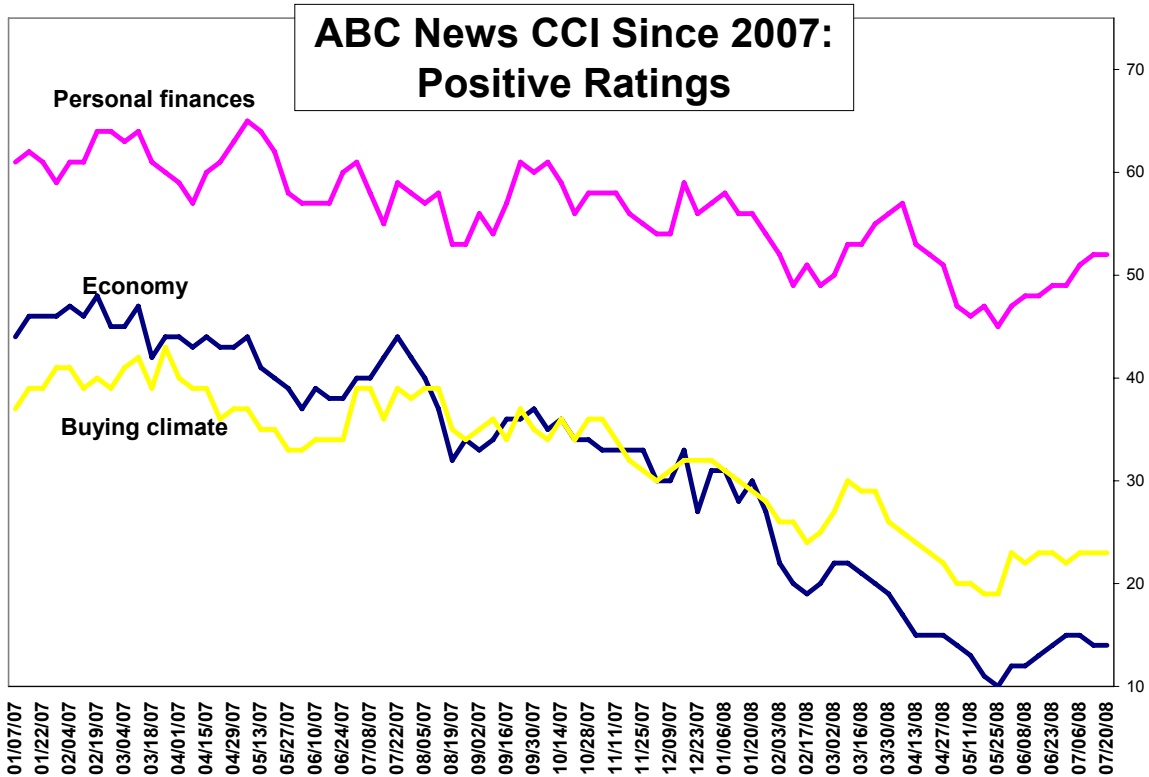
This week, consumers saw some positive news with a five-cent per-gallon drop in the price of gas, the biggest weekly decrease since January, bringing the average to \$4.06. Still, the national average has been over \$4 for seven consecutive weeks.



INDEX – The CCI is based on Americans’ ratings of their current finances, the national economy and the buying climate. Only 14 percent rate the national economy positively, and it’s been at or below 15 percent for 15 weeks straight, the longest period since 1992.



Last week	-41	
2008 low	-51	May 25
2008 high	-20	Jan. 6
2008 average	-37	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
May 25, 2008	-51	Record low
Average since 12/85	-10	



GROUPS – As usual, the CCI is higher in better-off groups, but is still negative across the board as it’s been since late June. It’s -8 among those with the highest incomes and -76 among those with the lowest incomes, -35 among people who’ve been to college and -54 among high-school dropouts, -39 among whites while -62 among blacks, and -37 among men and -45 among women.

Partisan differences remain: The index is -19 among Republicans, compared with -39 among independents and -56 among Democrats.

There are regional differences as well: The CCI is far better in the West at -31 than the Northeast at -47. In both the Midwest and South it’s -43.

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; the same as last week. The highest was 80 percent on 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	44	42
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	36	60	40	21

PERSONAL FINANCES – Fifty-two percent say their own finances are excellent or good; the same as 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	52	7	45	48	31	17
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Twenty-three 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 19 percent, which happened twice in May.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	23	2	21	77	44	33
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 July 20, 2008. 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 Emily B. Guskin.

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

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

07/20/08	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
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Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								

Overall Index	-41	-41	-43	-40	-5	-5	-27	-17
State of Economy	-72	-72	-72	-70	-12	-12	-46	-33
Personal Finances	4	4	-2	4	18	22	6	14
Buying Climate	-54	-54	-54	-54	-22	-22	-44	-32

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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	-37	-37	-45	-33	-4	0	-19	-10
Women	-45	-44	-39	-46	-6	-6	-35	-23
Age:								
18 - 34	-44	-41	-37	-35	0	0	-32	-14
35 - 44	-27	-28	-38	-46	-13	3	-31	-16
45 - 54	-46	-48	-45	-40	2	2	-29	-17
55 - 64	-42	-48	-64	-38	-15	-7	-36	-19
65+	-45	-40	-31	-42	-4	-4	-37	-22
Income:								
Under \$15K	-76	-74	-71	-74	-41	-31	-70	-54
\$15K To \$24.9K	-52	-44	-75	-71	-42	-27	-58	-44
\$25K To \$39.9K	-50	-54	-67	-43	-23	-15	-49	-29
\$40K To \$49.9K	-40	-49	-17	-52	-6	1	-47	-21
Over \$50K	-19	-17	-22	-28	21	24	-9	6
\$50K To \$74.9K	-29	-28	-44	-44	0	6	-28	-9
\$75K To \$99.9K	-20	-17	-24	-31	20	25	-19	3
Over \$100K	-8	-4	5	-6	46	49	1	24
Region:								
Northeast	-47	-52	-48	-45	-8	-4	-38	-22
Midwest	-43	-42	-39	-53	-18	-11	-30	-21
South	-43	-43	-44	-33	-1	-1	-31	-18
West	-31	-27	-36	-32	3	5	-21	-6
Race:								
White	-39	-38	-39	-39	-3	-3	-25	-14
Black	-62	-68	-56	-55	-29	-20	-54	-40
Politics:								
Republican	-19	-18	-17	-13	28	34	4	18
Democrat	-56	-55	-58	-53	-20	-15	-47	-33
Independent	-39	-39	-39	-40	-8	-8	-40	-25
Education:								
< High School	-54	-66	-73	-53	-34	-24	-57	-42
High Sch. Grad.	-44	-40	-46	-47	-13	-13	-38	-24
College +	-35	-34	-31	-30	10	10	-14	-4
Home:								
Own	-38	-37	-37	-34	0	0	-23	-11
Rent	-51	-54	-57	-56	-17	-17	-44	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-51	-44	-36	-38	-6	-6	-39	-20
Married	-26	-31	-38	-33	4	4	-18	-6
Sep/Wid/Div	-64	-66	-62	-61	-27	-27	-56	-40
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-33	-32	-38	-33	-4	-3	-24	-10
Part-Time	-53	-40	-33	-26	-4	-4	-39	-17
Not Employed	-47	-52	-49	-52	-8	-7	-43	-23

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