

Bloomberg® Consumer Comfort Index™



Weekly Data Report

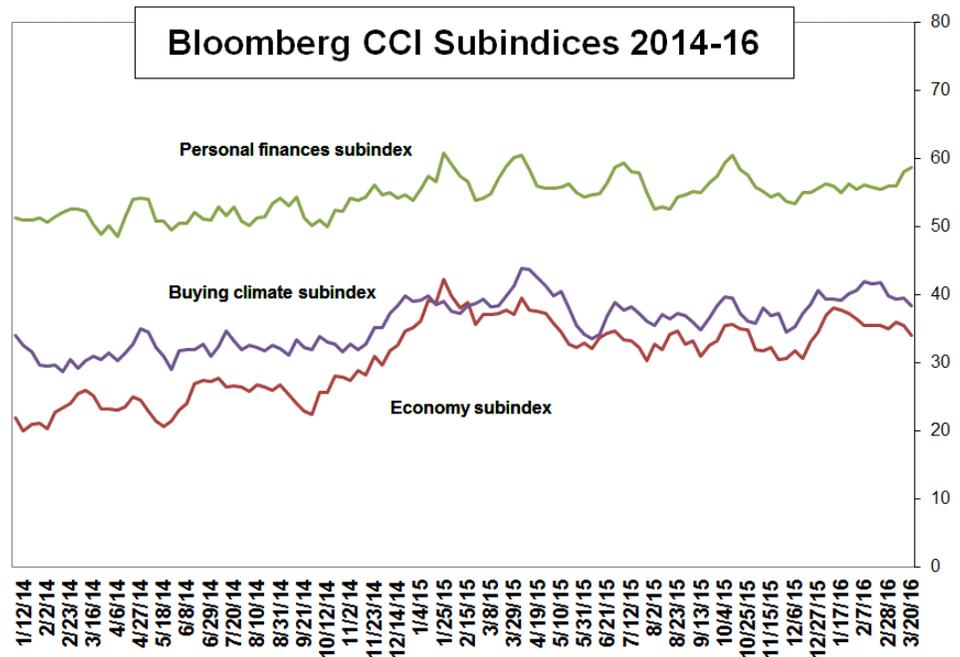
*Embargoed for release:
 9:45 a.m. Thursday,
 March 24, 2016*

Consumer sentiment pointed in opposite directions this week, as evaluations of the national economy and the buying climate hit 2016 lows while perceptions of personal finances reached a more-than-five-month high.

The split decision among the internal gauges of the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index left it essentially unchanged since last week, though numerically matching its 2016 low in February. A 2.7-point increase in the personal finances subindex in the past two weeks helped mostly balance out a 1.9-point decline in the national economy measure and a slight 1.1-point drop in the buying climate component during the same period.

At 43.6 on its 0-100 scale, the CCI has now held within a tight 1.0-point range for 13 straight weeks – a streak that’s only happened three other times in its 30-year history. The CCI’s quiescence this quarter stands in stark contrast to its rollercoaster ride in 2015.

This
 week’s
 CCI
 43.6



The divergence in the CCI’s subindices likely reflects mixed economic signals. A strong labor market may be buoying personal finance evaluations, while lower-than-anticipated sales in housing and continuing difficulties due to oil prices and weak demand for exports are consistent with softening views of the national economy and buying climate alike.

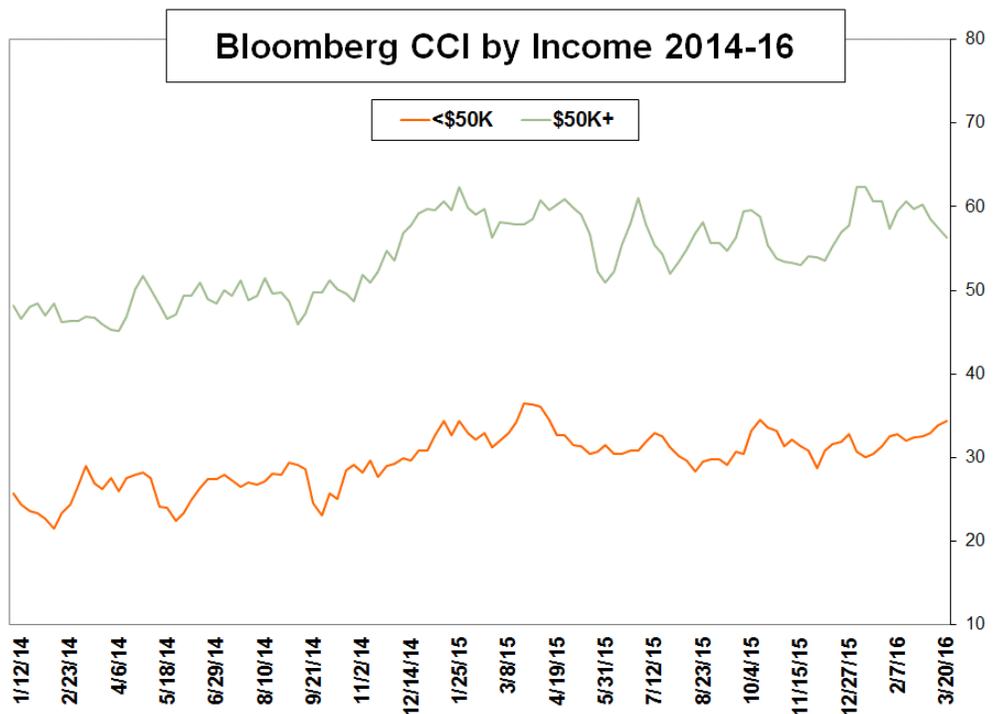
The overall index, produced by [Langer Research Associates](http://www.langerresearch.com), averages measures of these three consumer evaluations. As noted, two of these subindices are at new lows for 2016 while the third is at a high for the year:

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- At 34.0, the national economy subindex is the first CCI component at a 2016 low. It's down 4.0 points from January's nine-month high, 38.0, but it's close to last year's average, 34.7, suggesting a course correction after perhaps overly optimistic evaluations early in the year.
- The buying climate subindex is 38.3, also a new low for the year. After peaking with a nine-and-a-half-month high in early February, it's fallen 3.6 points. Compared with its long-term average in weekly polls since 1985, 35.8, it's still fairly healthy, if slightly less robust than over the last two months.
- The personal finances subindex, 58.6, is nearly unchanged from last week, when it reached its highest since October. It's now 2.4 and 3.3 points above its 2016 and long-term averages, respectively.

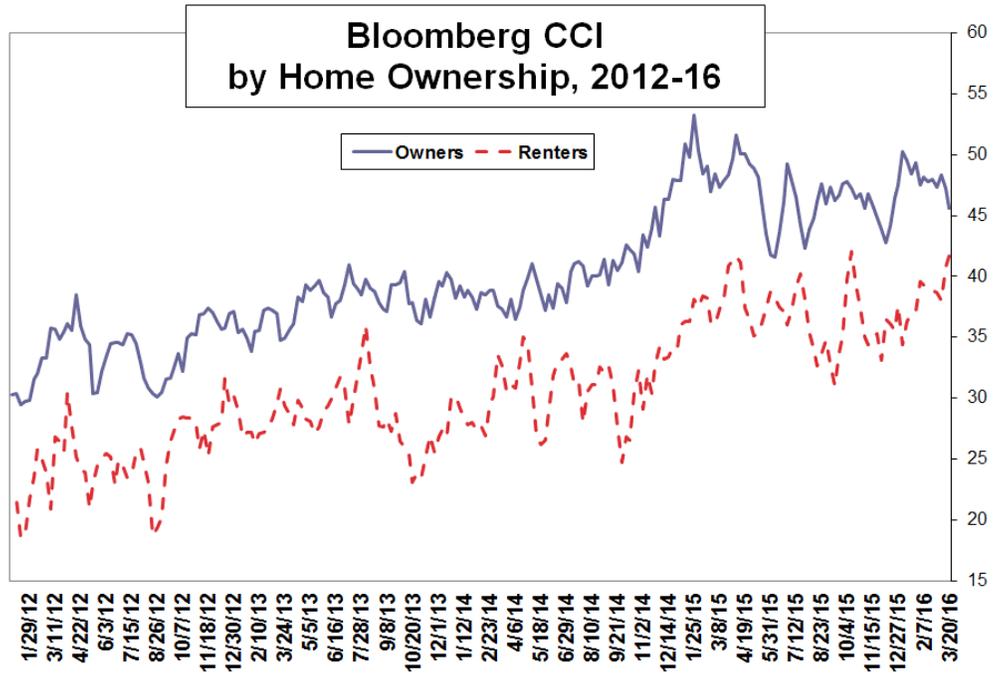
The index among Americans making less than \$50,000, 34.4, is a five-month peak and one of its highest in available data for this group since 2011. Those making \$50,000 or more seem to be swinging the other way: The CCI among middle and upper income earners, 56.3, is down 6.1 points from a post-recession high in mid-January.



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The CCI among homeowners is down to a three-month low, 45.6, vs. a five-month high, 41.7, among renters. Historically, those who own a home tend to feel more economically comfortable than renters, but this week the difference between them is just 3.9 points. That's the smallest it's been since June.



As the presidential primary season carries on, the difference between Republicans and Democrats in consumer comfort, 11.2 points, is at a 13-month high, its second week in a row in double digits. The CCI among the GOP faithful, 39.1, hit a three-and-a-half-month low, sliding 8.6 points since its nine-month high at the new year. Among Democrats (50.3) and independents (41.6), the index is essentially unchanged since January.

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Data summary for 3/24/2016

This week	43.6	
Last week	44.3	
2016 high	44.6	Jan. 24
2016 low	43.6	Feb. 28 and March 20
2016 average	44.1	
2009 average	26.0	Worst full year
2000 average	64.4	Best full year
June 21, 2009	23	Record low (also three other dates in 2008-09)
Jan. 16, 2000	69	Record high
Average since 12/85	41.7	

Individual measures:

	This week	Last week	Average 2016	Average '85-'16
Positive ratings of:				
National economy	34%	35	36	34
Personal finances	59	58	56	55
Buying climate	38	40	40	36

	Excel -lent	Good	Not so Good	Poor
Full ratings of:				
National economy	2%	32	40	26
Personal finances	7	52	26	15
Buying climate	4	35	42	20

	Positive High	Positive Low
Economy	80% Jan. 16, 2000	4% Feb. 8, 2009
Finances	70% latest Jan. 23, 2000	39% June 21 and 28, 2009
Buying climate	57% Jan. 16, 2000	18% latest Oct. 19, 2008

Methodology: The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index is produced by [Langer Research Associates](http://www.langerresearch.com). Results are based on 1,000 national random-sample landline and cellular telephone interviews, 250 per week in a four-week rolling average. The index, produced weekly since December 1985, is derived by averaging positive responses to each subindex question. Results of each question have a 3.5-point error margin. Interviews for this report were completed March 20, 2016. Field work and tabulation by SSRS of Media, Pa.

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03/20/16	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	43.6	44.3	44.2	42.2	45.5	47.9	39.6	42.9
State of Economy	34.0	35.4	35.5	33.0	37.7	39.5	30.4	34.3
Personal Finances	58.6	58.1	55.5	55.0	58.9	60.5	52.6	56.1
Buying Climate	38.3	39.5	41.7	38.6	39.8	43.8	33.5	38.3

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	47.8	49.0	48.8	45.1	46.0	53.4	41.2	46.4
Women	39.7	40.0	39.9	39.4	44.9	44.9	34.6	39.6
Age:								
18 - 34	50.9	51.8	47.9	48.4	49.4	52.4	42.0	47.1
35 - 44	42.6	39.8	41.8	39.3	49.5	51.2	33.4	42.3
45 - 54	37.3	39.0	43.6	36.4	42.4	47.3	33.6	39.4
55 - 64	43.3	47.5	42.8	46.7	39.4	48.2	31.1	40.1
65+	40.3	38.3	42.0	38.6	45.6	46.8	36.2	42.5
Income:								
Under \$15K	25.9	25.0	26.9	32.2	28.0	32.2	18.9	25.1
\$15K To \$24.9K	30.7	31.1	28.5	21.7	31.7	32.8	20.9	25.8
\$25K To \$39.9K	39.1	40.7	34.1	32.8	42.8	45.9	29.4	36.1
\$40K To \$49.9K	43.4	40.1	47.4	42.3	44.9	48.5	36.0	42.4
Under \$50K	34.4	33.9	32.4	31.9	36.5	36.5	28.3	31.8
Over \$50K	56.3	57.5	59.7	57.0	57.9	62.4	50.9	57.0
\$50K To \$74.9K	50.6	50.4	47.8	54.4	50.8	60.1	42.8	50.1
\$75K To \$99.9K	46.5	50.6	56.2	51.6	53.5	62.8	43.7	55.1
Over \$100K	67.5	68.3	70.6	64.1	66.0	74.1	55.9	64.7
Region:								
Northeast	43.4	43.8	45.5	47.3	39.1	52.1	35.4	43.4
Midwest	44.1	44.5	44.4	42.5	47.1	51.4	38.3	44.3
South	41.8	42.1	43.9	38.2	46.7	48.3	34.0	40.7
West	46.2	48.2	43.5	44.4	47.0	50.1	38.6	44.8
Race:								
White	43.7	43.8	43.7	43.7	44.3	47.9	40.1	43.6
Black	39.4	42.2	46.9	37.3	42.0	46.9	30.2	38.5
Politics:								
Republican	39.1	41.0	43.6	42.9	44.6	47.8	36.4	42.1
Democrat	50.3	51.9	50.5	44.3	54.0	54.2	40.8	48.0
Independent	41.6	41.5	40.1	42.4	40.2	44.9	37.7	41.1
Education:								
< High School	28.2	33.7	37.1	28.2	34.4	37.5	22.0	29.8
High Sch. Grad.	37.8	39.3	36.1	36.6	37.9	42.3	29.9	36.9
College +	50.5	49.9	51.0	48.8	51.7	53.7	44.5	49.3
Home:								
Own	45.6	47.2	48.0	46.4	48.3	51.6	41.6	46.8
Rent	41.7	40.8	38.9	35.6	40.9	42.0	31.0	37.1
Marital Status:								
Single	47.2	49.0	43.1	44.0	48.6	49.0	35.6	42.3
Married	46.0	47.2	50.6	46.2	46.5	52.5	40.0	46.6
Sep/Wid/Div	29.0	27.8	28.7	28.7	37.0	41.6	27.8	32.9
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	50.8	50.7	52.4	51.2	49.0	56.8	43.8	50.0
Part-Time	44.1	44.7	38.1	39.6	43.3	50.4	26.3	39.6
Not Employed	35.5	37.5	38.2	33.8	41.9	41.9	31.7	35.9

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