

LANGER RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

SURVEY RESEARCH DESIGN • MANAGEMENT • ANALYSIS

Bloomberg® Consumer Comfort Index™ Weekly Analysis

Embargoed for Release after 9:45 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014

**Contact: Langer Research Associates, 212 456-2621
info@langerresearch.com**

The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index reached its best in nearly seven years this week, aided by Americans' strongest ratings of their personal finances since the early days of the Great Recession.

The CCI stands at 38.5 on its scale of 0 to 100, up 3.7 points since late September to its highest since the first week of 2008. Its rise has been boosted by recent improvements in two of its three components – ratings of the national economy, just off the nearly seven-year high they reached last week; and of personal finances, now their best since early April 2008.

At the same time, economic expectations, measured separately from the CCI on a monthly basis, point to potential difficulties ahead. Thirty-four percent of Americans say the national economy is getting worse, vs. 29 percent who say it's getting better – back to a net negative score after a break last month.

It could be worse: Today's 5-point negative gap is far better than the -18-point gap two months ago. And, even while outnumbered by "getting worse" views, the share who see economic gains matches its second-highest in 17 months. (The rest, 36 percent, say the economy is staying the same.)

The weekly CCI, produced by Langer Research Associates, is based on Americans' ratings of the national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. At 54.4, the personal finances subindex remains the strongest of the three, just 0.8 points off its long-term average in weekly polling since late 1985. The buying climate subindex, 32.8, and national economy subindex, 28.2, are 2.8 and 5.8 points, respectively, off their nearly 29-year averages.

The overall index is 3.1 points off its long-term average, 41.6.

Improvement in the CCI aligns with employment and retail sales, both of which advanced in October. And gas prices are their lowest in nearly four years. But a slight rise in jobless claims in the past few weeks has produced some concern about the November jobs report.

The index reached long-term highs among several groups this week, including a more than seven-year high among seniors for the fourth week straight, 44.4, its best since August 2007.

The index is 44.0 among homeowners, its best since early in the Great Recession, vs. 30.4 among renters. It's 41.0 among whites, its best since the first week of 2008, while 30.6 among blacks. And at 42.5, the index is its best among married adults since January 2008, compared with 37.0 among singles and 28.3 among those who are separated, widowed or divorced.

The CCI ties its highest in more than six and a half years among those with a high school degree only, 36.0. It's 44.4 among those with more education, the smallest gap between the two groups in 11 weeks.

The income gap remains wide, with an index of 52.2 among those in \$50,000-plus households, its highest in more than a year, vs. 27.7 among those with lower household incomes. Among the highest earners – those with incomes of \$100,000 or more – it's 61.1, while at the low end of the income spectrum, among those earning less than \$15,000, it's 17.6.

Views on whether the economy is getting better or worse show similar changes within groups. Most notably, while “getting better” sentiment decreased overall, it increased by 6 points among those with a high school degree only and by 10 points among those age 65 or older.

Finally, perhaps reflecting the outcomes of the midterm elections, the percentage of optimistic Republicans rose by 8 points, while falling by the same number among Democrats.

The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index is produced by Langer Research Associates LLC (Langer). CONSUMER COMFORT INDEX™ is a trademark or service mark of Langer. BLOOMBERG® is a trademark or service mark of Bloomberg Finance L.P. Bloomberg Finance L.P. and its affiliates (collectively, "Bloomberg") or Bloomberg's licensors own all proprietary right in such mark. Neither Langer nor Bloomberg guarantee the timeliness, accuracy or completeness of any data or information relating to the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index. Langer and Bloomberg makes no warranty, express or implied, as to the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index or any data or values relating thereto or results to be obtained therefrom, and expressly disclaims all warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose with respect thereto. To the maximum extent allowed by law, Langer, Bloomberg, their licensors, and their respective employees, contractors, agents, suppliers and vendors shall have no liability or responsibility whatsoever for any injury or damages - whether direct, indirect, consequential, incidental, punitive or otherwise - arising in connection with the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index or any data or values relating thereto - whether arising from their negligence or otherwise. Nothing in the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index shall constitute or be construed as an offering of financial instruments or as investment advice or investment recommendations (i.e., recommendations as to whether or not to “buy,” “sell,” “hold” or to enter or not to enter into any other transaction involving any specific interest or interests) by Langer, Bloomberg or its affiliates or a recommendation as to an investment or other strategy by Langer, Bloomberg or its affiliates.

Click [here](#) for CCI details.

For subscription information: Langer Research Associates, info@langerresearch.com