

News Release

For further information:

Carol Courter 212-339-0232 / courter@conference-board.org

Joe DiBlasi 781-308-7935 / joseph.dibiasi@conference-board.org

For Release 10:00 AM ET, April 17, 2020

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. Plummets in March **Largest Decline in Index's 60-Year History**

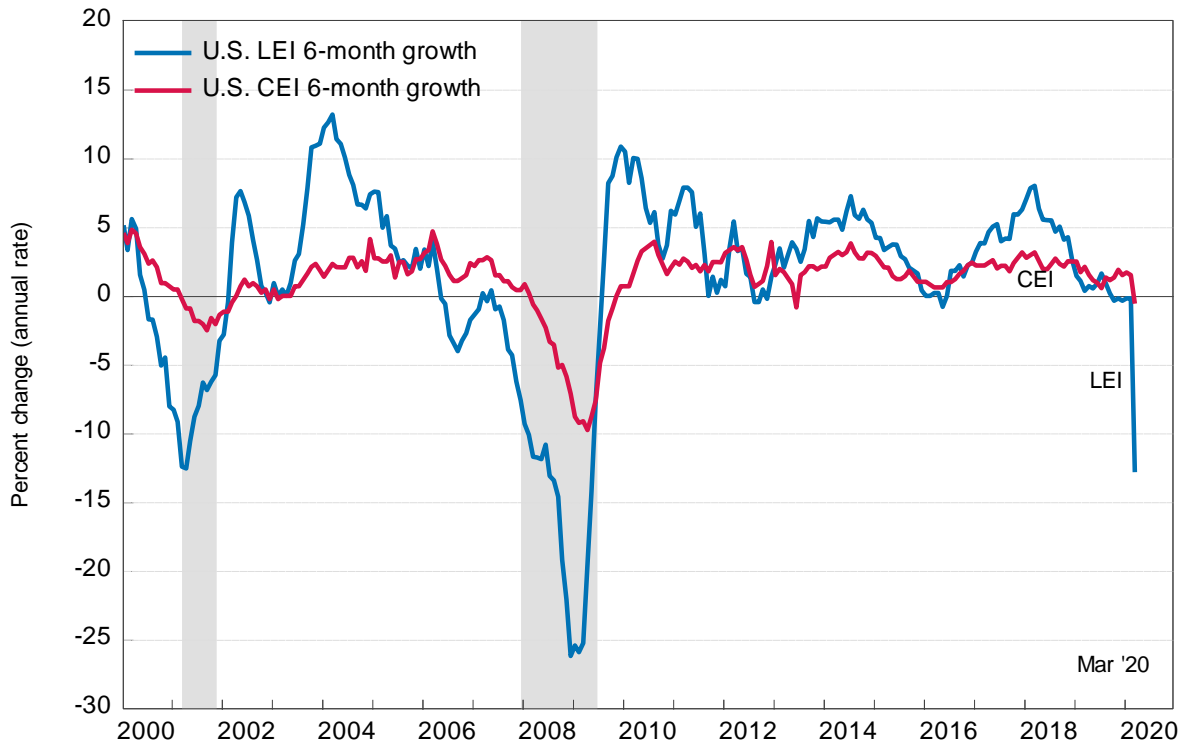
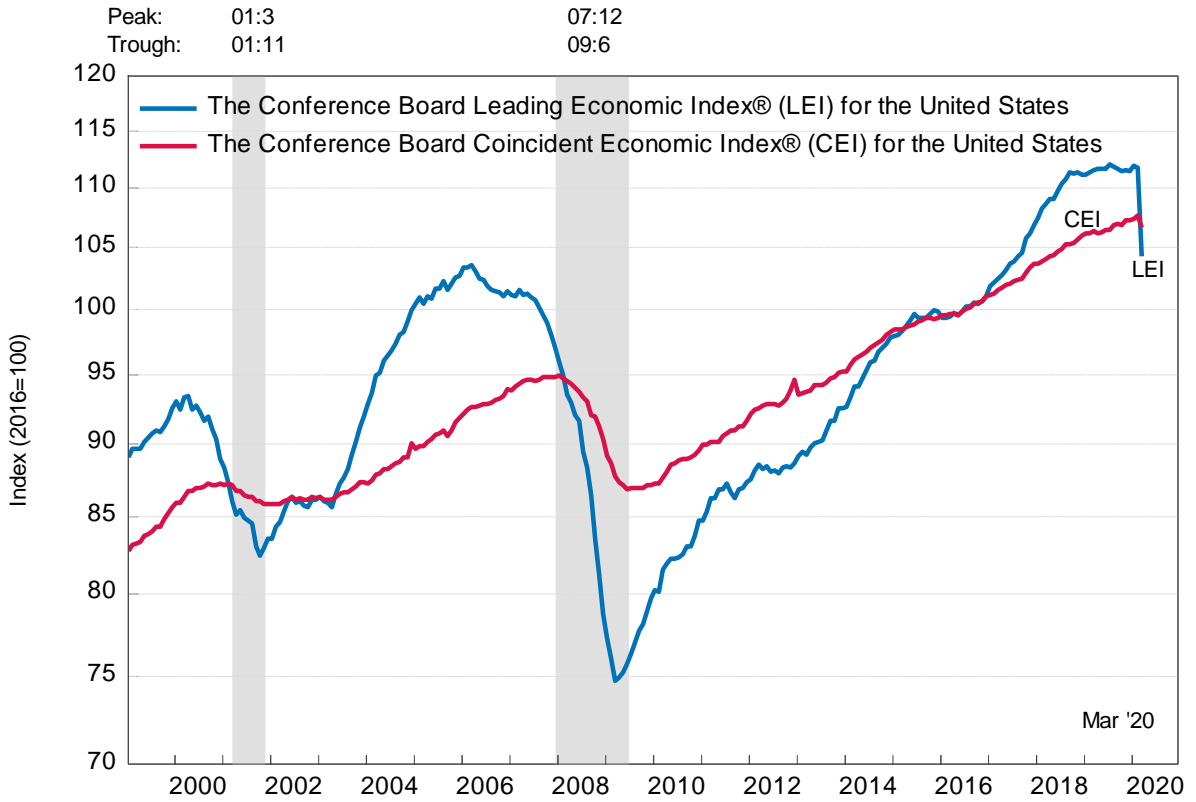
NEW YORK, April 17, 2020...The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. declined 6.7 percent in March to 104.2 (2016 = 100), following a 0.2 percent decrease in February, and a 0.4 percent increase in January.

“In March, the US LEI registered the largest decline in its 60-year history,” said Ataman Ozyildirim, Senior Director of Economic Research at The Conference Board. “The unprecedented and sudden deterioration was broad based, with the largest negative contributions coming from initial claims for unemployment insurance and stock prices. The sharp drop in the LEI reflects the sudden halting in business activity as a result of the global pandemic and suggests the US economy will be facing a very deep contraction.”

The Conference Board Coincident Economic Index® (CEI) for the U.S. decreased 0.9 percent in March to 106.6 (2016 = 100), following a 0.3 percent increase in February, and a 0.1 percent increase in January.

The Conference Board Lagging Economic Index® (LAG) for the U.S. increased 1.2 percent in March to 110.2 (2016 = 100), following a 0.3 percent increase in February, and a 0.1 percent decline in January.

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S. plummeted in March



Latest LEI Trough March 2009, Latest CEI Trough June 2009

Shaded areas represent recessions as determined by the NBER Business Cycle Dating Committee.

Source: The Conference Board

Summary Table of Composite Economic Indexes

	2020			6-month
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Sep to Mar
Leading Index	111.9 r	111.7 r	104.2 p	
Percent Change	0.4 r	-0.2 r	-6.7 p	-6.6
Diffusion	70.0	35.0	35.0	40.0
Coincident Index	107.3	107.6	106.6 p	
Percent Change	0.1	0.3	-0.9 p	-0.3
Diffusion	75.0	100.0	50.0	75.0
Lagging Index	108.6 r	108.9 r	110.2 p	
Percent Change	-0.1 r	0.3 r	1.2 p	1.8
Diffusion	50.0	64.3	50.0	42.9

p Preliminary r Revised

Indexes equal 100 in 2016

Source: The Conference Board

About The Conference Board Leading Economic Index® (LEI) for the U.S.

The composite economic indexes are the key elements in an analytic system designed to signal peaks and troughs in the business cycle. The leading, coincident, and lagging economic indexes are essentially composite averages of several individual leading, coincident, or lagging indicators. They are constructed to summarize and reveal common turning point patterns in economic data in a clearer and more convincing manner than any individual component – primarily because they smooth out some of the volatility of individual components.

The ten components of **The Conference Board Leading Economic Index®** for the U.S. include:

Average weekly hours, manufacturing

Average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance

Manufacturers' new orders, consumer goods and materials

ISM® Index of New Orders

Manufacturers' new orders, nondefense capital goods excluding aircraft orders

Building permits, new private housing units

Stock prices, 500 common stocks

Leading Credit Index™

Interest rate spread, 10-year Treasury bonds less federal funds

Average consumer expectations for business conditions

For full press release and technical notes:

<http://www.conference-board.org/data/bcicountry.cfm?cid=1>

For more information about The Conference Board global business cycle indicators:

<http://www.conference-board.org/data/bci.cfm>

About The Conference Board

The Conference Board is the member-driven think tank that delivers trusted insights for what's ahead. Founded in 1916, we are a non-partisan, not-for-profit entity holding 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status in the United States.

www.conference-board.org.