



# Economics Group

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## NFIB: Concerns Continued to Weigh Against Modest Growth

*The NFIB Small Business Index rose 0.9 points to 88.9 in January, as broader economic and policy concerns continued to offset modest gains in current operating fundamentals. Plans to hire rose modestly to 3 percent.*

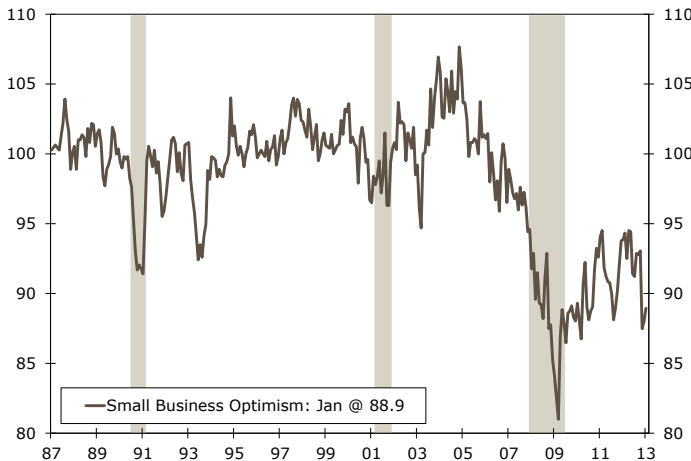
### Relatively Little Change in Small Business Sentiment

- The NFIB Small Business Optimism Index continues to soldier its way back from November's 5.6-percentage point drop. The net percentage of businesses reporting higher sales edged one point higher to -9, while slightly more businesses said they planned to hire additional workers and boost capital spending.
- Of those firms hiring, or trying to hire, 79 percent noted few or no qualified applicants for vacant positions.

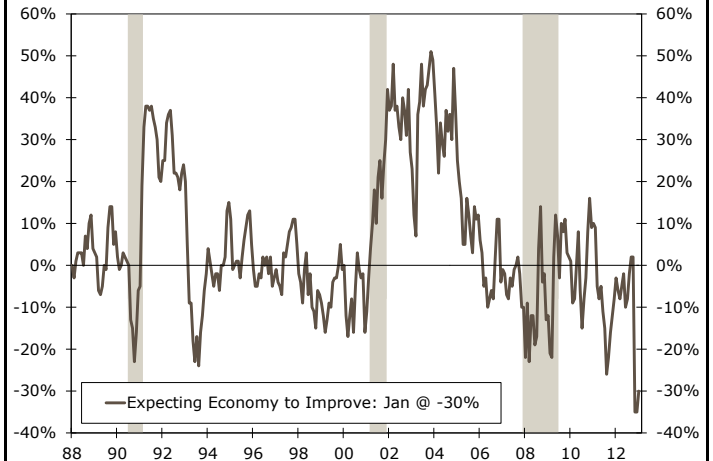
### Concerns Remain About Taxes & Regulation

- While the headline NFIB index rose 0.9 points in January, small businesses remain inordinately concerned about future economic prospects. The net percentage of business owners expecting conditions to improve in the next six months rose 5 points to -30 in January, still the fourth lowest reading ever.
- The most pressing problems for small businesses are taxes and regulations. The share citing poor sales continues to decrease.

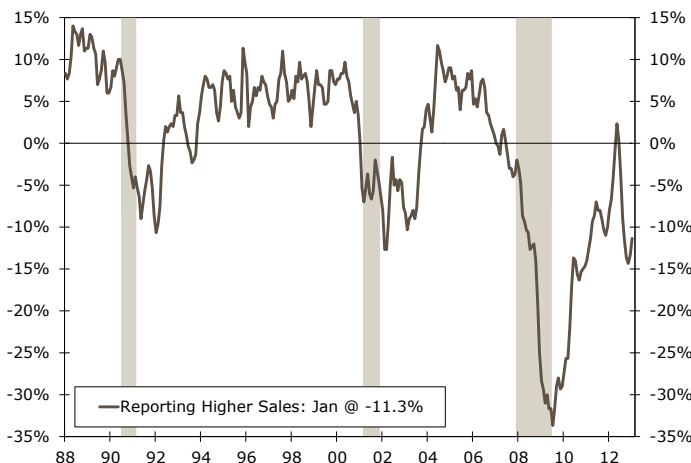
**NFIB Small Business Optimism**  
 Overall Index 1986 = 100



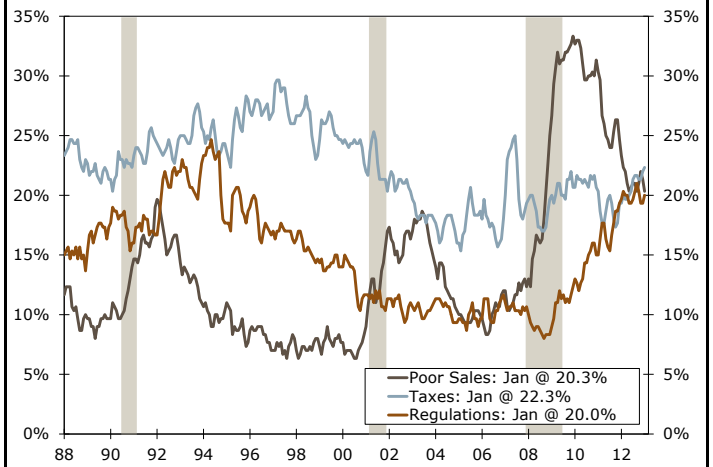
**Firms Expecting Economy to Improve**  
 Net % of Firms Expecting Economy to Improve Over the Next 6 mo.



**Small Businesses Reporting Higher Sales**  
 Net Percent of Firms With Higher Sales Past 3 Months, SA 3-MMA



**Small Business Most Important Problems**  
 Single Most Important Problem Facing Firms, SA 3-MMA



Source: National Federation of Independent Business and Wells Fargo Securities, LLC

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