



## TODAY IN 1950

Ralph J. Bunche, who managed to negotiate armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States in 1949, became the first African American to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

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# Repeal of military gay ban fails

## Senate Republicans block last-ditch bid

By Anne Flaherty  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans blocked a last-ditch effort in the Senate to lift the military's ban on openly gay troops Thursday, dealing a major blow to gay rights groups and making it unlikely Congress would repeal "don't ask, don't tell" any time soon.

The 57-40 vote fell three short of the 60 needed to overcome procedural hurdles to lift the 17-year-old

ban. Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine, was the lone Republican voting to advance the bill, and Sen. Joe Manchin, of West Virginia, was the only Democrat to vote against it.

The rejection was a defeat for President Barack Obama, who campaigned vowing to overturn the law and later called it one of his top legislative priorities. But in the end, the White House did little to push the legislation. Repeal advocates said the fight wasn't over, but Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid seemed to have little appetite to return to the subject with just a week left in the lame-duck session and other major legislation pending.

Gay rights advocates were livid

because the vote failed mainly because of a procedural row. "Instead of doing what is right, the world's greatest deliberative body devolved into shameful school yard spats that put petty partisan politics above the needs of our women and men in uniform," said Joe Solomonese, president of gay rights group Human Rights Campaign.

The 1993 law bans gay troops from publicly admitting their sexual orientation. A repeal provision included in a defense policy bill passed last spring in the House.

More than 60 senators were expected to support repeal, with at least four Republicans having said they support overturning "don't

ask, don't tell." But GOP senators were united in demanding that the Senate vote on tax cuts first.

Democrats had said Thursday morning they remained hopeful a last-minute deal could be struck with Collins, believing her support would persuade other GOP senators to advance the bill. But in the end, Reid called for a vote before one could be made.

Collins said she didn't understand why Reid didn't do more to oblige GOP concerns. "There was such a clear path for us to be able to get this done," she said on the Senate floor. "I'm perplexed and frustrated that this important bill will become a victim of politics."